

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,830

2
00:00:06,830 --> 00:00:10,010
This is the United States
Holocaust Memorial Museum

3
00:00:10,010 --> 00:00:13,790
interview with Christine Cohen,
conducted by Margaret Garrett

4
00:00:13,790 --> 00:00:20,420
on January 5th, 1997, in
Bethesda, Maryland, tape

5
00:00:20,420 --> 00:00:26,600
1, side A. Mrs. Cohen, what
was your name at birth?

6
00:00:26,600 --> 00:00:28,760
It was Rita Grabina.

7
00:00:28,760 --> 00:00:31,610
And what was the
date of your birth?

8
00:00:31,610 --> 00:00:34,340
April 27, 1940.

9
00:00:34,340 --> 00:00:36,210
And where were you born?

10
00:00:36,210 --> 00:00:39,150
I was born in Warsaw, Poland.

11
00:00:39,150 --> 00:00:42,020
Could you talk about
the circumstances

12
00:00:42,020 --> 00:00:43,940
surrounding your birth?

13
00:00:43,940 --> 00:00:48,740
Well, I was born in
the Warsaw ghetto

14
00:00:48,740 --> 00:00:54,800
with my family who, before the
war, lived all over Warsaw,

15
00:00:54,800 --> 00:00:59,390
being brought into the ghetto,
into a small confined area,

16
00:00:59,390 --> 00:01:06,380
the whole family, my
grandparents, my parents,

17
00:01:06,380 --> 00:01:11,960
my aunt, my uncle, their
spouses, and children,

18
00:01:11,960 --> 00:01:14,210
four cousins I had.

19
00:01:14,210 --> 00:01:16,160
We all lived in one
little apartment,

20
00:01:16,160 --> 00:01:17,880
from what I understand.

21
00:01:17,880 --> 00:01:21,380
They were all brought from
different parts of Warsaw.

22
00:01:21,380 --> 00:01:31,070
And I was born in the Warsaw
ghetto in a Jewish hospital

23
00:01:31,070 --> 00:01:35,060
and I was in the
ghetto until 1942.

24

00:01:35,060 --> 00:01:38,990
I was two years old when my
mother escaped from the ghetto

25

00:01:38,990 --> 00:01:41,650
with me, leaving
the family behind.

26

00:01:41,650 --> 00:01:45,380
Now, when you were born,
had the ghetto been sealed?

27

00:01:45,380 --> 00:01:48,170
Yes it had.

28

00:01:48,170 --> 00:01:49,490
It had been sealed.

29

00:01:49,490 --> 00:01:53,030
And so you lived in the
ghetto with your family

30

00:01:53,030 --> 00:01:54,420
until you were two years old.

31

00:01:54,420 --> 00:01:56,240
Two years old.

32

00:01:56,240 --> 00:02:01,730
And how was your mother able
to escape from the ghetto?

33

00:02:01,730 --> 00:02:03,890
Well, it's kind of a long story.

34

00:02:03,890 --> 00:02:12,896
My father had-- all his business
assets were signed over--

35

00:02:12,896 --> 00:02:14,540
before they were
put in the ghetto,

36
00:02:14,540 --> 00:02:18,350
were signed over to
one of his partner

37
00:02:18,350 --> 00:02:21,140
and very, very close friend,
because the Jews were not

38
00:02:21,140 --> 00:02:24,830
allowed to own anything.

39
00:02:24,830 --> 00:02:29,000
And my father was
taken, every day,

40
00:02:29,000 --> 00:02:31,220
by the Germans
out of the ghetto,

41
00:02:31,220 --> 00:02:34,880
along with other
men for hard labor.

42
00:02:34,880 --> 00:02:38,480
And he was able to make
contact with people

43
00:02:38,480 --> 00:02:48,720
in the outside world and get
some forged papers for us,

44
00:02:48,720 --> 00:02:51,770
stating that, of
course, we are Christian

45
00:02:51,770 --> 00:02:55,320
and not Jewish for
myself and my mother.

46
00:02:55,320 --> 00:02:59,970
And it was supposed to be
paid for with, basically,

47
00:02:59,970 --> 00:03:04,130
his money that the friend had.

48
00:03:04,130 --> 00:03:07,310
And my mother didn't
want to leave the ghetto,

49
00:03:07,310 --> 00:03:08,870
because the whole
family was there.

50
00:03:08,870 --> 00:03:11,420
And even though they knew
they were taking people away,

51
00:03:11,420 --> 00:03:15,740
no one really knew the
extent of what was happening,

52
00:03:15,740 --> 00:03:17,900
unless you were there yourself.

53
00:03:17,900 --> 00:03:20,570
No one, I guess,
wanted to believe

54
00:03:20,570 --> 00:03:22,050
that this was happening.

55
00:03:22,050 --> 00:03:26,060
So they felt, as long as
they were together, somehow,

56
00:03:26,060 --> 00:03:28,210
they will survive.

57
00:03:28,210 --> 00:03:31,360
My grandfather was a jeweler.

58
00:03:31,360 --> 00:03:36,430
And they were able to

stash some, I imagine,

59

00:03:36,430 --> 00:03:39,670
diamonds, whatever precious
jewelry, for which they

60

00:03:39,670 --> 00:03:42,910
were able to, at
least, for diamonds,

61

00:03:42,910 --> 00:03:44,620
you could buy a loaf of bread.

62

00:03:44,620 --> 00:03:46,840
You could make it
to the hospital.

63

00:03:46,840 --> 00:03:48,760
That's why I was
born in a hospital.

64

00:03:48,760 --> 00:03:52,510
So they were able to
get by with whatever

65

00:03:52,510 --> 00:03:57,010
he had in the way of
jewelry to bribe everybody.

66

00:03:57,010 --> 00:04:00,400
And they felt that
they would survive.

67

00:04:00,400 --> 00:04:06,850
And my father kind of
knew what was happening.

68

00:04:06,850 --> 00:04:10,610
And he wanted-- my mother
was only 22 years old.

69

00:04:10,610 --> 00:04:15,130
But he knew, if

anybody was capable,

70

00:04:15,130 --> 00:04:17,769

she was capable of
doing something.

71

00:04:17,769 --> 00:04:20,890

So he wanted for her to take me.

72

00:04:20,890 --> 00:04:24,790

And basically, to
save me, he made her--

73

00:04:24,790 --> 00:04:29,180

the way he made her escape
is she didn't want to.

74

00:04:29,180 --> 00:04:34,030

And he said that if not,
if she doesn't try it,

75

00:04:34,030 --> 00:04:38,020

he will give me to the Germans,
which a lot of people did.

76

00:04:38,020 --> 00:04:41,410

Very few children were
actually saved and sent

77

00:04:41,410 --> 00:04:45,790

to Germany or wherever,
very, very few.

78

00:04:45,790 --> 00:04:48,850

The majority were
killed as soon as they

79

00:04:48,850 --> 00:04:51,990

were given to the Germans
for a sum of money.

80

00:04:51,990 --> 00:04:54,640

Did your mother and

father know that?

81

00:04:54,640 --> 00:04:56,620

Yeah, they both knew it.

82

00:04:56,620 --> 00:05:00,580

And my father only said it to
make my mother do something.

83

00:05:00,580 --> 00:05:03,520

Everybody knew it, after
a while, in the ghetto.

84

00:05:03,520 --> 00:05:05,020

In '42, everybody knew it.

85

00:05:05,020 --> 00:05:08,170

At the beginning, people
were hoping against hope

86

00:05:08,170 --> 00:05:10,780

that someone will
save their children.

87

00:05:10,780 --> 00:05:12,850

But by then, they already knew.

88

00:05:12,850 --> 00:05:15,370

They would, as a
matter of fact, people

89

00:05:15,370 --> 00:05:18,520

saw it where they would
take the baby, that's

90

00:05:18,520 --> 00:05:20,410

what I hear from my
mother, of course,

91

00:05:20,410 --> 00:05:22,390

I couldn't possibly
remember that.

92

00:05:22,390 --> 00:05:23,380

They would take a baby.

93

00:05:23,380 --> 00:05:24,730

They would take the money.

94

00:05:24,730 --> 00:05:26,770

And then grab the
baby by the legs

95

00:05:26,770 --> 00:05:29,290

and just hit the head
against the wall.

96

00:05:29,290 --> 00:05:30,410

In front of the parents.

97

00:05:30,410 --> 00:05:33,250

In front of the parents, so
after a while, of course,

98

00:05:33,250 --> 00:05:34,150

they didn't try it.

99

00:05:34,150 --> 00:05:36,870

100

00:05:36,870 --> 00:05:41,370

So anyway, so my mother,
a doctor in the ghetto

101

00:05:41,370 --> 00:05:44,620

gave me a tranquilizer, because
I was only two years old.

102

00:05:44,620 --> 00:05:48,780

And of course, I could not be
discovered during the escape.

103

00:05:48,780 --> 00:05:52,350

My mother dressed like a
peasant woman from a village,

104
00:05:52,350 --> 00:05:56,940
put a big scarf around her
and put me inside the scarf.

105
00:05:56,940 --> 00:06:01,050
So I wouldn't be seen,
mainly, because I

106
00:06:01,050 --> 00:06:05,040
know it sounds strange, but
because not everybody in Poland

107
00:06:05,040 --> 00:06:07,350
is blue eyed and blond.

108
00:06:07,350 --> 00:06:09,600
But that's one way they
were judging people.

109
00:06:09,600 --> 00:06:12,150
My mother was a
blue-eyed blonde.

110
00:06:12,150 --> 00:06:13,200
And I was dark.

111
00:06:13,200 --> 00:06:18,690
And for a child, I did-- not
necessarily did I look Jewish,

112
00:06:18,690 --> 00:06:20,820
but I had dark, curly
hair and dark eyes.

113
00:06:20,820 --> 00:06:24,750
And that was enough to
identify me as being Jewish.

114
00:06:24,750 --> 00:06:28,015
So she didn't want
me to be seen.

115

00:06:28,015 --> 00:06:29,640

And of course, they
wanted me to sleep.

116

00:06:29,640 --> 00:06:31,230

So they gave me a tranquilizer.

117

00:06:31,230 --> 00:06:35,190

And she dressed in
this big, big shawl.

118

00:06:35,190 --> 00:06:39,990

And she had a maid before
the war who was called on

119

00:06:39,990 --> 00:06:42,480

to testify in court.

120

00:06:42,480 --> 00:06:45,990

And there was-- right
outside of the ghetto walls,

121

00:06:45,990 --> 00:06:48,030

there was a courthouse.

122

00:06:48,030 --> 00:06:53,610

Now, the Germans didn't
know how to read Polish.

123

00:06:53,610 --> 00:06:56,490

Plus, the date
was actually 1938.

124

00:06:56,490 --> 00:06:58,803

Had they paid
attention to it, they

125

00:06:58,803 --> 00:07:00,720

would have discovered
that there was something

126

00:07:00,720 --> 00:07:03,780

wrong with the summons.

127

00:07:03,780 --> 00:07:06,840

She took that summons
and walked straight

128

00:07:06,840 --> 00:07:11,070

to one of the
guards at the wall,

129

00:07:11,070 --> 00:07:12,900

at the gate, or
entrance, I don't

130

00:07:12,900 --> 00:07:17,010

know what it was at the
wall and took him off guard,

131

00:07:17,010 --> 00:07:19,950

because they were used to
people running away from them,

132

00:07:19,950 --> 00:07:21,550

not walking towards them.

133

00:07:21,550 --> 00:07:23,460

Everybody was afraid of them.

134

00:07:23,460 --> 00:07:28,050

And she told them, I think in
German, my mother spoke German.

135

00:07:28,050 --> 00:07:30,810

I know she spoke German
later, but I assume.

136

00:07:30,810 --> 00:07:36,660

She told him that, in Polish,
and he understood a little.

137

00:07:36,660 --> 00:07:39,750

She told him that she
is from some village.

138
00:07:39,750 --> 00:07:42,310
And she looked the part.

139
00:07:42,310 --> 00:07:46,050
And that she got
summoned to the court.

140
00:07:46,050 --> 00:07:47,310
And she got lost.

141
00:07:47,310 --> 00:07:48,240
She came in here.

142
00:07:48,240 --> 00:07:50,040
And she doesn't
know where she is.

143
00:07:50,040 --> 00:07:51,810
How does she get out?

144
00:07:51,810 --> 00:07:55,710
He was so surprised
by her walking up

145
00:07:55,710 --> 00:08:00,780
to him, talking to him,
that he pointed to the gate.

146
00:08:00,780 --> 00:08:05,250
And she, with real
bravado, she said,

147
00:08:05,250 --> 00:08:06,990
I'm afraid I'll get lost again.

148
00:08:06,990 --> 00:08:09,000
Would you please walk me out?

149
00:08:09,000 --> 00:08:10,470
And he did.

150

00:08:10,470 --> 00:08:13,290

He walked her right
outside of the wall.

151

00:08:13,290 --> 00:08:16,560

Then, she realized
that she forgot.

152

00:08:16,560 --> 00:08:19,080

She still had the Star
of David on her arm

153

00:08:19,080 --> 00:08:22,200

under that big shawl.

154

00:08:22,200 --> 00:08:23,670

So she went to
the first bathroom

155

00:08:23,670 --> 00:08:25,980

and flushed it down, of course.

156

00:08:25,980 --> 00:08:28,860

And then, she wasn't
out of danger,

157

00:08:28,860 --> 00:08:30,780

because if you were
without papers,

158

00:08:30,780 --> 00:08:33,419

you assumed to be
Jewish and shot.

159

00:08:33,419 --> 00:08:38,780

She had to get to this man who
basically had all our assets.

160

00:08:38,780 --> 00:08:40,400

And he had money.

161

00:08:40,400 --> 00:08:42,200

I don't know what it was then.

162
00:08:42,200 --> 00:08:44,059
It was a lot of money
for then, but say,

163
00:08:44,059 --> 00:08:46,460
it was \$10,000 before the war.

164
00:08:46,460 --> 00:08:48,510
He was supposed to
have it ready for her.

165
00:08:48,510 --> 00:08:51,650
So she could pay the
forger, meet the forger,

166
00:08:51,650 --> 00:08:53,570
and get the papers.

167
00:08:53,570 --> 00:08:57,170
Before she went to his place,
and of course, the danger

168
00:08:57,170 --> 00:09:00,530
was everywhere, because first
of all, I could wake up and cry.

169
00:09:00,530 --> 00:09:03,020
Secondly, she had no papers.

170
00:09:03,020 --> 00:09:06,050
And people were
stopped constantly.

171
00:09:06,050 --> 00:09:08,480
She made it to his place.

172
00:09:08,480 --> 00:09:11,480
And the men lived, and this
is kind of significant,

173

00:09:11,480 --> 00:09:14,330
because he lived in a
12 story building, which

174
00:09:14,330 --> 00:09:16,130
was a high rise then.

175
00:09:16,130 --> 00:09:18,170
And he lived on top.

176
00:09:18,170 --> 00:09:22,880
And she went there and
he opened the door.

177
00:09:22,880 --> 00:09:24,920
And she tells him she's
here for the money.

178
00:09:24,920 --> 00:09:27,200
And of course, he knew
very well what it was all

179
00:09:27,200 --> 00:09:29,450
set up with my father.

180
00:09:29,450 --> 00:09:32,090
And he said, what money?

181
00:09:32,090 --> 00:09:36,200
She said the money that is
their money to begin with.

182
00:09:36,200 --> 00:09:38,450
And he said, I don't know you.

183
00:09:38,450 --> 00:09:41,420
This is a person who
was a very close friend

184
00:09:41,420 --> 00:09:45,740
before the war, who went
with them to dinner,

185

00:09:45,740 --> 00:09:49,220

and was invited to every
party, and always said,

186

00:09:49,220 --> 00:09:53,540

if anything happens, you
can always count on me.

187

00:09:53,540 --> 00:09:56,090

My father trusted
him with all that.

188

00:09:56,090 --> 00:09:57,440

He said, I don't know you.

189

00:09:57,440 --> 00:10:00,080

She says, how can you
say you don't know me

190

00:10:00,080 --> 00:10:02,920

after all the dinners
you've had at my house?

191

00:10:02,920 --> 00:10:05,450

He says, well, what are
you going to do about it?

192

00:10:05,450 --> 00:10:08,210

He had a fortune from my father.

193

00:10:08,210 --> 00:10:12,110

But he didn't want to
spare the money just

194

00:10:12,110 --> 00:10:15,630

to save our life, just a
little bit of whatever he had.

195

00:10:15,630 --> 00:10:18,230

My father was very wealthy.

196

00:10:18,230 --> 00:10:20,900

So my mother, the reason
I said it's significant

197
00:10:20,900 --> 00:10:24,830
that there were 12 stories,
my mother went to the window,

198
00:10:24,830 --> 00:10:29,160
and stood on the
window, and said,

199
00:10:29,160 --> 00:10:33,150
if you don't give me
the money, I will jump,

200
00:10:33,150 --> 00:10:34,273
with me, she said--

201
00:10:34,273 --> 00:10:35,940
they always called
me Christine, anyway,

202
00:10:35,940 --> 00:10:38,760
because-- even before I got
the papers, because they always

203
00:10:38,760 --> 00:10:40,200
loved that name.

204
00:10:40,200 --> 00:10:43,860
I will jump with
Christine from the window.

205
00:10:43,860 --> 00:10:45,630
He gave her the
money not because he

206
00:10:45,630 --> 00:10:47,370
was worried about her jumping.

207
00:10:47,370 --> 00:10:48,720
He didn't care.

208

00:10:48,720 --> 00:10:51,532

But had she jumped
from his window,

209

00:10:51,532 --> 00:10:53,490

he would have been shot
too, because that would

210

00:10:53,490 --> 00:10:55,470

have been harboring a Jew.

211

00:10:55,470 --> 00:10:58,810

They would never believe
him that she just came in--

212

00:10:58,810 --> 00:11:00,210

they would kill him too.

213

00:11:00,210 --> 00:11:02,260

So he had to give her the money.

214

00:11:02,260 --> 00:11:05,040

And when I was older, my
mother told me the story.

215

00:11:05,040 --> 00:11:08,340

I asked her, I said,
had he said no,

216

00:11:08,340 --> 00:11:10,770

would you really have jumped?

217

00:11:10,770 --> 00:11:12,850

And she said, yes.

218

00:11:12,850 --> 00:11:15,600

She said, because I wouldn't
have gone back to the ghetto.

219

00:11:15,600 --> 00:11:18,000

And I was as good as dead.

220

00:11:18,000 --> 00:11:21,300

And she really meant it.

221

00:11:21,300 --> 00:11:23,130

My mother was an
incredible woman.

222

00:11:23,130 --> 00:11:27,600

Now, all of this happening,
she's 22 or 23 years old.

223

00:11:27,600 --> 00:11:31,470

And someone who never had to
lift a finger to do anything,

224

00:11:31,470 --> 00:11:37,500

from a loving family, everybody
always took care of her,

225

00:11:37,500 --> 00:11:40,530

and all of a sudden, she
fights for her life and mine

226

00:11:40,530 --> 00:11:41,730

every day.

227

00:11:41,730 --> 00:11:43,350

Then, she met with the forger.

228

00:11:43,350 --> 00:11:47,460

Again, until she had the papers,
there was always the danger.

229

00:11:47,460 --> 00:11:49,380

She met with the
forger, paid him.

230

00:11:49,380 --> 00:11:51,360

Got the papers.

231

00:11:51,360 --> 00:11:53,610

And then, of course, I

don't know the details,

232

00:11:53,610 --> 00:11:55,110
how we got wherever we got.

233

00:11:55,110 --> 00:11:58,090
But we went to
some small village.

234

00:11:58,090 --> 00:12:00,510
Do you remember the
name of the village?

235

00:12:00,510 --> 00:12:05,150
Yes, I-- starts
with a G. I'll think

236

00:12:05,150 --> 00:12:11,230
of it in a minute,
Goroshkov, I think.

237

00:12:11,230 --> 00:12:13,720
And I mean, I don't
remember, remember.

238

00:12:13,720 --> 00:12:16,210
I just remember from
when my mother said.

239

00:12:16,210 --> 00:12:19,930
And she picked a place,
there were farmers there.

240

00:12:19,930 --> 00:12:22,090
It was right by the forest.

241

00:12:22,090 --> 00:12:24,220
Because she felt if she
ever needed to hide,

242

00:12:24,220 --> 00:12:25,630
that was a good place.

243

00:12:25,630 --> 00:12:27,010

The partisans were there.

244

00:12:27,010 --> 00:12:30,865

Although they were not
helpful to Jews at all.

245

00:12:30,865 --> 00:12:31,990

But they were hiding there.

246

00:12:31,990 --> 00:12:33,430

It was a good place to hide.

247

00:12:33,430 --> 00:12:35,762

There was a woman
and I don't exactly

248

00:12:35,762 --> 00:12:37,720

know whether there were
three children, however

249

00:12:37,720 --> 00:12:44,170

many children, and I assume
there were around 10, 8, 12,

250

00:12:44,170 --> 00:12:49,930

give or take a couple of years,
and this couple of farmers.

251

00:12:49,930 --> 00:12:53,630

My mother had to pay
them to live there.

252

00:12:53,630 --> 00:12:57,790

Oh, her story was that
because people, Polish people

253

00:12:57,790 --> 00:13:00,010

didn't just leave Warsaw.

254

00:13:00,010 --> 00:13:05,890

Her cover story was that her

husband was in the Polish army

255

00:13:05,890 --> 00:13:08,080
and was taken prisoner of war.

256

00:13:08,080 --> 00:13:10,690
And that's why she left Warsaw.

257

00:13:10,690 --> 00:13:13,300
The reason she left
Warsaw, the main reason,

258

00:13:13,300 --> 00:13:16,690
is because between my
grandfather and my father,

259

00:13:16,690 --> 00:13:18,820
they were very well known.

260

00:13:18,820 --> 00:13:20,740
And she could have
been recognized

261

00:13:20,740 --> 00:13:22,540
by someone non-Jewish
and they were only

262

00:13:22,540 --> 00:13:26,470
too happy to report
you, most people.

263

00:13:26,470 --> 00:13:28,570
I'm not saying everybody.

264

00:13:28,570 --> 00:13:30,220
So that's why she took off.

265

00:13:30,220 --> 00:13:33,250
So her cover was that her
husband is a prisoner of war.

266

00:13:33,250 --> 00:13:34,900

And she didn't
want to stay there.

267
00:13:34,900 --> 00:13:37,120
Everybody believed her.

268
00:13:37,120 --> 00:13:44,140
And she had to
work to support us.

269
00:13:44,140 --> 00:13:47,920
She never worked
a day in her life.

270
00:13:47,920 --> 00:13:50,920
She would sell
cigarettes and liquor

271
00:13:50,920 --> 00:13:53,230
on trains, which was illegal.

272
00:13:53,230 --> 00:13:55,780
You could get shot for that.

273
00:13:55,780 --> 00:13:57,550
But she made money.

274
00:13:57,550 --> 00:14:01,240
She would work in the fields,
all kinds of odd jobs.

275
00:14:01,240 --> 00:14:03,872
The problem was she would
have to leave in the morning

276
00:14:03,872 --> 00:14:05,080
and come back in the evening.

277
00:14:05,080 --> 00:14:09,160
And she paid these people
to take care of me.

278

00:14:09,160 --> 00:14:12,790

And the man, I don't
remember that part of it,

279

00:14:12,790 --> 00:14:14,710

because I guess
I blocked it out.

280

00:14:14,710 --> 00:14:16,160

I don't want to remember.

281

00:14:16,160 --> 00:14:18,730

But somewhere in
my subconscious,

282

00:14:18,730 --> 00:14:21,400

I know I was abused
by all of them.

283

00:14:21,400 --> 00:14:22,540

Abused how?

284

00:14:22,540 --> 00:14:28,280

Physically, children, and
the woman, not the husband.

285

00:14:28,280 --> 00:14:30,540

By hitting or sexual abuse?

286

00:14:30,540 --> 00:14:33,020

Oh, no, no, no hitting,
hitting, hitting.

287

00:14:33,020 --> 00:14:37,760

They would-- the thing is I
have pictures of German soldiers

288

00:14:37,760 --> 00:14:39,050

on a horse with me.

289

00:14:39,050 --> 00:14:42,430

I was very talkative.

290

00:14:42,430 --> 00:14:44,480

Well, I was more intelligent
than the children

291

00:14:44,480 --> 00:14:45,470

in the village.

292

00:14:45,470 --> 00:14:48,260

And all the soldiers
just loved me.

293

00:14:48,260 --> 00:14:50,030

They used to come
bring me presents.

294

00:14:50,030 --> 00:14:52,940

And the kids were jealous,
so they used to hit me.

295

00:14:52,940 --> 00:14:54,140

The mother was jealous.

296

00:14:54,140 --> 00:14:55,160

So she used to hit me.

297

00:14:55,160 --> 00:14:58,280

When the father was
home, no one hit me,

298

00:14:58,280 --> 00:15:00,470

because he was a good man.

299

00:15:00,470 --> 00:15:05,210

But the mother and the kids used
to, I mean, really abused me.

300

00:15:05,210 --> 00:15:07,190

You don't remember
that did you say?

301

00:15:07,190 --> 00:15:10,250

Vaguely, vaguely.

302
00:15:10,250 --> 00:15:11,340
What is your memory?

303
00:15:11,340 --> 00:15:15,250

304
00:15:15,250 --> 00:15:19,470
My memory is that I
was afraid of them.

305
00:15:19,470 --> 00:15:21,240
And I was the youngest
to begin with.

306
00:15:21,240 --> 00:15:22,740
I don't know how
those kids were.

307
00:15:22,740 --> 00:15:24,180
To me, they were giants.

308
00:15:24,180 --> 00:15:26,790
But they probably were
8 and 10 years old.

309
00:15:26,790 --> 00:15:28,680
But I was the youngest.

310
00:15:28,680 --> 00:15:30,750
And like I said,
the kids hit me.

311
00:15:30,750 --> 00:15:32,790
And the woman didn't care.

312
00:15:32,790 --> 00:15:34,050
Or she probably hit me too.

313
00:15:34,050 --> 00:15:35,150
I don't remember.

314
00:15:35,150 --> 00:15:36,930
And how old were you?

315
00:15:36,930 --> 00:15:38,970
Well, I was two
when we got there.

316
00:15:38,970 --> 00:15:40,995
And we stayed until I was four.

317
00:15:40,995 --> 00:15:44,840

318
00:15:44,840 --> 00:15:49,340
So between two and four, these
vague memories of being afraid

319
00:15:49,340 --> 00:15:49,860
of them?

320
00:15:49,860 --> 00:15:52,850
Yes, unless the father was home.

321
00:15:52,850 --> 00:15:56,150
So it would be the mother
and the older children?

322
00:15:56,150 --> 00:15:58,427
Actually, all the children.

323
00:15:58,427 --> 00:15:59,135
All the children.

324
00:15:59,135 --> 00:16:02,700

325
00:16:02,700 --> 00:16:04,050
That would be boys and girls?

326
00:16:04,050 --> 00:16:06,300
Yeah, I think, I don't

know if there was one boy,

327

00:16:06,300 --> 00:16:07,410

two girls, whatever.

328

00:16:07,410 --> 00:16:08,850

But I don't remember.

329

00:16:08,850 --> 00:16:12,180

That it's funny that I remember
the second family, because they

330

00:16:12,180 --> 00:16:14,400

were wonderful to
me, but not this one.

331

00:16:14,400 --> 00:16:18,000

But I do remember the father,
because he was a good man.

332

00:16:18,000 --> 00:16:23,160

Anyway, the other thing, the
other big thing was my mother,

333

00:16:23,160 --> 00:16:25,020

they thought--

334

00:16:25,020 --> 00:16:28,290

they didn't know for sure that
I was Jewish, because had they

335

00:16:28,290 --> 00:16:31,410

known, my mother wouldn't have
found me when she came home.

336

00:16:31,410 --> 00:16:33,570

But they were fishing.

337

00:16:33,570 --> 00:16:35,010

They were on a
fishing expedition.

338

00:16:35,010 --> 00:16:38,760

They even went as far as
churches, checking stuff.

339

00:16:38,760 --> 00:16:41,100

And we had baptism certificates.

340

00:16:41,100 --> 00:16:43,650

It was all forged,
but we had it.

341

00:16:43,650 --> 00:16:45,000

So they didn't do anything.

342

00:16:45,000 --> 00:16:47,100

But they used to
tell my mother--

343

00:16:47,100 --> 00:16:50,190

even the people in the
village, even the woman

344

00:16:50,190 --> 00:16:54,450

we lived with, used to ask her
how much money did you take

345

00:16:54,450 --> 00:16:56,310

to hide the Jewish bastard?

346

00:16:56,310 --> 00:16:59,550

Because they were
convinced she was Polish.

347

00:16:59,550 --> 00:17:01,770

But I was Jewish.

348

00:17:01,770 --> 00:17:05,500

And of course, my mother had
to act very brave and all that.

349

00:17:05,500 --> 00:17:08,160

And then they would say,
well, you go on to work.

350
00:17:08,160 --> 00:17:10,170
When you get back,
she won't be here.

351
00:17:10,170 --> 00:17:12,510
We're going to take
her to the Gestapo.

352
00:17:12,510 --> 00:17:14,250
My mother had no choice.

353
00:17:14,250 --> 00:17:15,930
She had to.

354
00:17:15,930 --> 00:17:24,408
So this affected my whole
life, because my mother,

355
00:17:24,408 --> 00:17:26,950
she never knew, when she came
home, whether I would be there,

356
00:17:26,950 --> 00:17:30,160
whether they were just bluffing,
or they would really take me,

357
00:17:30,160 --> 00:17:32,000
they would dig up something.

358
00:17:32,000 --> 00:17:34,090
So it was a horrible
way to live,

359
00:17:34,090 --> 00:17:36,560
because my mother
escaped only for me.

360
00:17:36,560 --> 00:17:39,070
Otherwise, she would have
stayed with the family.

361

00:17:39,070 --> 00:17:41,380
And this affected me
till the day she died.

362
00:17:41,380 --> 00:17:44,560
She worried-- mothers
worry about children.

363
00:17:44,560 --> 00:17:47,290
But it was to the point,
when I was younger,

364
00:17:47,290 --> 00:17:49,000
that it drove me crazy.

365
00:17:49,000 --> 00:17:54,830
She couldn't go to sleep
unless I was in bed at night.

366
00:17:54,830 --> 00:17:56,140
Because she was so worried?

367
00:17:56,140 --> 00:17:56,980
So worried.

368
00:17:56,980 --> 00:17:59,440
I was 22 years old
when I got married.

369
00:17:59,440 --> 00:18:03,280
Before I got married,
I had a curfew,

370
00:18:03,280 --> 00:18:07,090
not because she didn't trust
me, but because she could not

371
00:18:07,090 --> 00:18:09,970
sleep, unless I
was safely in bed.

372
00:18:09,970 --> 00:18:14,710
How old were you when she

told you what had happened?

373

00:18:14,710 --> 00:18:16,900

Over the years, many times.

374

00:18:16,900 --> 00:18:22,570

Was it something that you
remember knowing from--

375

00:18:22,570 --> 00:18:28,660

Probably from the time
I was 7, 8, 9, actually,

376

00:18:28,660 --> 00:18:30,220

somewhere around
that age, because I

377

00:18:30,220 --> 00:18:34,030

didn't know I was Jewish,
which I'll get into.

378

00:18:34,030 --> 00:18:36,960

Before you were seven, you
think, she had not told you.

379

00:18:36,960 --> 00:18:39,070

No, no, no, no, no.

380

00:18:39,070 --> 00:18:42,195

One day, she just sat
you down and told you?

381

00:18:42,195 --> 00:18:46,870

No, a lot of it
came out gradually.

382

00:18:46,870 --> 00:18:49,560

But she had to tell
me I was Jewish.

383

00:18:49,560 --> 00:18:51,190

And I was already
nine years old.

384
00:18:51,190 --> 00:18:53,130
It was a few years
after the war,

385
00:18:53,130 --> 00:18:55,410
which is another story again.

386
00:18:55,410 --> 00:19:00,470
So anyway, should I get
back to the village?

387
00:19:00,470 --> 00:19:02,870
So we were there.

388
00:19:02,870 --> 00:19:06,670
And there was a
German soldier there.

389
00:19:06,670 --> 00:19:10,040
An older man, at that
time, he was, probably,

390
00:19:10,040 --> 00:19:13,130
he had a granddaughter my age.

391
00:19:13,130 --> 00:19:16,580
And there was-- my mother
was a very beautiful woman.

392
00:19:16,580 --> 00:19:20,240
But there was nothing
going on there.

393
00:19:20,240 --> 00:19:21,080
He loved me.

394
00:19:21,080 --> 00:19:22,970
He used to bring me
whatever he could.

395
00:19:22,970 --> 00:19:24,230

He missed his granddaughter.

396

00:19:24,230 --> 00:19:28,070

He was just a simple
soldier, not SS or anything,

397

00:19:28,070 --> 00:19:30,950

they send him there to fight.

398

00:19:30,950 --> 00:19:34,850

And he always seemed
to warn my mother,

399

00:19:34,850 --> 00:19:38,000

because what the
Germans did is, if they

400

00:19:38,000 --> 00:19:39,770

had a suspicion about
something, mostly,

401

00:19:39,770 --> 00:19:42,200

they were looking
for partisans, they

402

00:19:42,200 --> 00:19:47,840

would come in the middle of
the night, take the rifle

403

00:19:47,840 --> 00:19:52,055

and hit the door of the
house, and ask for vodka.

404

00:19:52,055 --> 00:19:53,180

They would bring the vodka.

405

00:19:53,180 --> 00:19:55,222

As a matter of fact,
there's an interesting story

406

00:19:55,222 --> 00:19:56,840

about that with my mother.

407

00:19:56,840 --> 00:19:59,870

And have them drink with
them, and search the house.

408

00:19:59,870 --> 00:20:02,330

One night, they came
over there and did that

409

00:20:02,330 --> 00:20:04,310

in the middle of the night.

410

00:20:04,310 --> 00:20:07,280

And my mother never,
maybe, she had

411

00:20:07,280 --> 00:20:09,830

a glass of champagne or
wine before the war, but not

412

00:20:09,830 --> 00:20:11,000

straight vodka.

413

00:20:11,000 --> 00:20:13,310

They poured these
big glasses of vodka.

414

00:20:13,310 --> 00:20:15,320

And they tell her to drink.

415

00:20:15,320 --> 00:20:17,270

And she can't, she's choking.

416

00:20:17,270 --> 00:20:21,440

So the woman that
we're staying with

417

00:20:21,440 --> 00:20:25,490

said, she didn't mean anything
bad, because had she known,

418

00:20:25,490 --> 00:20:26,600

we would be dead.

419
00:20:26,600 --> 00:20:29,210
Says, you know what,
you drink like a Jew.

420
00:20:29,210 --> 00:20:32,090
Supposedly, Jews couldn't drink.

421
00:20:32,090 --> 00:20:34,280
That's all she had to say.

422
00:20:34,280 --> 00:20:36,380
My mother swallowed the vodka.

423
00:20:36,380 --> 00:20:38,660
And the man, she
told me, the husband,

424
00:20:38,660 --> 00:20:42,210
was so nice that he kept
pouring water in it for her.

425
00:20:42,210 --> 00:20:46,237
So it would look like she
was drinking all that vodka.

426
00:20:46,237 --> 00:20:47,570
But that's what the Germans did.

427
00:20:47,570 --> 00:20:49,430
If you didn't drink with
them, you were shot.

428
00:20:49,430 --> 00:20:50,847
Then they searched
the house, then

429
00:20:50,847 --> 00:20:53,600
they searched someone escape,
whatever was going on.

430
00:20:53,600 --> 00:20:58,100

Then this older German soldier
kept warning my mother.

431

00:20:58,100 --> 00:21:01,670
He knew when they were coming
to search for somebody.

432

00:21:01,670 --> 00:21:04,190
And he would say, why don't
you take Christine and go

433

00:21:04,190 --> 00:21:08,150
visit somebody at some
neighborhood village.

434

00:21:08,150 --> 00:21:09,590
And she says, why should I go?

435

00:21:09,590 --> 00:21:12,500
He says, well, your husband
is a prisoner of war.

436

00:21:12,500 --> 00:21:15,890
You don't want to be here
when they come searching.

437

00:21:15,890 --> 00:21:16,970
So she would do that.

438

00:21:16,970 --> 00:21:20,180
He did it several times.

439

00:21:20,180 --> 00:21:25,070
Then, he was transferred
to the Russian front.

440

00:21:25,070 --> 00:21:28,170
And there was a woman
in the village who

441

00:21:28,170 --> 00:21:31,490
worked with the underground.

442

00:21:31,490 --> 00:21:35,330

Like I said, the underground
was not sympathetic to the Jews.

443

00:21:35,330 --> 00:21:38,000

As a rule, they did not help.

444

00:21:38,000 --> 00:21:39,258

They didn't care.

445

00:21:39,258 --> 00:21:40,550

They were fighting the Germans.

446

00:21:40,550 --> 00:21:42,590

But they didn't
care about the Jews.

447

00:21:42,590 --> 00:21:46,010

They were probably just
as likely to report Jews

448

00:21:46,010 --> 00:21:48,770

to somebody, but
certainly not help them.

449

00:21:48,770 --> 00:21:55,340

This woman, she was a
titled woman, aristocracy.

450

00:21:55,340 --> 00:21:58,910

They still had,
what do you call it?

451

00:21:58,910 --> 00:21:59,960

Can't think of it.

452

00:21:59,960 --> 00:22:03,110

But anyway, she was she had
a castle in the village.

453

00:22:03,110 --> 00:22:05,780

Nobility, she had a

castle in the village.

454

00:22:05,780 --> 00:22:08,330

But she was helping
the resistance.

455

00:22:08,330 --> 00:22:10,700

And this German man knew her.

456

00:22:10,700 --> 00:22:12,890

And he trusted her.

457

00:22:12,890 --> 00:22:15,620

And he went and talked
to her about my mother.

458

00:22:15,620 --> 00:22:18,860

My mother didn't know
that until after the war.

459

00:22:18,860 --> 00:22:20,620

And he told her--

460

00:22:20,620 --> 00:22:23,120

this German soldier knew
my mother was Jewish.

461

00:22:23,120 --> 00:22:25,010

I don't know how he found out.

462

00:22:25,010 --> 00:22:27,770

The reason he didn't want to
tell my mother that he knew

463

00:22:27,770 --> 00:22:31,340

is because he thought, he
was such a wonderful man,

464

00:22:31,340 --> 00:22:35,000

he thought that if she finds
out that he knows, she will run.

465

00:22:35,000 --> 00:22:35,870
She'll be scared.

466
00:22:35,870 --> 00:22:38,400
And he felt he
could protect her.

467
00:22:38,400 --> 00:22:43,130
So he trusted that woman
with the information.

468
00:22:43,130 --> 00:22:46,730
He said, don't ever let
her know that she's Jewish,

469
00:22:46,730 --> 00:22:48,490
but help her.

470
00:22:48,490 --> 00:22:50,980
And that woman helped
us several times

471
00:22:50,980 --> 00:22:53,290
out of a situation
where they were coming.

472
00:22:53,290 --> 00:22:56,110
And she told my mother
the same thing he said.

473
00:22:56,110 --> 00:22:59,020
And she didn't tell her
until after the war.

474
00:22:59,020 --> 00:23:01,720
And of course, my mother
searched for him everywhere.

475
00:23:01,720 --> 00:23:03,580
He probably died on
the Russian front.

476
00:23:03,580 --> 00:23:05,110

She never could find him.

477
00:23:05,110 --> 00:23:07,780
But he saved our
life many times.

478
00:23:07,780 --> 00:23:11,170
And through him, the woman.

479
00:23:11,170 --> 00:23:15,190
But that's basically it.

480
00:23:15,190 --> 00:23:20,240
I don't know if, in
my tape, I mentioned,

481
00:23:20,240 --> 00:23:23,910
because that I found out, I
think, after I did the tape.

482
00:23:23,910 --> 00:23:25,970
This is the tape
that you loaned to me

483
00:23:25,970 --> 00:23:27,560
that was done 10 years ago.

484
00:23:27,560 --> 00:23:29,750
Yeah, I didn't, because
I didn't know about it.

485
00:23:29,750 --> 00:23:35,510
My mother just wrote the article
afterwards, about my mother,

486
00:23:35,510 --> 00:23:37,760
when she was going
on these trains

487
00:23:37,760 --> 00:23:40,160
to sell liquor and cigarettes.

488

00:23:40,160 --> 00:23:44,720
They would stop the train if
they suspected someone not

489
00:23:44,720 --> 00:23:47,690
Jewish and search for papers.

490
00:23:47,690 --> 00:23:51,200
And if someone didn't have
papers, they were shot.

491
00:23:51,200 --> 00:23:53,240
So my mother, in
fact, I have article

492
00:23:53,240 --> 00:23:59,970
my mother wrote, they
stopped the train one time.

493
00:23:59,970 --> 00:24:03,660
That I didn't know until
three, four years ago.

494
00:24:03,660 --> 00:24:07,050
And they got everybody
off the train.

495
00:24:07,050 --> 00:24:11,860
And there was a young
18-year-old girl, no papers,

496
00:24:11,860 --> 00:24:13,650
she was Jewish.

497
00:24:13,650 --> 00:24:17,460
And the Germans said, they'll
make an example of her

498
00:24:17,460 --> 00:24:19,950
and bury her alive.

499
00:24:19,950 --> 00:24:25,590
And they made everybody dig

her grave, including her.

500
00:24:25,590 --> 00:24:29,880
And my mother wrote in it
that she had a little red coat

501
00:24:29,880 --> 00:24:31,380
and a red purse.

502
00:24:31,380 --> 00:24:34,890
And even the Polish
people were begging

503
00:24:34,890 --> 00:24:38,130
them to shoot her first,
not to bury her alive.

504
00:24:38,130 --> 00:24:44,250
But they said, no, they had to
show what they do with Jews.

505
00:24:44,250 --> 00:24:46,050
And they buried her alive.

506
00:24:46,050 --> 00:24:48,690
And they put the little
red coat on the grave.

507
00:24:48,690 --> 00:24:50,670
My mother said she
will never, ever forget

508
00:24:50,670 --> 00:24:54,300
it, and the little red purse.

509
00:24:54,300 --> 00:24:57,940
And so she witnessed that,
along with other people.

510
00:24:57,940 --> 00:25:01,230
And even the, like I said,
the Poles, as a rule,

511

00:25:01,230 --> 00:25:06,520
didn't care what happened to
the Jews, everybody on the train

512

00:25:06,520 --> 00:25:09,760
wanted her killed first.

513

00:25:09,760 --> 00:25:14,170
I mean, they didn't want her
dead, but that it was so cruel.

514

00:25:14,170 --> 00:25:16,630
So this is just
some of the things

515

00:25:16,630 --> 00:25:17,860
that my mother witnessed.

516

00:25:17,860 --> 00:25:20,110
One time, the
Germans caught her.

517

00:25:20,110 --> 00:25:25,870
And she was supposed to
cook for the big police

518

00:25:25,870 --> 00:25:32,920
dogs, the dogs that were
supposed to smell a Jew.

519

00:25:32,920 --> 00:25:35,200
And of course, the first
time she was afraid,

520

00:25:35,200 --> 00:25:39,130
you hear about it, they can
tell who's Jewish who's not.

521

00:25:39,130 --> 00:25:42,250
She was scared to
death, but she had to.

522

00:25:42,250 --> 00:25:43,750
The dogs loved it.

523
00:25:43,750 --> 00:25:46,150
They didn't know who
was Jewish, who was not.

524
00:25:46,150 --> 00:25:48,010
She fed them.

525
00:25:48,010 --> 00:25:51,550
All kinds of strange, digging
potatoes in the fields,

526
00:25:51,550 --> 00:25:54,850
I mean, any kind of odd
job to keep us alive.

527
00:25:54,850 --> 00:25:58,120
Then, I do not know
why we ended up

528
00:25:58,120 --> 00:26:01,330
in another village towards
the end of the war.

529
00:26:01,330 --> 00:26:02,083
That I don't know.

530
00:26:02,083 --> 00:26:03,250
And I guess I'll never know.

531
00:26:03,250 --> 00:26:05,420
I didn't ask my mother.

532
00:26:05,420 --> 00:26:08,140
But we ended up
in another village

533
00:26:08,140 --> 00:26:11,920
with a couple of
poor, poor farmers.

534

00:26:11,920 --> 00:26:14,370

They had two daughters,
who were, I assume,

535

00:26:14,370 --> 00:26:15,220

they were teenagers.

536

00:26:15,220 --> 00:26:17,770

At that time, they
looked grown up to me.

537

00:26:17,770 --> 00:26:19,360

They were teenagers.

538

00:26:19,360 --> 00:26:25,240

And they were wonderful,
wonderful family.

539

00:26:25,240 --> 00:26:30,100

The parents, I called
them grandma and grandpa.

540

00:26:30,100 --> 00:26:31,840

I didn't have anybody--

541

00:26:31,840 --> 00:26:35,230

I never had grandparents
that I remembered.

542

00:26:35,230 --> 00:26:37,330

So they were my grandparents.

543

00:26:37,330 --> 00:26:39,530

And they were good to me.

544

00:26:39,530 --> 00:26:42,970

And the girls were wonderful.

545

00:26:42,970 --> 00:26:44,710

I was like their little sister.

546

00:26:44,710 --> 00:26:47,030
They were, like I said,
they were very, very poor.

547
00:26:47,030 --> 00:26:48,250
Do you remember them?

548
00:26:48,250 --> 00:26:49,120
That I remember.

549
00:26:49,120 --> 00:26:51,340
That's when I
started remembering.

550
00:26:51,340 --> 00:26:53,450
So you don't remember
very much from the--

551
00:26:53,450 --> 00:26:56,920
Before, I think I don't want to.

552
00:26:56,920 --> 00:27:01,960
But from that time on,
I remember everything.

553
00:27:01,960 --> 00:27:02,950
Like what?

554
00:27:02,950 --> 00:27:05,260
Well, I remember
going with the girls,

555
00:27:05,260 --> 00:27:07,630
we were going to get bread.

556
00:27:07,630 --> 00:27:10,450
And like I said, they
were very poor farmers.

557
00:27:10,450 --> 00:27:13,180
And they gave the girls money--

558

00:27:13,180 --> 00:27:18,130
the girls were maybe
14, 16, to go buy bread.

559
00:27:18,130 --> 00:27:20,440
And there was a carnival.

560
00:27:20,440 --> 00:27:22,100
And they took me to it.

561
00:27:22,100 --> 00:27:23,500
And I wanted a doll.

562
00:27:23,500 --> 00:27:25,870
I wanted a doll so badly.

563
00:27:25,870 --> 00:27:29,020
The girls took the bread
money and bought me the doll.

564
00:27:29,020 --> 00:27:30,430
You wanted that doll?

565
00:27:30,430 --> 00:27:31,720
Did you not have any dolls?

566
00:27:31,720 --> 00:27:35,530
Probably not,
because today, have

567
00:27:35,530 --> 00:27:38,920
I have a collection
of stuffed animals.

568
00:27:38,920 --> 00:27:40,150
I'm a grown person.

569
00:27:40,150 --> 00:27:42,970
And I have a collection,
incredible collection,

570
00:27:42,970 --> 00:27:44,350

of stuffed animals.

571

00:27:44,350 --> 00:27:47,320

It's something I always
wonder why does it

572

00:27:47,320 --> 00:27:48,430

appeal to me so much?

573

00:27:48,430 --> 00:27:50,710

I mean, I'm not playing
with them like a child.

574

00:27:50,710 --> 00:27:52,660

I just want to have them.

575

00:27:52,660 --> 00:27:53,860

I probably didn't.

576

00:27:53,860 --> 00:27:56,410

We were at this
bizarre carnival.

577

00:27:56,410 --> 00:28:01,270

And I wanted, maybe, that
particular doll or a doll,

578

00:28:01,270 --> 00:28:02,450

I don't know.

579

00:28:02,450 --> 00:28:04,630

But they took the bread money.

580

00:28:04,630 --> 00:28:06,430

And they brought me the doll.

581

00:28:06,430 --> 00:28:08,620

And when we got
back, the parents

582

00:28:08,620 --> 00:28:11,950

were not upset with them at

all, because they all loved me.

583

00:28:11,950 --> 00:28:14,620

So this was the
beginning, for me,

584

00:28:14,620 --> 00:28:18,140

of having some
semblance of a family.

585

00:28:18,140 --> 00:28:22,540

So when my mother went to
work, I didn't-- first of all,

586

00:28:22,540 --> 00:28:24,740

my mother was a stranger to me.

587

00:28:24,740 --> 00:28:27,250

I knew it was this lady
that loved me and hugged me

588

00:28:27,250 --> 00:28:28,990

every night and every morning.

589

00:28:28,990 --> 00:28:30,820

But she was never with me.

590

00:28:30,820 --> 00:28:32,650

So I really didn't miss her.

591

00:28:32,650 --> 00:28:34,510

It was a way of life for me.

592

00:28:34,510 --> 00:28:36,970

She didn't have a day off
that she could spend with you?

593

00:28:36,970 --> 00:28:40,120

You can't have a day off
in a situation like that.

594

00:28:40,120 --> 00:28:42,880

You scratch and claw
wherever you can.

595
00:28:42,880 --> 00:28:46,870
I mean, you can have a day
off, but you need the money.

596
00:28:46,870 --> 00:28:49,420
So she never spent
any time with me.

597
00:28:49,420 --> 00:28:53,050
She was there at night,
I knew, but that's it.

598
00:28:53,050 --> 00:28:55,080
Do you remember whether
you slept with her?

599
00:28:55,080 --> 00:28:56,410
Probably.

600
00:28:56,410 --> 00:28:58,130
I'm sure I did, because--

601
00:28:58,130 --> 00:28:59,150
You don't remember that.

602
00:28:59,150 --> 00:29:00,370
But you think must have.

603
00:29:00,370 --> 00:29:01,300
I must have.

604
00:29:01,300 --> 00:29:03,820
The places were
very, very small.

605
00:29:03,820 --> 00:29:07,240
And then, with the other
people, again, my mother

606

00:29:07,240 --> 00:29:08,650
was someone who came and went.

607
00:29:08,650 --> 00:29:10,840
But they were my family.

608
00:29:10,840 --> 00:29:12,640
Because I would
wait for the girls

609
00:29:12,640 --> 00:29:16,090
to come home from school,
and the other people,

610
00:29:16,090 --> 00:29:17,985
I mean, they were
my grandparents.

611
00:29:17,985 --> 00:29:20,330
Like I said, they
were very poor.

612
00:29:20,330 --> 00:29:22,510
And when they did,
they were so good,

613
00:29:22,510 --> 00:29:26,110
that when they didn't have
money, something happened,

614
00:29:26,110 --> 00:29:27,580
my mother worked.

615
00:29:27,580 --> 00:29:32,620
And we all lived off
of what my mother made.

616
00:29:32,620 --> 00:29:35,080
When my mother got
sick, there was a time

617
00:29:35,080 --> 00:29:39,520
where, and it was all related

to the war and everything,

618
00:29:39,520 --> 00:29:42,460
she, all of a sudden,
lost her vision.

619
00:29:42,460 --> 00:29:44,650
I'm not saying it
was psychosomatic,

620
00:29:44,650 --> 00:29:48,080
but it had to do--

621
00:29:48,080 --> 00:29:50,560
there was no physical
reason for it.

622
00:29:50,560 --> 00:29:51,610
She lost her vision.

623
00:29:51,610 --> 00:29:53,460
She couldn't see.

624
00:29:53,460 --> 00:29:57,390
So the poor farmer went
to work and supported us.

625
00:29:57,390 --> 00:29:59,770
And vice versa, then
she had some other--

626
00:29:59,770 --> 00:30:03,330
then all of a sudden,
she started seeing again.

627
00:30:03,330 --> 00:30:05,940
When she could not see
and could not work,

628
00:30:05,940 --> 00:30:07,890
was she then home with you?

629

00:30:07,890 --> 00:30:09,120
Do you remember that?

630
00:30:09,120 --> 00:30:12,150
Not really, because it
wasn't such a long time.

631
00:30:12,150 --> 00:30:14,430
I remember more all the
times that she wasn't.

632
00:30:14,430 --> 00:30:18,520

633
00:30:18,520 --> 00:30:22,540
Anyway, at the end of
the war, what it was,

634
00:30:22,540 --> 00:30:27,490
whoever could worked
and we were like family.

635
00:30:27,490 --> 00:30:30,010
When the war ended,
my mother wanted

636
00:30:30,010 --> 00:30:33,250
to go find, see, if
there's anybody left.

637
00:30:33,250 --> 00:30:34,510
So she wanted to go to Warsaw.

638
00:30:34,510 --> 00:30:38,740
And because they were like my
family, she left me with them.

639
00:30:38,740 --> 00:30:40,330
Was no place for me to go.

640
00:30:40,330 --> 00:30:41,350
Do you remember that?

641

00:30:41,350 --> 00:30:42,790

Do you remember her leaving?

642

00:30:42,790 --> 00:30:46,540

Yeah, I wasn't upset or anything, because I loved them.

643

00:30:46,540 --> 00:30:48,550

Warsaw was in ruins.

644

00:30:48,550 --> 00:30:50,350

And she didn't want to take me.

645

00:30:50,350 --> 00:30:52,210

So she took-- she went.

646

00:30:52,210 --> 00:30:55,420

I don't remember for how long, whatever,

647

00:30:55,420 --> 00:30:58,480

she didn't find anybody.

648

00:30:58,480 --> 00:31:03,010

Then she found somebody in a small town

649

00:31:03,010 --> 00:31:06,940

that wasn't a relative, the relatives of her sister's

650

00:31:06,940 --> 00:31:07,810

husband.

651

00:31:07,810 --> 00:31:09,910

That's the closest to the relatives,

652

00:31:09,910 --> 00:31:12,940

her sister who died with the twins, that's--

653

00:31:12,940 --> 00:31:15,730

I'm sure you've got
that, with the twins,

654

00:31:15,730 --> 00:31:20,050

was married to a man who had
family, some of them survive,

655

00:31:20,050 --> 00:31:23,770

his sisters, her
brother-in-law's family.

656

00:31:23,770 --> 00:31:26,770

And they lived in
the little town close

657

00:31:26,770 --> 00:31:33,390

to the German
border in the south.

658

00:31:33,390 --> 00:31:36,600

And she figured it better
than no family at all.

659

00:31:36,600 --> 00:31:39,100

And she just--

660

00:31:39,100 --> 00:31:42,100

I think that's
where we ended up.

661

00:31:42,100 --> 00:31:44,080

That's where we ended up.

662

00:31:44,080 --> 00:31:46,150

Well, she found a job.

663

00:31:46,150 --> 00:31:49,840

And she decided to stay there.

664

00:31:49,840 --> 00:31:51,830

Or maybe she did it in Warsaw.

665
00:31:51,830 --> 00:31:53,980
No, no, no, she went
to Warsaw first.

666
00:31:53,980 --> 00:31:56,510
She found a job and
decided to stay there.

667
00:31:56,510 --> 00:31:58,660
She went back for me.

668
00:31:58,660 --> 00:32:00,965
And I didn't want to go.

669
00:32:00,965 --> 00:32:01,840
Do you remember that?

670
00:32:01,840 --> 00:32:04,250
Yeah, I didn't want
to go with her,

671
00:32:04,250 --> 00:32:07,430
because I had my grandpa,
and grandma, and my sisters.

672
00:32:07,430 --> 00:32:09,140
And I didn't want to go.

673
00:32:09,140 --> 00:32:10,860
These people were good to me.

674
00:32:10,860 --> 00:32:11,910
They were always with me.

675
00:32:11,910 --> 00:32:12,810
They took care of me.

676
00:32:12,810 --> 00:32:13,977
I didn't want to leave them.

677

00:32:13,977 --> 00:32:15,170
And you were about five?

678
00:32:15,170 --> 00:32:19,520
I was five, depending on
when-- officially, my birthday

679
00:32:19,520 --> 00:32:21,800
is April '45.

680
00:32:21,800 --> 00:32:25,140
So I don't even know,
officially, when the war ended.

681
00:32:25,140 --> 00:32:26,660
But I was five.

682
00:32:26,660 --> 00:32:29,330
And I didn't want to go.

683
00:32:29,330 --> 00:32:33,390
And so they talked, and she
left me for a couple of months.

684
00:32:33,390 --> 00:32:34,430
She came to visit.

685
00:32:34,430 --> 00:32:35,150
But she went.

686
00:32:35,150 --> 00:32:36,380
She worked.

687
00:32:36,380 --> 00:32:38,210
She got an apartment.

688
00:32:38,210 --> 00:32:40,370
No, at that time, she
went to that little town

689
00:32:40,370 --> 00:32:42,050
where that family was.

690

00:32:42,050 --> 00:32:45,510

She got an apartment.

691

00:32:45,510 --> 00:32:48,380

She got help.

692

00:32:48,380 --> 00:32:50,310

She had a maid.

693

00:32:50,310 --> 00:32:53,550

Someone to take care of me,
and then she came and got me,

694

00:32:53,550 --> 00:32:56,250

whether I wanted to or not.

695

00:32:56,250 --> 00:33:00,790

She came and got me
and she had to work.

696

00:33:00,790 --> 00:33:02,970

But she had someone
taking care of me.

697

00:33:02,970 --> 00:33:05,940

Do you remember
leaving the farm?

698

00:33:05,940 --> 00:33:07,080

Not really.

699

00:33:07,080 --> 00:33:08,130

I know I left.

700

00:33:08,130 --> 00:33:11,010

But I don't remember, because
again, it was probably

701

00:33:11,010 --> 00:33:12,892

something I didn't want to do.

702

00:33:12,892 --> 00:33:14,100

So I didn't want to remember.

703

00:33:14,100 --> 00:33:15,470

I really didn't want to go.

704

00:33:15,470 --> 00:33:18,960

705

00:33:18,960 --> 00:33:22,350

Well, here's so-called
family, so again, there

706

00:33:22,350 --> 00:33:25,110

was one older lady
who was a grandmother

707

00:33:25,110 --> 00:33:26,230

to the other children.

708

00:33:26,230 --> 00:33:28,500

So she became my
grandmother too.

709

00:33:28,500 --> 00:33:30,390

So that made it a little better.

710

00:33:30,390 --> 00:33:33,390

After a while, I had
some sort of a family,

711

00:33:33,390 --> 00:33:35,670

even though we weren't
really related,

712

00:33:35,670 --> 00:33:37,410

except through marriage.

713

00:33:37,410 --> 00:33:38,550

But it was the closest.

714

00:33:38,550 --> 00:33:40,110
There were three sisters.

715
00:33:40,110 --> 00:33:42,870
They all had children my age.

716
00:33:42,870 --> 00:33:44,790
And their mother was alive.

717
00:33:44,790 --> 00:33:47,340
So they call her grandma,
I called her grandma.

718
00:33:47,340 --> 00:33:50,070
Needless to say, the people from
the village came to visit us.

719
00:33:50,070 --> 00:33:51,120
And we went to see them.

720
00:33:51,120 --> 00:33:52,590
And we kept in touch.

721
00:33:52,590 --> 00:33:55,140
These were the farmers that
you'd been living with?

722
00:33:55,140 --> 00:33:58,500
Yeah, and my mother,
later on, helped them.

723
00:33:58,500 --> 00:34:02,250
Anyway, my mother
had a maid, who was--

724
00:34:02,250 --> 00:34:05,040
this is a story in itself--

725
00:34:05,040 --> 00:34:06,690
Maybe we should
turn the tape over.

726

00:34:06,690 --> 00:34:08,159
Yeah and I need to go to--

727
00:34:08,159 --> 00:34:21,800

728
00:34:21,800 --> 00:34:28,380
Christine Cohen, tape 1, side B.

729
00:34:28,380 --> 00:34:34,020
Anyway, my mother had this
maid who was basically Polish,

730
00:34:34,020 --> 00:34:39,810
but of German descent, because
of Poland being the way it was.

731
00:34:39,810 --> 00:34:42,659
At times, parts of Poland
belonged to Germany.

732
00:34:42,659 --> 00:34:44,280
At times, they were Poland.

733
00:34:44,280 --> 00:34:47,489
There were a lot of, in
that particular town,

734
00:34:47,489 --> 00:34:49,590
in that part of Poland,
there were a lot

735
00:34:49,590 --> 00:34:52,110
of people that were German.

736
00:34:52,110 --> 00:34:55,080
But they were there
for generations.

737
00:34:55,080 --> 00:34:57,060
And it was Poland now.

738

00:34:57,060 --> 00:35:00,570

She had this maid her name
was, I still remember, Irene,

739

00:35:00,570 --> 00:35:04,950

and she's lived in
Poland all her life.

740

00:35:04,950 --> 00:35:10,440

But she had a sister who was
married and lived in Germany.

741

00:35:10,440 --> 00:35:17,550

And the maid's brother-in-law
was in the German army.

742

00:35:17,550 --> 00:35:20,220

They had a child,
a little boy named

743

00:35:20,220 --> 00:35:23,100

Willy, who was exactly my age.

744

00:35:23,100 --> 00:35:26,420

And the parents got killed, or
taken prisoners after the war,

745

00:35:26,420 --> 00:35:27,780

or whatever.

746

00:35:27,780 --> 00:35:31,200

And this Irene was
left with her nephew.

747

00:35:31,200 --> 00:35:31,980

She was single.

748

00:35:31,980 --> 00:35:33,690

She was left with her nephew.

749

00:35:33,690 --> 00:35:35,020

So she lived with us.

750

00:35:35,020 --> 00:35:36,450

She was a live-in.

751

00:35:36,450 --> 00:35:39,000

But the child lived with us too.

752

00:35:39,000 --> 00:35:42,690

And she told him he was
exactly the same age as I was.

753

00:35:42,690 --> 00:35:44,600

She told him, people
are going to--

754

00:35:44,600 --> 00:35:46,840

again, shoe was sort
of on the other foot.

755

00:35:46,840 --> 00:35:50,160

Not exactly, but they
were hiding the fact

756

00:35:50,160 --> 00:35:51,780

that they were German.

757

00:35:51,780 --> 00:35:54,960

So she told this little
boy, if anybody asks you,

758

00:35:54,960 --> 00:35:57,000

tell them you're not German.

759

00:35:57,000 --> 00:35:58,800

Don't tell anybody
you're German,

760

00:35:58,800 --> 00:36:03,450

because of the repercussion
after the war from the Poles,

761

00:36:03,450 --> 00:36:05,080

as a matter of fact.

762
00:36:05,080 --> 00:36:07,800
There weren't enough
Jews left to do anything.

763
00:36:07,800 --> 00:36:10,590
But Germans were hated.

764
00:36:10,590 --> 00:36:13,260
And the little boy could
have been really hurt.

765
00:36:13,260 --> 00:36:14,880
So he understood that.

766
00:36:14,880 --> 00:36:17,160
Children grow up
very quickly, just

767
00:36:17,160 --> 00:36:19,230
like myself, when
I was two years old

768
00:36:19,230 --> 00:36:21,510
and we went to the village.

769
00:36:21,510 --> 00:36:25,170
I had aunts, and uncles, and
cousins, and grandparents,

770
00:36:25,170 --> 00:36:27,930
and all of a sudden, the next
day, I don't have anybody.

771
00:36:27,930 --> 00:36:30,480
And I'm two years old,
and my mother tells me,

772
00:36:30,480 --> 00:36:32,820
people will ask you questions.

773
00:36:32,820 --> 00:36:35,700

They'll ask you where is your
grandma, where's your grandpa?

774
00:36:35,700 --> 00:36:38,650
You say to everything,
I don't know.

775
00:36:38,650 --> 00:36:41,400
And I guess children
grow up very fast

776
00:36:41,400 --> 00:36:45,710
under those circumstances,
because from the age of two,

777
00:36:45,710 --> 00:36:47,420
whenever anybody asked me--

778
00:36:47,420 --> 00:36:51,050
I don't remember that, but my
mother told me, about anybody

779
00:36:51,050 --> 00:36:57,470
in the family, my standard
answer was I don't know.

780
00:36:57,470 --> 00:37:00,620
So you can tell children,
when it comes to danger.

781
00:37:00,620 --> 00:37:03,020
Anyway this little
Willy lived with us.

782
00:37:03,020 --> 00:37:05,030
And he was my companion.

783
00:37:05,030 --> 00:37:08,960
I used to-- we used
to play board games

784
00:37:08,960 --> 00:37:10,010
and things like that.

785
00:37:10,010 --> 00:37:12,730
We were inseparable.

786
00:37:12,730 --> 00:37:17,240
One day, well, my
mother was at work.

787
00:37:17,240 --> 00:37:21,050
And this Irene was talking to
another maid in the building

788
00:37:21,050 --> 00:37:22,190
or something and left us.

789
00:37:22,190 --> 00:37:23,420
We were five years old.

790
00:37:23,420 --> 00:37:24,755
We were playing a board game.

791
00:37:24,755 --> 00:37:25,880
I don't even remember what.

792
00:37:25,880 --> 00:37:28,640
But I remember, I can
see it in my mind,

793
00:37:28,640 --> 00:37:30,890
we're sitting at a table
playing a board game.

794
00:37:30,890 --> 00:37:34,490
And I said, Willy,
are you German?

795
00:37:34,490 --> 00:37:35,930
And he said no, ma'am.

796
00:37:35,930 --> 00:37:36,440
I'm not.

797
00:37:36,440 --> 00:37:37,370
I'm not.

798
00:37:37,370 --> 00:37:38,120
He was scared.

799
00:37:38,120 --> 00:37:42,110
So I said, well, do you
understand such and such,

800
00:37:42,110 --> 00:37:46,700
and I made up a word that
I thought was German.

801
00:37:46,700 --> 00:37:50,450
And he, being a child,
said, forgot himself,

802
00:37:50,450 --> 00:37:54,630
that's not German at all,
because he spoke German.

803
00:37:54,630 --> 00:37:57,770
And I said, aha, if you
know that's not German,

804
00:37:57,770 --> 00:37:59,240
that means you speak German.

805
00:37:59,240 --> 00:38:02,780
And I was only five years
old, right after the war.

806
00:38:02,780 --> 00:38:05,420
And if you speak German,
then you are German.

807
00:38:05,420 --> 00:38:07,520
And the Germans killed my daddy.

808
00:38:07,520 --> 00:38:09,620
And now, I'm going to kill you.

809
00:38:09,620 --> 00:38:11,660
That's what I told the kid.

810
00:38:11,660 --> 00:38:14,300
And I went to the kitchen,
and I remember that.

811
00:38:14,300 --> 00:38:17,240
I got a kitchen knife, that big.

812
00:38:17,240 --> 00:38:19,370
And we had a big dining
room, I remember.

813
00:38:19,370 --> 00:38:21,620
I was chasing him
around the dining room

814
00:38:21,620 --> 00:38:24,020
table with this big knife.

815
00:38:24,020 --> 00:38:27,290
And the maid was
somewhere next door.

816
00:38:27,290 --> 00:38:29,540
I mean, she left us for
a couple of minutes.

817
00:38:29,540 --> 00:38:32,660
I never give any indication
of being violent towards him.

818
00:38:32,660 --> 00:38:33,680
He was my companion.

819
00:38:33,680 --> 00:38:35,190
We played together.

820
00:38:35,190 --> 00:38:36,080
We ate together.

821
00:38:36,080 --> 00:38:37,880
We did everything together.

822
00:38:37,880 --> 00:38:39,620
And I'm chasing him,
I remember that,

823
00:38:39,620 --> 00:38:41,300
around the dining room table.

824
00:38:41,300 --> 00:38:44,030
And he's screaming that
I'm going to kill him.

825
00:38:44,030 --> 00:38:47,030
And my mother happened to
come home for something.

826
00:38:47,030 --> 00:38:50,840
She walked in and saw
what was happening.

827
00:38:50,840 --> 00:38:52,640
Well, immediately,
she let the woman go,

828
00:38:52,640 --> 00:38:55,190
because she knew what
was happening with me.

829
00:38:55,190 --> 00:38:57,810

830
00:38:57,810 --> 00:38:58,980
And you remember that?

831
00:38:58,980 --> 00:39:01,450
I remember that.

832
00:39:01,450 --> 00:39:05,370
Do you have any idea why it

was then that you brought up--

833

00:39:05,370 --> 00:39:07,200

No, because we were completely--

834

00:39:07,200 --> 00:39:09,780

I mean, here he was, I
don't know how long they

835

00:39:09,780 --> 00:39:12,750

were there, but for some time.

836

00:39:12,750 --> 00:39:14,310

We always played together.

837

00:39:14,310 --> 00:39:16,770

I do remember I was
very bossy with him.

838

00:39:16,770 --> 00:39:21,960

He did what I wanted, always,
because, I have to admit,

839

00:39:21,960 --> 00:39:26,310

that after the war, because
I felt I was so mistreated,

840

00:39:26,310 --> 00:39:27,810

I went completely the other way.

841

00:39:27,810 --> 00:39:29,010

I was very selfish.

842

00:39:29,010 --> 00:39:30,990

And I wanted all the attention.

843

00:39:30,990 --> 00:39:33,630

My mother used to undress me
when I was seven years old

844

00:39:33,630 --> 00:39:34,740

and put me to bed.

845
00:39:34,740 --> 00:39:36,900
You felt you were mistreated?

846
00:39:36,900 --> 00:39:37,950
And I wanted--

847
00:39:37,950 --> 00:39:39,910
Mistreated how?

848
00:39:39,910 --> 00:39:43,650
Physically, and I didn't
have attention of my mother.

849
00:39:43,650 --> 00:39:46,440
And I wanted all
of her attention.

850
00:39:46,440 --> 00:39:48,825
And so I always--

851
00:39:48,825 --> 00:39:51,760

852
00:39:51,760 --> 00:39:54,430
I never did anything to the boy.

853
00:39:54,430 --> 00:39:57,280
I never, I just--
always, he knew

854
00:39:57,280 --> 00:39:59,240
that he had to defer to me.

855
00:39:59,240 --> 00:40:02,800
And I don't know if this
was because his aunt worked

856
00:40:02,800 --> 00:40:05,350
for my mother, or because
he was afraid of me.

857

00:40:05,350 --> 00:40:06,880

But I never did anything to him.

858

00:40:06,880 --> 00:40:10,330

We were friends, as long
as he did what I told him.

859

00:40:10,330 --> 00:40:12,430

And then all of a sudden,
out of the clear blue,

860

00:40:12,430 --> 00:40:14,530

we're sitting
playing a board game.

861

00:40:14,530 --> 00:40:16,710

I don't know why.

862

00:40:16,710 --> 00:40:18,940

But you had been bossy with him.

863

00:40:18,940 --> 00:40:22,090

Yes, that I remember.

864

00:40:22,090 --> 00:40:25,400

Was he younger or
smaller than you.

865

00:40:25,400 --> 00:40:26,818

No, I was very small.

866

00:40:26,818 --> 00:40:28,110

So he couldn't have been small.

867

00:40:28,110 --> 00:40:29,960

I was tiny.

868

00:40:29,960 --> 00:40:31,490

No, he wasn't.

869

00:40:31,490 --> 00:40:33,260

We were exactly the same age.

870

00:40:33,260 --> 00:40:34,610

He was wasn't smaller.

871

00:40:34,610 --> 00:40:38,140

He was probably
bigger than I was.

872

00:40:38,140 --> 00:40:40,630

But you said that you did
want a lot of attention

873

00:40:40,630 --> 00:40:42,550

from your mother?

874

00:40:42,550 --> 00:40:44,380

And I got a lot
of attention from.

875

00:40:44,380 --> 00:40:46,450

And the more I got,
the more I wanted.

876

00:40:46,450 --> 00:40:48,430

So she usually gave in to you?

877

00:40:48,430 --> 00:40:50,290

Yes, with everything.

878

00:40:50,290 --> 00:40:53,050

Everything, and until
the day she died,

879

00:40:53,050 --> 00:40:55,530

my mother couldn't say no to me.

880

00:40:55,530 --> 00:40:56,590

And I have a brother.

881

00:40:56,590 --> 00:40:59,750

And she was a wonderful

mother to him too,

882
00:40:59,750 --> 00:41:02,120
brother that was
born after the war.

883
00:41:02,120 --> 00:41:04,810
But with me, it
was just different.

884
00:41:04,810 --> 00:41:08,830
My mother, I guess,
felt, not that she

885
00:41:08,830 --> 00:41:12,190
should have felt
guilty, but in a sense,

886
00:41:12,190 --> 00:41:16,450
that I didn't have
what I should have had.

887
00:41:16,450 --> 00:41:21,470
So she tried to make
up for it all her life.

888
00:41:21,470 --> 00:41:23,980
And I took, until I--

889
00:41:23,980 --> 00:41:26,560
I was a selfish,
bratty teenager, too,

890
00:41:26,560 --> 00:41:31,690
until I understood later
on what really went on.

891
00:41:31,690 --> 00:41:33,190
That changed me.

892
00:41:33,190 --> 00:41:34,970
My mother remarried
after the war.

893
00:41:34,970 --> 00:41:36,790
I don't know if we're
ready for that part.

894
00:41:36,790 --> 00:41:39,460
Let's go back to that
so you and your mother

895
00:41:39,460 --> 00:41:41,320
were living in the apartment.

896
00:41:41,320 --> 00:41:45,680
Yes and then, like I said,
after that boy episode,

897
00:41:45,680 --> 00:41:47,338
she got someone
else who was Polish.

898
00:41:47,338 --> 00:41:48,130
Were you going to--

899
00:41:48,130 --> 00:41:49,840
you weren't going to
school a that point?

900
00:41:49,840 --> 00:41:51,400
No, I was five years old.

901
00:41:51,400 --> 00:41:53,390
And did you then start school?

902
00:41:53,390 --> 00:41:57,430
I started school around
the age of six, I guess.

903
00:41:57,430 --> 00:41:58,580
No, it wasn't village.

904
00:41:58,580 --> 00:41:59,500
We were in a city.

905
00:41:59,500 --> 00:42:00,340
It was a city.

906
00:42:00,340 --> 00:42:02,810
City, it was after the war.

907
00:42:02,810 --> 00:42:03,850
But it wasn't Warsaw.

908
00:42:03,850 --> 00:42:06,790
We have not gone
back to Warsaw yet,

909
00:42:06,790 --> 00:42:08,260
because eventually,
we went back.

910
00:42:08,260 --> 00:42:10,450
And what was the
name of the city?

911
00:42:10,450 --> 00:42:14,260
It was called Walbrzych
I would have to spell it.

912
00:42:14,260 --> 00:42:14,760
W--

913
00:42:14,760 --> 00:42:18,052

914
00:42:18,052 --> 00:42:19,704
Do you want to get that?

915
00:42:19,704 --> 00:42:20,420
Housekeeper.

916
00:42:20,420 --> 00:42:21,170
Stop for a minute.

917

00:42:21,170 --> 00:42:23,760

918

00:42:23,760 --> 00:42:25,470

You were spelling the city,

919

00:42:25,470 --> 00:42:37,570

W-A-L-B-R-Z-Y-C-H.

920

00:42:37,570 --> 00:42:39,880

So you started school there.

921

00:42:39,880 --> 00:42:42,440

Do you remember that at all?

922

00:42:42,440 --> 00:42:44,425

Vaguely, I do.

923

00:42:44,425 --> 00:42:45,300

What do you remember?

924

00:42:45,300 --> 00:42:47,840

925

00:42:47,840 --> 00:42:50,490

Well, what I remember
the most, but that's

926

00:42:50,490 --> 00:42:53,610

sort of after the fact,
because I didn't realize it

927

00:42:53,610 --> 00:42:59,960

until after it happened, that
I didn't know I was Jewish.

928

00:42:59,960 --> 00:43:05,670

And throughout the war, I
remember children telling me,

929

00:43:05,670 --> 00:43:08,130

I know I'm going

back now, but just

930
00:43:08,130 --> 00:43:11,520
to give you a background how
I felt about Jewish people.

931
00:43:11,520 --> 00:43:16,200
I disliked them as much as the
children in the village did.

932
00:43:16,200 --> 00:43:18,450
Disliked them is not the word.

933
00:43:18,450 --> 00:43:20,400
We didn't think
of them as human,

934
00:43:20,400 --> 00:43:22,530
because that's
what I was taught.

935
00:43:22,530 --> 00:43:26,520
In the village, the kids used
to say, you know what a Jew is?

936
00:43:26,520 --> 00:43:27,990
And I would say, what?

937
00:43:27,990 --> 00:43:30,450
I would say pig with a tail.

938
00:43:30,450 --> 00:43:34,110
So my early, formative
years, I grew up

939
00:43:34,110 --> 00:43:37,080
believing that
Jews were subhuman.

940
00:43:37,080 --> 00:43:39,600
So these were the little
kids in the village where

941
00:43:39,600 --> 00:43:42,060
you were until you were five.

942
00:43:42,060 --> 00:43:44,490
But you didn't know any
Jews that you knew of,

943
00:43:44,490 --> 00:43:45,900
the kids just talked about Jews.

944
00:43:45,900 --> 00:43:48,060
Talked about them, there
weren't any to know.

945
00:43:48,060 --> 00:43:50,440
If they were to know,
they would be dead.

946
00:43:50,440 --> 00:43:52,830
Not only that, my mother--

947
00:43:52,830 --> 00:43:55,740
we were not too far
from one of the camps.

948
00:43:55,740 --> 00:43:59,130
I forget, which one, whether it
was Treblinka or Majdanek, one

949
00:43:59,130 --> 00:44:06,270
of the two, where her family
went, as it turned out.

950
00:44:06,270 --> 00:44:12,060
And the woman, the first
village we were in, used to say,

951
00:44:12,060 --> 00:44:14,130
to my mother, and
my mother's heart

952
00:44:14,130 --> 00:44:16,050

was breaking every
day she looked at it,

953
00:44:16,050 --> 00:44:22,320
but she had to be very blase
about it, because they were.

954
00:44:22,320 --> 00:44:25,530
See that smoke over there,
and my mother said, yes.

955
00:44:25,530 --> 00:44:27,600
That's Jews burning.

956
00:44:27,600 --> 00:44:30,210
And how do you say that?

957
00:44:30,210 --> 00:44:32,070
Oh, they deserve to be burning.

958
00:44:32,070 --> 00:44:34,110
And my mother said,
why would you say that?

959
00:44:34,110 --> 00:44:36,190
She couldn't protest
too much, obviously.

960
00:44:36,190 --> 00:44:38,310
She says, oh, because
they're sinners.

961
00:44:38,310 --> 00:44:41,400
They didn't go to
church on Sunday.

962
00:44:41,400 --> 00:44:46,210
That was, I mean, that
was the mentality there.

963
00:44:46,210 --> 00:44:47,110
They're different.

964

00:44:47,110 --> 00:44:50,560

They're something to
fear, so let them burn.

965

00:44:50,560 --> 00:44:54,130

But that's how Jews,
so little bits, I mean,

966

00:44:54,130 --> 00:44:58,900

I do remember the part about the
Jews being a pig with the tail.

967

00:44:58,900 --> 00:45:00,550

But there were other
things that were

968

00:45:00,550 --> 00:45:07,950

said that I knew, growing up I
knew that a Jew was subhuman.

969

00:45:07,950 --> 00:45:11,760

And I mean, I didn't know
anybody that was Jewish.

970

00:45:11,760 --> 00:45:13,930

And I certainly didn't
know I was Jewish.

971

00:45:13,930 --> 00:45:15,570

So when you started
school, the kids

972

00:45:15,570 --> 00:45:18,570

were still talking
this way about Jews.

973

00:45:18,570 --> 00:45:22,920

Not as bad, but I'm sure,
because the anti-Semitism

974

00:45:22,920 --> 00:45:25,530

is strong in Poland.

975

00:45:25,530 --> 00:45:27,320

With the communists,
don't forget,

976

00:45:27,320 --> 00:45:29,970

I was growing up
during communism,

977

00:45:29,970 --> 00:45:33,670

it was against the law to
express anything against Jews.

978

00:45:33,670 --> 00:45:37,170

It really was, you
could go to jail for it.

979

00:45:37,170 --> 00:45:39,780

But the kids, among
themselves, talked.

980

00:45:39,780 --> 00:45:41,710

But I was one of them.

981

00:45:41,710 --> 00:45:44,830

I was Jewish, according to me.

982

00:45:44,830 --> 00:45:48,750

And my mother had a
hard time telling me.

983

00:45:48,750 --> 00:45:51,540

So she waited for
the right moment.

984

00:45:51,540 --> 00:45:52,950

First she waited
she was married,

985

00:45:52,950 --> 00:45:54,185

I would be more settled.

986

00:45:54,185 --> 00:45:57,390

I would have two parents.

987

00:45:57,390 --> 00:45:58,680

Did she marry a Jew?

988

00:45:58,680 --> 00:46:02,460

Yes, she married-- that's
an interesting story, too,

989

00:46:02,460 --> 00:46:04,320

she married--

990

00:46:04,320 --> 00:46:10,890

well, my father, the only
father I know, in '46.

991

00:46:10,890 --> 00:46:12,140

So you were six.

992

00:46:12,140 --> 00:46:13,590

I was six.

993

00:46:13,590 --> 00:46:17,610

He was from Krakow.

994

00:46:17,610 --> 00:46:21,810

His whole family died, also,
in a concentration camp,

995

00:46:21,810 --> 00:46:24,930

except for him and one sister.

996

00:46:24,930 --> 00:46:27,390

They ended up in Russia.

997

00:46:27,390 --> 00:46:29,190

He worked in a coal mine.

998

00:46:29,190 --> 00:46:31,080

They put him to
work, the Russians.

999

00:46:31,080 --> 00:46:35,700

In fact, he lost half of
his pinky in the coal mines.

1000

00:46:35,700 --> 00:46:40,200

He was an electrical
engineer, brilliant man,

1001

00:46:40,200 --> 00:46:41,980

absolutely brilliant.

1002

00:46:41,980 --> 00:46:44,550

As a matter of fact, we
lived in Israel for a time.

1003

00:46:44,550 --> 00:46:48,090

And he was in charge
of the Negev irrigation

1004

00:46:48,090 --> 00:46:50,610

of the whole Negev desert.

1005

00:46:50,610 --> 00:46:55,650

Brilliant man, spoke seven
languages, most wonderful man

1006

00:46:55,650 --> 00:47:01,800

that you could possibly ask to
meet, kind, gentle, sweet, just

1007

00:47:01,800 --> 00:47:03,030

wonderful.

1008

00:47:03,030 --> 00:47:04,830

And my mother,
what my mother did

1009

00:47:04,830 --> 00:47:07,800

was, before she married
him, my mother married him,

1010

00:47:07,800 --> 00:47:10,890

I hate to say it, I'm sure
after many, many years,

1011
00:47:10,890 --> 00:47:12,840
they lived together 30 years.

1012
00:47:12,840 --> 00:47:13,800
They loved each other.

1013
00:47:13,800 --> 00:47:16,320
But she married him to
have a father for me.

1014
00:47:16,320 --> 00:47:18,360
And I realize that now.

1015
00:47:18,360 --> 00:47:21,420
How did you feel when you knew
they were getting married?

1016
00:47:21,420 --> 00:47:23,080
Oh, I loved him.

1017
00:47:23,080 --> 00:47:24,450
I loved him, because--

1018
00:47:24,450 --> 00:47:26,100
You didn't mind
sharing your mother.

1019
00:47:26,100 --> 00:47:28,170
No, because he was so
wonderful, because then

1020
00:47:28,170 --> 00:47:30,180
I had two people to spoil me.

1021
00:47:30,180 --> 00:47:32,520
He spoiled me just as bad.

1022
00:47:32,520 --> 00:47:35,910
I mean, there was nothing my

father wouldn't do for me.

1023
00:47:35,910 --> 00:47:37,890
So my mother--

1024
00:47:37,890 --> 00:47:40,800
I had two people to
just jump up and down

1025
00:47:40,800 --> 00:47:42,010
and do whatever I wanted.

1026
00:47:42,010 --> 00:47:46,680
So I thought that was great,
until my brother came.

1027
00:47:46,680 --> 00:47:49,980
That's another story.

1028
00:47:49,980 --> 00:47:55,330
My mother left me with my
dad, whose name was Leon,

1029
00:47:55,330 --> 00:47:58,570
for a week, went out
of town on business.

1030
00:47:58,570 --> 00:48:00,910
She arranged it on
purpose, because she wanted

1031
00:48:00,910 --> 00:48:03,520
to see how he could handle me.

1032
00:48:03,520 --> 00:48:05,470
And she was going to ask me.

1033
00:48:05,470 --> 00:48:07,180
And she knew that
I would tell her.

1034
00:48:07,180 --> 00:48:10,450

Anybody that look at me the
wrong way, I would tell her.

1035
00:48:10,450 --> 00:48:14,110
Because like I told you, I
went completely the other way.

1036
00:48:14,110 --> 00:48:15,880
I wanted everything I wanted.

1037
00:48:15,880 --> 00:48:16,870
I wanted attention.

1038
00:48:16,870 --> 00:48:18,190
I wanted everything.

1039
00:48:18,190 --> 00:48:20,380
Even then, without
realizing it, I

1040
00:48:20,380 --> 00:48:22,450
guess, I felt like the
world had to make up

1041
00:48:22,450 --> 00:48:25,570
to me for what I lost,
even though I probably

1042
00:48:25,570 --> 00:48:27,850
couldn't form that thought.

1043
00:48:27,850 --> 00:48:30,220
So she left me with him.

1044
00:48:30,220 --> 00:48:31,220
We had a great time.

1045
00:48:31,220 --> 00:48:31,970
He bought me this.

1046
00:48:31,970 --> 00:48:32,720
He bought me that.

1047
00:48:32,720 --> 00:48:33,580
He took me skating.

1048
00:48:33,580 --> 00:48:35,780
We fell through the ice.

1049
00:48:35,780 --> 00:48:37,750
And of course, he saved me.

1050
00:48:37,750 --> 00:48:39,790
But my mother almost
didn't marry him,

1051
00:48:39,790 --> 00:48:41,870
because he let me
fall through the ice.

1052
00:48:41,870 --> 00:48:43,150
Well, I remember.

1053
00:48:43,150 --> 00:48:44,610
He fell through the ice too.

1054
00:48:44,610 --> 00:48:45,850
Were you scared?

1055
00:48:45,850 --> 00:48:47,480
No, because I was with him.

1056
00:48:47,480 --> 00:48:48,730
And I knew he would save me.

1057
00:48:48,730 --> 00:48:49,990
Was it deep?

1058
00:48:49,990 --> 00:48:51,130
Yeah, it was deep.

1059
00:48:51,130 --> 00:48:53,440
We went on a lake skating.

1060
00:48:53,440 --> 00:48:55,960
He wanted to teach
me how to skate.

1061
00:48:55,960 --> 00:48:57,910
And we went on the lake.

1062
00:48:57,910 --> 00:49:01,270
And the ice broke in
the middle of the lake.

1063
00:49:01,270 --> 00:49:03,970
But he got very sick after that.

1064
00:49:03,970 --> 00:49:06,430
But of course, I
wasn't scared at all.

1065
00:49:06,430 --> 00:49:09,340
I thought it was
a great adventure.

1066
00:49:09,340 --> 00:49:12,370
My dad was very--
he used to ski.

1067
00:49:12,370 --> 00:49:15,670
He used to rescue people
when they-- he was very, very

1068
00:49:15,670 --> 00:49:16,810
athletic.

1069
00:49:16,810 --> 00:49:21,130
And he tried to teach
me everything, skiing,

1070
00:49:21,130 --> 00:49:22,925
skating, swimming.

1071
00:49:22,925 --> 00:49:24,550

My mother wouldn't
let him, because she

1072
00:49:24,550 --> 00:49:26,540
was afraid something
would happen to me.

1073
00:49:26,540 --> 00:49:29,620
So I remember when he
taught me swimming,

1074
00:49:29,620 --> 00:49:30,760
I was seven years old.

1075
00:49:30,760 --> 00:49:32,500
And he threw me in the pool.

1076
00:49:32,500 --> 00:49:34,000
But he was right there.

1077
00:49:34,000 --> 00:49:37,000
And my mother, who doesn't swim,
ran around the pool and scream.

1078
00:49:37,000 --> 00:49:38,320
And she was going to save me.

1079
00:49:38,320 --> 00:49:40,445
And how did you feel when
he threw you in the pool?

1080
00:49:40,445 --> 00:49:42,130
I didn't mind he
could do anything,

1081
00:49:42,130 --> 00:49:45,547
because I knew he would never
let anything happen to me.

1082
00:49:45,547 --> 00:49:46,630
So you really trusted him.

1083

00:49:46,630 --> 00:49:47,650
I trusted him.

1084
00:49:47,650 --> 00:49:48,430
And I loved him.

1085
00:49:48,430 --> 00:49:52,660
And my mother was very smart
for leaving me with him,

1086
00:49:52,660 --> 00:49:54,340
because when she
came back, I told her

1087
00:49:54,340 --> 00:49:57,190
in detail everything
that happened.

1088
00:49:57,190 --> 00:49:59,920
Of course, I told
her we fell in the--

1089
00:49:59,920 --> 00:50:01,600
but I loved the man.

1090
00:50:01,600 --> 00:50:05,020
And I loved him till
the day he died.

1091
00:50:05,020 --> 00:50:08,410
And I could never ask
for a better father.

1092
00:50:08,410 --> 00:50:13,440
In fact, all my life, my
brother was his natural son,

1093
00:50:13,440 --> 00:50:16,860
all my life, my dad,
as long as he lived,

1094
00:50:16,860 --> 00:50:18,520
I was very special to him.

1095
00:50:18,520 --> 00:50:19,800
He loved little girls.

1096
00:50:19,800 --> 00:50:21,570
And I was very, very special.

1097
00:50:21,570 --> 00:50:23,550
He had patience for me.

1098
00:50:23,550 --> 00:50:24,760
He studied with me.

1099
00:50:24,760 --> 00:50:30,140
He would stay up all night
for a test, if I needed to.

1100
00:50:30,140 --> 00:50:31,250
It was incredible.

1101
00:50:31,250 --> 00:50:34,760
And then my mother would holler
that he was keeping me awake.

1102
00:50:34,760 --> 00:50:37,460
Actually, he had to go
to work the next day.

1103
00:50:37,460 --> 00:50:38,570
And he was awake.

1104
00:50:38,570 --> 00:50:40,040
I was keeping him awake.

1105
00:50:40,040 --> 00:50:43,420
But that's my mother.

1106
00:50:43,420 --> 00:50:45,040
He was just the
most wonderful man.

1107

00:50:45,040 --> 00:50:47,500
He wanted to adopt me
legally, but my mother

1108
00:50:47,500 --> 00:50:49,670
didn't want to change my name.

1109
00:50:49,670 --> 00:50:52,163
So in every other
sense, he was my father.

1110
00:50:52,163 --> 00:50:53,830
But she wouldn't let
him change my name.

1111
00:50:53,830 --> 00:50:56,080
Did you know about
that at the time?

1112
00:50:56,080 --> 00:50:56,920
About what?

1113
00:50:56,920 --> 00:50:59,650
That he wanted to adopt
you and change your name?

1114
00:50:59,650 --> 00:51:01,077
No, not really.

1115
00:51:01,077 --> 00:51:02,410
It was later that you found out.

1116
00:51:02,410 --> 00:51:03,670
Later, I found out.

1117
00:51:03,670 --> 00:51:04,970
And later, it didn't matter.

1118
00:51:04,970 --> 00:51:05,650
He was my dad.

1119
00:51:05,650 --> 00:51:07,720

I was his daughter.

1120
00:51:07,720 --> 00:51:10,510
When he introduced me to
someone, he was just beaming.

1121
00:51:10,510 --> 00:51:11,440
This is my daughter.

1122
00:51:11,440 --> 00:51:14,050
This is my--

1123
00:51:14,050 --> 00:51:16,010
So you still didn't
know you were Jewish.

1124
00:51:16,010 --> 00:51:17,420
No, I didn't know I was Jewish.

1125
00:51:17,420 --> 00:51:20,380
What had happened, all of
a sudden, during the war,

1126
00:51:20,380 --> 00:51:22,130
we had to go to
church every Sunday.

1127
00:51:22,130 --> 00:51:24,910
So I was basically
brought up Catholic,

1128
00:51:24,910 --> 00:51:28,930
knew all the rituals
and everything.

1129
00:51:28,930 --> 00:51:31,360
After the war, without
an explanation,

1130
00:51:31,360 --> 00:51:34,590
we weren't going
to church anymore.

1131

00:51:34,590 --> 00:51:39,180

So I knew, I don't
know how I knew,

1132

00:51:39,180 --> 00:51:43,600

but I knew it was something
we didn't talk about

1133

00:51:43,600 --> 00:51:45,310

for some reason.

1134

00:51:45,310 --> 00:51:47,060

But I missed it.

1135

00:51:47,060 --> 00:51:49,910

It was something I grew up with.

1136

00:51:49,910 --> 00:51:53,710

So I started going myself,
without telling my mother,

1137

00:51:53,710 --> 00:51:57,290

when I was old enough to
leave the apartment and go.

1138

00:51:57,290 --> 00:51:59,080

Which would have
been about how old?

1139

00:51:59,080 --> 00:52:03,520

Probably eight, I mean, walk
out, because it was safe--

1140

00:52:03,520 --> 00:52:05,770

So that would have been
three years since you

1141

00:52:05,770 --> 00:52:07,466

went to Catholic church.

1142

00:52:07,466 --> 00:52:08,190

At least.

1143
00:52:08,190 --> 00:52:09,190
And you still missed it.

1144
00:52:09,190 --> 00:52:10,810
I still missed it.

1145
00:52:10,810 --> 00:52:15,130
And well, it gave me
a sense of security,

1146
00:52:15,130 --> 00:52:17,260
a sense of belonging somewhere.

1147
00:52:17,260 --> 00:52:21,010
Because here, I was here, I
was there, I was moved here.

1148
00:52:21,010 --> 00:52:23,410
Everybody disappeared
in my life.

1149
00:52:23,410 --> 00:52:26,150
To me, that was a constant.

1150
00:52:26,150 --> 00:52:28,300
So that's why I missed it.

1151
00:52:28,300 --> 00:52:30,220
I didn't necessarily
miss the rituals,

1152
00:52:30,220 --> 00:52:32,110
but something familiar.

1153
00:52:32,110 --> 00:52:34,360
And one day, I was--
maybe I was older

1154
00:52:34,360 --> 00:52:36,430
than that when I went by
myself, and the church

1155
00:52:36,430 --> 00:52:37,730
was across the street.

1156
00:52:37,730 --> 00:52:39,310
So it was not--

1157
00:52:39,310 --> 00:52:42,970
I was 10 years old, I think,
when I went to church one day

1158
00:52:42,970 --> 00:52:45,040
and the kids told me,
you don't belong here.

1159
00:52:45,040 --> 00:52:46,750
I said, why not?

1160
00:52:46,750 --> 00:52:49,015
Because you're Jewish.

1161
00:52:49,015 --> 00:52:50,640
Well, I didn't believe
them, of course.

1162
00:52:50,640 --> 00:52:51,360
I went home.

1163
00:52:51,360 --> 00:52:52,800
And I was just crushed.

1164
00:52:52,800 --> 00:52:56,850
How could I be subhuman,
less than a person?

1165
00:52:56,850 --> 00:53:00,300
That's how I grew up knowing
that's what Jews were.

1166
00:53:00,300 --> 00:53:03,870
And then my mother had to
tell me as much of the story

1167
00:53:03,870 --> 00:53:07,480
as she felt I could understand.

1168
00:53:07,480 --> 00:53:09,850
I did not accept it.

1169
00:53:09,850 --> 00:53:13,530
What did she tell you?

1170
00:53:13,530 --> 00:53:15,330
That I was Jewish.

1171
00:53:15,330 --> 00:53:16,648
And she tried to explain.

1172
00:53:16,648 --> 00:53:17,940
And I didn't want to be Jewish.

1173
00:53:17,940 --> 00:53:19,500
I didn't want to be a piglet.

1174
00:53:19,500 --> 00:53:21,660
Of course, at the
age of 10, I knew

1175
00:53:21,660 --> 00:53:23,670
that's not a pig
with a tail, but it's

1176
00:53:23,670 --> 00:53:25,470
someone less than human.

1177
00:53:25,470 --> 00:53:30,320
And my mother tried to
explain, in terms of child

1178
00:53:30,320 --> 00:53:35,600
could understand, how the
world, how the Germans, Poles,

1179

00:53:35,600 --> 00:53:37,790
how the world felt about
Jews, what happened

1180
00:53:37,790 --> 00:53:39,080
without frightening me.

1181
00:53:39,080 --> 00:53:41,660
I don't remember what
she said, because I

1182
00:53:41,660 --> 00:53:43,880
didn't want to hear it.

1183
00:53:43,880 --> 00:53:47,540
And for the next few years, I
hid the fact that I was Jewish.

1184
00:53:47,540 --> 00:53:51,210
I wouldn't admit it to anyone.

1185
00:53:51,210 --> 00:53:54,870
In fact, I probably did
not admit it to anyone

1186
00:53:54,870 --> 00:53:59,050
until I was 17 and
we moved to Israel.

1187
00:53:59,050 --> 00:54:03,280
So your parents
were not observant.

1188
00:54:03,280 --> 00:54:05,490
No one in Poland after the war--

1189
00:54:05,490 --> 00:54:08,830
my mother didn't come from
a very religious family,

1190
00:54:08,830 --> 00:54:10,890
neither did my father.

1191

00:54:10,890 --> 00:54:13,890

After the war, there
was not a synagogue

1192

00:54:13,890 --> 00:54:15,750

left in Warsaw,
because we eventually

1193

00:54:15,750 --> 00:54:18,000

moved back to Warsaw.

1194

00:54:18,000 --> 00:54:20,790

Not a synagogue left in Warsaw.

1195

00:54:20,790 --> 00:54:23,750

And they just weren't observant.

1196

00:54:23,750 --> 00:54:26,840

So no one-- I mean,
I remember-- oh, I

1197

00:54:26,840 --> 00:54:30,840

forgot to say that until
I found out I was Jewish,

1198

00:54:30,840 --> 00:54:34,750

I had a Christmas tree
every year and presents.

1199

00:54:34,750 --> 00:54:37,610

1200

00:54:37,610 --> 00:54:42,410

So I guess my parents, instead
of telling me right away,

1201

00:54:42,410 --> 00:54:46,190

felt that, I don't know,
they wanted to make me happy.

1202

00:54:46,190 --> 00:54:47,780

They wanted to do anything.

1203
00:54:47,780 --> 00:54:50,330
Were you expecting a
Christmas tree and presents?

1204
00:54:50,330 --> 00:54:52,970
Sure, during the war,
I didn't get presents.

1205
00:54:52,970 --> 00:54:55,010
But after the war,
I expected presents,

1206
00:54:55,010 --> 00:54:57,140
because they knew other
kids got presents.

1207
00:54:57,140 --> 00:54:59,180
So I wanted presents too.

1208
00:54:59,180 --> 00:55:00,380
And I got it.

1209
00:55:00,380 --> 00:55:02,600
Like I said, I was--

1210
00:55:02,600 --> 00:55:09,090
they were both trying to make
up to me and, as a child,

1211
00:55:09,090 --> 00:55:10,057
I was very demanding.

1212
00:55:10,057 --> 00:55:10,640
I wanted this.

1213
00:55:10,640 --> 00:55:11,660
And I wanted that.

1214
00:55:11,660 --> 00:55:16,040
And until I got married and
actually had my own children,

1215
00:55:16,040 --> 00:55:17,330
I didn't understand.

1216
00:55:17,330 --> 00:55:18,170
I didn't understand.

1217
00:55:18,170 --> 00:55:20,600
I resented my
mother for making me

1218
00:55:20,600 --> 00:55:23,630
come home early enough
so she can go to sleep

1219
00:55:23,630 --> 00:55:26,180
without worrying about me.

1220
00:55:26,180 --> 00:55:31,910
And all these things, I thought
she didn't respect my privacy.

1221
00:55:31,910 --> 00:55:36,260
I know she would listen in
on a phone conversation.

1222
00:55:36,260 --> 00:55:39,680
Or open my letter, or
whatever, all these things, as

1223
00:55:39,680 --> 00:55:42,470
a teenager, used
to drive me wild.

1224
00:55:42,470 --> 00:55:44,720
But now I understand why.

1225
00:55:44,720 --> 00:55:49,440
To her, there was a threat
hanging over me, even

1226
00:55:49,440 --> 00:55:51,960

in peacetime.

1227

00:55:51,960 --> 00:55:56,410

And she had to protect me
above all, at all costs,

1228

00:55:56,410 --> 00:55:59,100

even if it meant making me
mad, because she picked up

1229

00:55:59,100 --> 00:56:03,600

the phone I was talking to
somebody, that sort of thing.

1230

00:56:03,600 --> 00:56:05,590

And I could always play them.

1231

00:56:05,590 --> 00:56:08,820

I mean, if I got sick, all
I had to do was sneeze.

1232

00:56:08,820 --> 00:56:11,670

My parents were ready to give
me the world, because my mother

1233

00:56:11,670 --> 00:56:13,290

thought I was dying.

1234

00:56:13,290 --> 00:56:15,960

Was your mother
overprotective with--

1235

00:56:15,960 --> 00:56:17,670

My brother?

1236

00:56:17,670 --> 00:56:20,070

Yes, but not to the extent.

1237

00:56:20,070 --> 00:56:22,412

Yes, my mother was
always overprotective.

1238

00:56:22,412 --> 00:56:23,870
I don't know if
she would have been

1239
00:56:23,870 --> 00:56:27,720
without the war, because she
was with my brother, too.

1240
00:56:27,720 --> 00:56:31,290
But not the same as with me.

1241
00:56:31,290 --> 00:56:33,220
My brother went away to college.

1242
00:56:33,220 --> 00:56:34,680
They didn't worry about him.

1243
00:56:34,680 --> 00:56:36,870
Me, I couldn't
leave for one night

1244
00:56:36,870 --> 00:56:39,760
without them worrying about me.

1245
00:56:39,760 --> 00:56:42,340
They never left me alone.

1246
00:56:42,340 --> 00:56:45,690
They always-- and it wasn't
a matter of trust, never.

1247
00:56:45,690 --> 00:56:51,460
It was just a matter of she
was so scared that I could

1248
00:56:51,460 --> 00:56:53,530
go during the day somewhere.

1249
00:56:53,530 --> 00:56:57,400
I am sure she never told
me that she was uneasy

1250

00:56:57,400 --> 00:57:03,940
until I came home and she saw
me safe, till the day she died.

1251
00:57:03,940 --> 00:57:05,540
She died a year and a half ago.

1252
00:57:05,540 --> 00:57:07,700
She was in-- her
last year of life,

1253
00:57:07,700 --> 00:57:11,110
she was in a nursing home
in San Antonio where I live.

1254
00:57:11,110 --> 00:57:14,170
And she had no
short-term memory.

1255
00:57:14,170 --> 00:57:17,120
She had the long-term
memory at that point.

1256
00:57:17,120 --> 00:57:20,020
And of course, she
was reliving the war.

1257
00:57:20,020 --> 00:57:22,900
And no matter what
I said, I realized

1258
00:57:22,900 --> 00:57:24,440
that I'm not going
to convince her

1259
00:57:24,440 --> 00:57:29,390
that it's where we're at, that
it's the '90s and whatever.

1260
00:57:29,390 --> 00:57:31,540
So after a while, I
started, because I

1261

00:57:31,540 --> 00:57:34,630
knew I was upsetting her,
I would come and visit her.

1262
00:57:34,630 --> 00:57:36,550
And she would tell me,
take off your glasses,

1263
00:57:36,550 --> 00:57:38,170
put on your contacts, put this.

1264
00:57:38,170 --> 00:57:39,250
I said, why?

1265
00:57:39,250 --> 00:57:41,750
So they won't recognize you,
and take a different route

1266
00:57:41,750 --> 00:57:43,900
home, and that sort of thing.

1267
00:57:43,900 --> 00:57:46,420
Here she was, she had
congestive heart failure, which

1268
00:57:46,420 --> 00:57:50,530
is what she died of, and
beginning of Alzheimer,

1269
00:57:50,530 --> 00:57:56,320
but still, even with that
still, to the day she died,

1270
00:57:56,320 --> 00:57:57,670
she worried about me.

1271
00:57:57,670 --> 00:57:59,500
That must have been
upsetting for you?

1272
00:57:59,500 --> 00:58:00,160
It was.

1273

00:58:00,160 --> 00:58:03,640

That's why I said, everything
had changed for me.

1274

00:58:03,640 --> 00:58:07,030

My mother lived in New
York after I got married.

1275

00:58:07,030 --> 00:58:10,120

And as much as I
love my parents,

1276

00:58:10,120 --> 00:58:13,060

it's a good thing, too, because
I'd be completely helpless

1277

00:58:13,060 --> 00:58:15,400

if she lived where I did,
because my mother always

1278

00:58:15,400 --> 00:58:19,120

did things for me, and I let
her, because it was easier.

1279

00:58:19,120 --> 00:58:21,160

Few years ago, my
mother came to visit.

1280

00:58:21,160 --> 00:58:22,670

My children are already grown.

1281

00:58:22,670 --> 00:58:25,180

I've been married,
now, 34 years.

1282

00:58:25,180 --> 00:58:27,120

I'm cutting something
in the kitchen.

1283

00:58:27,120 --> 00:58:29,950

She came behind me, took the
kitchen knife out of my hand,

1284

00:58:29,950 --> 00:58:31,330
and she says, let me do it.

1285

00:58:31,330 --> 00:58:33,560
You'll hurt yourself.

1286

00:58:33,560 --> 00:58:38,740
So in a way, it was good that I
wasn't near them, because that

1287

00:58:38,740 --> 00:58:42,430
was the easy to let my
mother do everything for me,

1288

00:58:42,430 --> 00:58:43,810
decide for me.

1289

00:58:43,810 --> 00:58:45,370
I couldn't make a decision.

1290

00:58:45,370 --> 00:58:48,550
I'm amazed I made the
decision to get married.

1291

00:58:48,550 --> 00:58:53,380
And I had to be away
to become independent.

1292

00:58:53,380 --> 00:58:55,430
Did you decide to be away?

1293

00:58:55,430 --> 00:58:58,690
Oh, no, no, no, no it was
a complete coincidence.

1294

00:58:58,690 --> 00:59:06,490
I have-- my natural father
died on the way to Treblinka,

1295

00:59:06,490 --> 00:59:08,560
I guess--

1296

00:59:08,560 --> 00:59:11,080

we know for a fact, what
happened to everybody

1297

00:59:11,080 --> 00:59:15,670

in the family, because
those same cousins,

1298

00:59:15,670 --> 00:59:17,890

I mean, the family
of my mother's sister

1299

00:59:17,890 --> 00:59:23,710

that we lived near after
the war, one of the sisters

1300

00:59:23,710 --> 00:59:26,480

was in that transport
with the whole family.

1301

00:59:26,480 --> 00:59:29,500

So she knows what
happened to everybody.

1302

00:59:29,500 --> 00:59:34,440

Anyway, I forgot what
I was going to say.

1303

00:59:34,440 --> 00:59:39,830

1304

00:59:39,830 --> 00:59:41,730

What was I going to say?

1305

00:59:41,730 --> 00:59:43,093

We're talking about something.

1306

00:59:43,093 --> 00:59:44,760

I get off the subject
and then I forget.

1307

00:59:44,760 --> 00:59:48,790

1308
00:59:48,790 --> 00:59:51,150
I'm trying to think.

1309
00:59:51,150 --> 00:59:56,190
We're talking about,
oh, so anyway,

1310
00:59:56,190 --> 01:00:03,580
my natural father's family, two
aunts, and a couple of cousins,

1311
01:00:03,580 --> 01:00:05,440
of course, some of
the cousins weren't

1312
01:00:05,440 --> 01:00:08,320
born till after the
war, survived the war.

1313
01:00:08,320 --> 01:00:13,138
One aunt and her family lived
in Mexico from before the war.

1314
01:00:13,138 --> 01:00:13,930
So they were there.

1315
01:00:13,930 --> 01:00:18,150
But there was another aunt
who was with her daughter

1316
01:00:18,150 --> 01:00:20,490
in a concentration camp.

1317
01:00:20,490 --> 01:00:26,540
They went, the daughter was
13, she had three boys, also.

1318
01:00:26,540 --> 01:00:28,850
She had a older daughter
who was in Mexico.

1319

01:00:28,850 --> 01:00:29,870

But she had three boys.

1320

01:00:29,870 --> 01:00:32,810

So the husband and
the three little boys

1321

01:00:32,810 --> 01:00:38,220

died, because they were
younger than 10, I think.

1322

01:00:38,220 --> 01:00:40,100

And she and her mother survived.

1323

01:00:40,100 --> 01:00:41,900

And somehow, my
mother found them.

1324

01:00:41,900 --> 01:00:45,260

We lived in Paris for a while,
my mother found out about them,

1325

01:00:45,260 --> 01:00:47,360

found them.

1326

01:00:47,360 --> 01:00:48,930

And they started writing.

1327

01:00:48,930 --> 01:00:53,470

So when my parents moved
to New York from Paris,

1328

01:00:53,470 --> 01:00:55,630

my aunt wanted to meet me.

1329

01:00:55,630 --> 01:00:57,340

And I wanted to meet my family.

1330

01:00:57,340 --> 01:00:58,750

And they lived in San Antonio.

1331

01:00:58,750 --> 01:01:01,510
And I went for a two week visit.

1332
01:01:01,510 --> 01:01:03,830
And I met my husband.

1333
01:01:03,830 --> 01:01:07,510
I wasn't planning
on being there.

1334
01:01:07,510 --> 01:01:09,690
So that's how I ended
up in San Antonio.

1335
01:01:09,690 --> 01:01:15,000
I didn't do it
consciously, certainly not,

1336
01:01:15,000 --> 01:01:16,440
trying to get away from her.

1337
01:01:16,440 --> 01:01:20,120
But there were many
times when I wanted to.

1338
01:01:20,120 --> 01:01:24,080
Until, like I said, I started
understanding, took me time.

1339
01:01:24,080 --> 01:01:25,850
And I understood.

1340
01:01:25,850 --> 01:01:29,970
Even though I knew all
of that, but I still--

1341
01:01:29,970 --> 01:01:33,690
I was very resentful of the
being so protective, being--

1342
01:01:33,690 --> 01:01:37,440
I felt like I was suffocating
when I was growing up.

1343
01:01:37,440 --> 01:01:41,990
Did your mother talk,
as you were growing up,

1344
01:01:41,990 --> 01:01:48,500
about the experiences during
the war during the Holocaust?

1345
01:01:48,500 --> 01:01:51,010
Only if I asked her.

1346
01:01:51,010 --> 01:01:52,090
Only if you asked her.

1347
01:01:52,090 --> 01:01:56,370
And when did you start
asking her do you think?

1348
01:01:56,370 --> 01:01:59,370
Probably in my teens--
actually, I don't know.

1349
01:01:59,370 --> 01:02:02,580
I probably started asking
after I got married.

1350
01:02:02,580 --> 01:02:04,980
Until I got married, I probably
didn't want to hear it.

1351
01:02:04,980 --> 01:02:07,610

1352
01:02:07,610 --> 01:02:12,620
Because what I know is
certainly more recent.

1353
01:02:12,620 --> 01:02:15,730
And it had to be
after I got married.

1354

01:02:15,730 --> 01:02:21,450
When I got away from this
situation, I wanted to know.

1355
01:02:21,450 --> 01:02:23,880
Before that, all I knew,
my parents were different,

1356
01:02:23,880 --> 01:02:26,050
they suffocating me.

1357
01:02:26,050 --> 01:02:30,270
But she didn't say what she
had gone through for you.

1358
01:02:30,270 --> 01:02:34,050
Oh never, never, never
ever did my mother

1359
01:02:34,050 --> 01:02:36,410
say look what I did for you.

1360
01:02:36,410 --> 01:02:40,860
She use to play the
guilt, but not with that.

1361
01:02:40,860 --> 01:02:42,510
Never, but I know.

1362
01:02:42,510 --> 01:02:43,920
She didn't have to tell me.

1363
01:02:43,920 --> 01:02:46,170
I know that she did it for me.

1364
01:02:46,170 --> 01:02:51,210
If I wasn't there, my
mother wouldn't have gone.

1365
01:02:51,210 --> 01:02:55,190
She would have stayed with
the rest of the family.

1366

01:02:55,190 --> 01:02:57,320
They were very family oriented.

1367

01:02:57,320 --> 01:03:00,980
As a matter of fact, that's
why what happened happened,

1368

01:03:00,980 --> 01:03:06,510
because before the war, people
were already kind of aware of--

1369

01:03:06,510 --> 01:03:11,310
well, they never realized
what would really happen.

1370

01:03:11,310 --> 01:03:14,520
But they knew things
weren't safe for the Jews.

1371

01:03:14,520 --> 01:03:19,500
And my mother, and her
brother, and his wife,

1372

01:03:19,500 --> 01:03:23,460
and the sisters, and everybody,
they wanted to leave Poland.

1373

01:03:23,460 --> 01:03:27,490
But my grandfather didn't want
to, because he didn't want to--

1374

01:03:27,490 --> 01:03:29,940
the problem was the
people that had something

1375

01:03:29,940 --> 01:03:32,080
to lose didn't want to leave.

1376

01:03:32,080 --> 01:03:34,260
They didn't want to
leave their wealth.

1377

01:03:34,260 --> 01:03:38,085
And my grandfather
said, we'll survive.

1378
01:03:38,085 --> 01:03:39,210
We'll have enough diamonds.

1379
01:03:39,210 --> 01:03:40,200
We'll survive.

1380
01:03:40,200 --> 01:03:44,220
He was convinced that if
you have enough money,

1381
01:03:44,220 --> 01:03:46,180
you'll survive.

1382
01:03:46,180 --> 01:03:48,030
And the children
didn't want to leave

1383
01:03:48,030 --> 01:03:50,760
the parents, my grandparents.

1384
01:03:50,760 --> 01:03:53,650
So no one left.

1385
01:03:53,650 --> 01:03:56,160
And then finally, before the--

1386
01:03:56,160 --> 01:04:01,730
in '39, I guess the war was
on already, was September '39,

1387
01:04:01,730 --> 01:04:04,980
so maybe it was
shortly after that,

1388
01:04:04,980 --> 01:04:07,460
my mother was pregnant with me.

1389
01:04:07,460 --> 01:04:12,530

So it had to be '39, early '40.

1390
01:04:12,530 --> 01:04:16,310
And they decided to finally
leave, my mother's parents.

1391
01:04:16,310 --> 01:04:18,230
The other children
didn't want to,

1392
01:04:18,230 --> 01:04:20,240
because my father,
again, insisted,

1393
01:04:20,240 --> 01:04:21,720
because my mother was pregnant.

1394
01:04:21,720 --> 01:04:23,750
They were going to have a baby.

1395
01:04:23,750 --> 01:04:28,670
They paid off some Russians
to get them into Russia.

1396
01:04:28,670 --> 01:04:31,190
They crossed the border.

1397
01:04:31,190 --> 01:04:33,470
The Russians took whatever
it is that they paid them,

1398
01:04:33,470 --> 01:04:35,720
whether it was diamond,
money, or whatever,

1399
01:04:35,720 --> 01:04:38,630
and turned them
over to the Gestapo.

1400
01:04:38,630 --> 01:04:42,890
And they beat them,
put them in some--

1401

01:04:42,890 --> 01:04:44,210
that I know from my mother.

1402

01:04:44,210 --> 01:04:47,600
They put them in some
stalls for horses,

1403

01:04:47,600 --> 01:04:51,350
or whatever, barn, and just
beat them and send them back

1404

01:04:51,350 --> 01:04:52,610
to Warsaw.

1405

01:04:52,610 --> 01:04:55,430
So when they tried,
it was too late.

1406

01:04:55,430 --> 01:04:58,670
But at first, they didn't want
to, because none of the kids

1407

01:04:58,670 --> 01:05:00,260
wanted to leave the parents.

1408

01:05:00,260 --> 01:05:01,790
And the parents
didn't want to go.

1409

01:05:01,790 --> 01:05:03,940
They didn't believe--

1410

01:05:03,940 --> 01:05:07,630
You asked your mother
about these things

1411

01:05:07,630 --> 01:05:09,310
after you were married.

1412

01:05:09,310 --> 01:05:11,410
Why do you think it
was at that point

1413
01:05:11,410 --> 01:05:13,270
that you started asking her?

1414
01:05:13,270 --> 01:05:19,690
Because as I got older,
and even now, I guess,

1415
01:05:19,690 --> 01:05:23,620
when I was a teenager,
family wasn't--

1416
01:05:23,620 --> 01:05:27,820
or at least I didn't realize it
was, extended family, wasn't as

1417
01:05:27,820 --> 01:05:30,220
important to me as it is now.

1418
01:05:30,220 --> 01:05:35,950
Each year I get older,
it's all important to me.

1419
01:05:35,950 --> 01:05:38,340
I feel like I lost out a lot.

1420
01:05:38,340 --> 01:05:41,310
Lost out, I never knew
my aunts, my uncles.

1421
01:05:41,310 --> 01:05:44,760
Until my mother
died, I didn't know

1422
01:05:44,760 --> 01:05:49,800
what my grandparents looked
like, because my mother was not

1423
01:05:49,800 --> 01:05:51,102
allowed to take any pictures.

1424
01:05:51,102 --> 01:05:53,310

Well, she couldn't take any pictures from the ghetto,

1425
01:05:53,310 --> 01:05:58,170
because that could identify her.

1426
01:05:58,170 --> 01:06:01,650
And she had gotten,
probably a few years ago,

1427
01:06:01,650 --> 01:06:04,890
from the family in
Israel, a few pictures.

1428
01:06:04,890 --> 01:06:08,250
And I had to, by
process of elimination,

1429
01:06:08,250 --> 01:06:09,930
figure out who was who.

1430
01:06:09,930 --> 01:06:13,650
Even my mother's wedding
picture to my natural father,

1431
01:06:13,650 --> 01:06:15,930
I do have a picture
of my natural father,

1432
01:06:15,930 --> 01:06:18,820
because my cousin in
San Antonio had it.

1433
01:06:18,820 --> 01:06:20,440
And she had it made for me.

1434
01:06:20,440 --> 01:06:24,930
But other than that, I never
saw pictures of anybody else.

1435
01:06:24,930 --> 01:06:28,860
When my mother died, I
guess, she just got them.

1436
01:06:28,860 --> 01:06:31,020
And then she got
sick, she forgot--

1437
01:06:31,020 --> 01:06:33,360
she didn't forget,
she didn't tell me.

1438
01:06:33,360 --> 01:06:35,040
When my brother
brought her things,

1439
01:06:35,040 --> 01:06:39,250
because she lived in Seattle
before she went to the nursing

1440
01:06:39,250 --> 01:06:41,020
home, we got her
out of New York,

1441
01:06:41,020 --> 01:06:43,150
because she was
alone in New York.

1442
01:06:43,150 --> 01:06:45,790
And he brought a bunch
of boxes with papers.

1443
01:06:45,790 --> 01:06:47,240
And I found some pictures.

1444
01:06:47,240 --> 01:06:50,020
And to me, it was a treasure.

1445
01:06:50,020 --> 01:06:53,540
And by process of elimination,
I figured out who was who.

1446
01:06:53,540 --> 01:06:57,530
And now I'm having them
made for my brother, too,

1447

01:06:57,530 --> 01:06:59,600
and restored, and all that.

1448

01:06:59,600 --> 01:07:01,430
And there are
about six pictures.

1449

01:07:01,430 --> 01:07:03,590
But they're incredible.

1450

01:07:03,590 --> 01:07:07,670
And I didn't find it until
after my mother died.

1451

01:07:07,670 --> 01:07:12,050
And so to me, at least,
there's some link to the past,

1452

01:07:12,050 --> 01:07:14,670
because--

1453

01:07:14,670 --> 01:07:19,850
And I guess I want to know
more and more now, because

1454

01:07:19,850 --> 01:07:22,770
and I know I won't
to know anymore.

1455

01:07:22,770 --> 01:07:24,920
I'm sorry I didn't
ask more questions,

1456

01:07:24,920 --> 01:07:29,690
because my mother was the last
link to the past, so to speak.

1457

01:07:29,690 --> 01:07:32,750
And no one else knows.

1458

01:07:32,750 --> 01:07:36,740
What are some of the questions

that you would like to know?

1459

01:07:36,740 --> 01:07:40,670

I don't know, just what the
people were really like,

1460

01:07:40,670 --> 01:07:42,770

about her sisters.

1461

01:07:42,770 --> 01:07:45,000

Not that she was
wonderful and beautiful,

1462

01:07:45,000 --> 01:07:49,730

I know she was wonderful and
beautiful, but some details.

1463

01:07:49,730 --> 01:07:52,370

That I always thought
I had time to ask.

1464

01:07:52,370 --> 01:07:56,200

1465

01:07:56,200 --> 01:08:00,000

Let's stop here and
turn over the tape.

1466

01:08:00,000 --> 01:08:03,000