

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:03,600

2

00:00:03,600 --> 00:00:06,390

This is the United States  
Holocaust Memorial Museum

3

00:00:06,390 --> 00:00:09,870

interview with Peter  
Phillips, conducted

4

00:00:09,870 --> 00:00:17,550

by Gail Schwartz on June 16,  
1997 in Bethesda, Maryland.

5

00:00:17,550 --> 00:00:22,990

This is tape number  
one, side A. Could

6

00:00:22,990 --> 00:00:25,400

you give us your full name?

7

00:00:25,400 --> 00:00:27,400

It's actually Ernest  
Peter Phillips,

8

00:00:27,400 --> 00:00:31,880

but I generally use only  
Peter or whenever possible,

9

00:00:31,880 --> 00:00:34,420

Pete Phillips.

10

00:00:34,420 --> 00:00:36,910

And what name were you norm?

11

00:00:36,910 --> 00:00:41,740

I was born Ernst  
Pieter Phillips.

12

00:00:41,740 --> 00:00:44,500

Where were you born,  
and when were you born?

13  
00:00:44,500 --> 00:00:50,080  
In Essen, Germany,  
December 5th, 1931.

14  
00:00:50,080 --> 00:00:51,460  
Let's talk about your family.

15  
00:00:51,460 --> 00:00:54,830  
Who were the members of  
your immediate family?

16  
00:00:54,830 --> 00:00:59,890  
My father, Bruno, my mother,  
Lily, and I have twin brothers,

17  
00:00:59,890 --> 00:01:03,700  
who are about four years  
younger than I am, Ervin,

18  
00:01:03,700 --> 00:01:08,380  
spelled E-R-V-I-N, and George.

19  
00:01:08,380 --> 00:01:11,050  
Where were your parents from?

20  
00:01:11,050 --> 00:01:13,690  
My father was born in a  
little town called Oberhausen,

21  
00:01:13,690 --> 00:01:18,130  
and my mother was born in  
an even smaller town called

22  
00:01:18,130 --> 00:01:24,090  
[PLACE NAME.] And my brothers  
were born in Mulheim an der

23  
00:01:24,090 --> 00:01:24,590  
Ruhr.

24

00:01:24,590 --> 00:01:27,280

25

00:01:27,280 --> 00:01:30,070

So when did your family--

26

00:01:30,070 --> 00:01:33,580

or what brought your  
family to Essen?

27

00:01:33,580 --> 00:01:40,900

My mother was working  
in a dress shop,

28

00:01:40,900 --> 00:01:45,610

which was a very  
fancy store that

29

00:01:45,610 --> 00:01:48,820

catered to the elite of Essen.

30

00:01:48,820 --> 00:01:52,810

The wives of the steel magnets  
would get their dresses

31

00:01:52,810 --> 00:01:55,300

made to order in that shop.

32

00:01:55,300 --> 00:01:57,730

She was an apprentice  
to her aunt.

33

00:01:57,730 --> 00:02:02,320

And my father was,  
as well, a apprentice

34

00:02:02,320 --> 00:02:09,490

in a international hide and  
skin export trading firm.

35

00:02:09,490 --> 00:02:12,850

And my parents met

there, actually,

36

00:02:12,850 --> 00:02:14,320

during an opera performance.

37

00:02:14,320 --> 00:02:17,780

38

00:02:17,780 --> 00:02:21,050

How much education  
did your family have?

39

00:02:21,050 --> 00:02:22,730

Incredibly little.

40

00:02:22,730 --> 00:02:26,840

My mother admitted  
that she hated school,

41

00:02:26,840 --> 00:02:30,320

and I think she probably had the  
equivalent of the sixth grade

42

00:02:30,320 --> 00:02:31,730

in this country.

43

00:02:31,730 --> 00:02:34,400

My father, likewise,  
never went to what

44

00:02:34,400 --> 00:02:36,500

you would call junior high  
school in this country.

45

00:02:36,500 --> 00:02:41,120

46

00:02:41,120 --> 00:02:48,400

[INAUDIBLE] was a very well  
educated, self-educated man.

47

00:02:48,400 --> 00:02:55,530

He read voluminously, was a  
great lover of art and music,

48  
00:02:55,530 --> 00:02:59,400  
taught himself to play  
the violin and the piano.

49  
00:02:59,400 --> 00:03:01,590  
And did so well enough  
to be able to play

50  
00:03:01,590 --> 00:03:05,410  
chamber music with friends.

51  
00:03:05,410 --> 00:03:07,415  
In his own way, I  
think he was a genius.

52  
00:03:07,415 --> 00:03:11,110

53  
00:03:11,110 --> 00:03:13,570  
Did your mother have other  
interests, or once you

54  
00:03:13,570 --> 00:03:16,040  
were born did she stay at home?

55  
00:03:16,040 --> 00:03:18,310  
My mother was--

56  
00:03:18,310 --> 00:03:20,320  
I can say without fear  
of being contradicted,

57  
00:03:20,320 --> 00:03:22,760  
a genius with her fingers.

58  
00:03:22,760 --> 00:03:24,220  
She designed clothes.

59  
00:03:24,220 --> 00:03:31,810

She could go into a store,  
look at a dress on a mannequin,

60  
00:03:31,810 --> 00:03:34,480  
go home, and duplicate it.

61  
00:03:34,480 --> 00:03:38,530  
She made men's neckties  
during the war.

62  
00:03:38,530 --> 00:03:40,090  
That will come up later.

63  
00:03:40,090 --> 00:03:43,630  
She even made-- assembled  
cigarette lighters

64  
00:03:43,630 --> 00:03:46,240  
during the war for the army.

65  
00:03:46,240 --> 00:03:51,010  
She could take a set of  
curtains and make a dress,

66  
00:03:51,010 --> 00:03:54,130  
or she could take a dress and  
make another dress out of it.

67  
00:03:54,130 --> 00:03:55,590  
She just was fantastic.

68  
00:03:55,590 --> 00:03:57,070  
She never used a pattern.

69  
00:03:57,070 --> 00:03:59,590  
She knitted, crocheted,  
she made her own clothes,

70  
00:03:59,590 --> 00:04:01,770  
she made clothes  
for other people.

71

00:04:01,770 --> 00:04:04,780

She was really very  
gifted with her hands.

72

00:04:04,780 --> 00:04:07,050

Did she make your clothes?

73

00:04:07,050 --> 00:04:08,620

No, but she would  
have if she could--

74

00:04:08,620 --> 00:04:12,201

if I had been a girl she  
certainly would have done so.

75

00:04:12,201 --> 00:04:15,970

How religious was your family?

76

00:04:15,970 --> 00:04:17,140

That's a difficult question.

77

00:04:17,140 --> 00:04:21,560

My mother was very  
anti-religious.

78

00:04:21,560 --> 00:04:27,910

She could not reconcile the  
hypocrisy she saw in the world

79

00:04:27,910 --> 00:04:31,110

with the religious aspect of it.

80

00:04:31,110 --> 00:04:33,430

I may not be too  
articulate on that,

81

00:04:33,430 --> 00:04:40,510

but she only went into a  
synagogue under duress,

82

00:04:40,510 --> 00:04:44,177

such as my bar mitzvah,  
my brother's bar mitzvahs,

83  
00:04:44,177 --> 00:04:45,010  
and that's about it.

84  
00:04:45,010 --> 00:04:47,830  
She never went even on  
the Jewish holidays.

85  
00:04:47,830 --> 00:04:50,050  
She always made a  
big fuss about not

86  
00:04:50,050 --> 00:04:52,870  
wanting to have Seder  
and things like that.

87  
00:04:52,870 --> 00:04:56,950  
She just was intolerant of any  
kind of organized religion.

88  
00:04:56,950 --> 00:05:02,440  
Whereas my father grew  
up very devout, and even

89  
00:05:02,440 --> 00:05:04,300  
wanted me to later  
fill in when I

90  
00:05:04,300 --> 00:05:08,350  
was 12 and 13, which I did  
once or twice and rebelled

91  
00:05:08,350 --> 00:05:10,850  
and didn't do it.

92  
00:05:10,850 --> 00:05:17,440  
And it was a constant source  
of friction between my parents.

93  
00:05:17,440 --> 00:05:22,280  
Which I, of course,  
suffered from, if you will.



94

00:05:22,280 --> 00:05:26,760

And as a consequence I went  
through various religious

95

00:05:26,760 --> 00:05:32,460

phases myself in my 65 years.

96

00:05:32,460 --> 00:05:33,990

We will talk about  
your childhood,

97

00:05:33,990 --> 00:05:36,330

but obviously, as you  
said, there are stages.

98

00:05:36,330 --> 00:05:40,650

And my next questions are going  
to be really the first stage,

99

00:05:40,650 --> 00:05:43,450

the first part of your life.

100

00:05:43,450 --> 00:05:47,190

And so whatever  
you can remember,

101

00:05:47,190 --> 00:05:50,340

or what was told to you  
would be very helpful,

102

00:05:50,340 --> 00:05:53,280

because you were so young.

103

00:05:53,280 --> 00:05:55,740

Was your father a Zionist?

104

00:05:55,740 --> 00:05:59,410

Not that I'm aware of, no.

105

00:05:59,410 --> 00:06:01,130

No.

106

00:06:01,130 --> 00:06:03,410

Was he interested in  
political matters?

107

00:06:03,410 --> 00:06:04,670

Oh, yes, very much so.

108

00:06:04,670 --> 00:06:06,260

Very much so.

109

00:06:06,260 --> 00:06:11,900

As I said, he read the New York  
Times, I grew up with that.

110

00:06:11,900 --> 00:06:15,193

He read Business Week Magazine.

111

00:06:15,193 --> 00:06:16,610

Not that he had  
much time to read,

112

00:06:16,610 --> 00:06:20,650

but yes, he was very  
much politically aware.

113

00:06:20,650 --> 00:06:24,050

As was, indeed, my mother, too.

114

00:06:24,050 --> 00:06:26,985

What language did  
you speak at home?

115

00:06:26,985 --> 00:06:28,610

In the early years  
in the United States

116

00:06:28,610 --> 00:06:30,320

we spoke, of course, German.

117

00:06:30,320 --> 00:06:37,810

But my parents were very  
keen to learn English.

118  
00:06:37,810 --> 00:06:41,220  
And my brothers  
and I, being young,

119  
00:06:41,220 --> 00:06:43,380  
we very quickly picked it up.

120  
00:06:43,380 --> 00:06:44,700  
But I'm talking as a child--

121  
00:06:44,700 --> 00:06:45,580  
We spoke--

122  
00:06:45,580 --> 00:06:47,880  
In your early childhood,  
you spoke German?

123  
00:06:47,880 --> 00:06:49,770  
Yes, in Germany  
certainly we did.

124  
00:06:49,770 --> 00:06:52,050  
But in this country  
then we spoke English.

125  
00:06:52,050 --> 00:06:53,280  
Yeah.

126  
00:06:53,280 --> 00:06:56,040  
But in Germany, did you speak  
any other languages, or just

127  
00:06:56,040 --> 00:06:56,830  
German?

128  
00:06:56,830 --> 00:06:58,770  
Just German.

129  
00:06:58,770 --> 00:07:02,130  
What was your relationship as a  
young child with your parents?

130  
00:07:02,130 --> 00:07:07,200  
Were they very outgoing  
type of people?

131  
00:07:07,200 --> 00:07:10,560  
Or was it a more reserved  
type of relationship?

132  
00:07:10,560 --> 00:07:14,100  
I would say reserved.

133  
00:07:14,100 --> 00:07:16,920  
Europeans of that generation  
tended to be reserved.

134  
00:07:16,920 --> 00:07:21,262  
They were not touchy  
feely, huggy type--

135  
00:07:21,262 --> 00:07:22,500  
it wasn't done.

136  
00:07:22,500 --> 00:07:30,480  
I mean, I never hugged my  
father the way kids do nowadays.

137  
00:07:30,480 --> 00:07:33,435  
We never expressed  
love in so many words.

138  
00:07:33,435 --> 00:07:34,060  
It wasn't done.

139  
00:07:34,060 --> 00:07:37,830  
It wasn't the custom.

140  
00:07:37,830 --> 00:07:40,290  
What is one of your  
earliest memories?

141  
00:07:40,290 --> 00:07:44,620

142

00:07:44,620 --> 00:07:47,350

The earliest memory I have--

143

00:07:47,350 --> 00:07:51,290

oh, I have quite

a few, actually.

144

00:07:51,290 --> 00:07:56,810

That I had a very strict

father, and very controlling

145

00:07:56,810 --> 00:08:00,510

I guess would be the

term one would use today.

146

00:08:00,510 --> 00:08:05,960

So that even when I had my own

money from my meager allowance,

147

00:08:05,960 --> 00:08:09,470

I was not able to do

with it what I wanted.

148

00:08:09,470 --> 00:08:12,890

149

00:08:12,890 --> 00:08:16,520

Other early memory, I may

be skipping ahead here,

150

00:08:16,520 --> 00:08:19,790

but I certainly remember the

Germans marching into Prague

151

00:08:19,790 --> 00:08:22,370

when we lived there.

152

00:08:22,370 --> 00:08:24,920

Playing with the

German soldiers who

153

00:08:24,920 --> 00:08:29,428  
were bivouacked in the  
playground across the street

154

00:08:29,428 --> 00:08:30,470  
from our apartment house.

155

00:08:30,470 --> 00:08:32,053  
Yeah, we'll get to  
Prague in a minute.

156

00:08:32,053 --> 00:08:34,440  
But let's stay in  
Essen for a moment.

157

00:08:34,440 --> 00:08:36,080  
Do you know where your parents--

158

00:08:36,080 --> 00:08:37,690  
where your home was?

159

00:08:37,690 --> 00:08:38,950  
Was it in the town?

160

00:08:38,950 --> 00:08:41,000  
Was it on the outskirts?

161

00:08:41,000 --> 00:08:42,980  
Did your parents tell you?

162

00:08:42,980 --> 00:08:44,960  
It was in the city proper.

163

00:08:44,960 --> 00:08:48,710  
But I don't have any  
recollections of Essen as such,

164

00:08:48,710 --> 00:08:50,030  
and didn't go to school there.

165

00:08:50,030 --> 00:08:51,210

Right.

166  
00:08:51,210 --> 00:08:54,530  
And you were how old  
when you left Essen?

167  
00:08:54,530 --> 00:09:01,030  
I was about five or six.

168  
00:09:01,030 --> 00:09:04,150  
So as you say, you don't have  
any recollections of playing

169  
00:09:04,150 --> 00:09:07,530  
with children or any sense?

170  
00:09:07,530 --> 00:09:08,450  
No.

171  
00:09:08,450 --> 00:09:12,700  
OK, do you have any--

172  
00:09:12,700 --> 00:09:15,580  
probably not, but do you  
have any recollections

173  
00:09:15,580 --> 00:09:20,230  
of your parents talking  
very early on after Hitler

174  
00:09:20,230 --> 00:09:21,340  
came into power?

175  
00:09:21,340 --> 00:09:27,010  
Again, you were very  
young up to 1935, '36.

176  
00:09:27,010 --> 00:09:30,370  
Did you sense any  
tension in the household?

177  
00:09:30,370 --> 00:09:32,320

Yes, I did certainly.

178  
00:09:32,320 --> 00:09:35,200  
I don't remember  
any conversations,

179  
00:09:35,200 --> 00:09:39,700  
but the tenseness, the  
tension, was always there.

180  
00:09:39,700 --> 00:09:42,300

181  
00:09:42,300 --> 00:09:45,190  
There was no way for  
my parents to hide it.

182  
00:09:45,190 --> 00:09:50,740  
The vigils they kept  
listening to the radio.

183  
00:09:50,740 --> 00:09:55,430  
I remember the gas masks on  
the wardrobe, things like that.

184  
00:09:55,430 --> 00:10:00,910  
There was all-- and jumping  
ahead to Prague for a stop,

185  
00:10:00,910 --> 00:10:05,940  
I certainly remember air raid  
drills and things like that.

186  
00:10:05,940 --> 00:10:08,050  
You said they had  
gas masks in Essen?

187  
00:10:08,050 --> 00:10:10,790  
No, I'm sorry, the gas  
masks were in Prague.

188  
00:10:10,790 --> 00:10:11,290  
Yeah.



189  
00:10:11,290 --> 00:10:12,450  
Yes.

190  
00:10:12,450 --> 00:10:16,060  
OK, do you know why  
or what precipitated,

191  
00:10:16,060 --> 00:10:18,370  
or what went into your  
father's-- your parents

192  
00:10:18,370 --> 00:10:21,570  
thinking about moving?

193  
00:10:21,570 --> 00:10:24,150  
I happen to know that, yes.

194  
00:10:24,150 --> 00:10:27,240  
First, my mother's side of  
it is that she worked, as I

195  
00:10:27,240 --> 00:10:29,940  
said, in this fancy dress shop.

196  
00:10:29,940 --> 00:10:35,040  
And when Hitler came  
to power the customers

197  
00:10:35,040 --> 00:10:38,400  
stayed away, because the store  
was owned by her aunt who

198  
00:10:38,400 --> 00:10:40,260  
was, of course, Jewish.

199  
00:10:40,260 --> 00:10:42,150  
They just stayed away.

200  
00:10:42,150 --> 00:10:46,970  
She was snubbed by the  
family doctor and by friends.

201  
00:10:46,970 --> 00:10:52,530  
So the ascension of Hitler  
was immediately manifest

202  
00:10:52,530 --> 00:10:55,560  
in her life, and she  
couldn't make a living.

203  
00:10:55,560 --> 00:10:57,480  
She was one of the  
early feminists,

204  
00:10:57,480 --> 00:11:02,070  
I guess, by working full  
time from the very beginning.

205  
00:11:02,070 --> 00:11:05,250  
So your parents had  
non-Jewish friends in Essen

206  
00:11:05,250 --> 00:11:07,260  
and mixed with non-Jews?

207  
00:11:07,260 --> 00:11:08,910  
Yes, they did.

208  
00:11:08,910 --> 00:11:11,790  
My father, I remember  
very clearly,

209  
00:11:11,790 --> 00:11:13,980  
telling me that  
he was on his way

210  
00:11:13,980 --> 00:11:19,440  
to the home of a good non-Jewish  
friend to play some music.

211  
00:11:19,440 --> 00:11:21,840  
I think the friend  
was a pianist.

212

00:11:21,840 --> 00:11:25,200

My father must have been  
carrying his violin that day.

213

00:11:25,200 --> 00:11:29,230

And when my father went  
into the living room,

214

00:11:29,230 --> 00:11:32,400

he saw a big portrait of Hitler  
on the concert grand-- no,

215

00:11:32,400 --> 00:11:36,890

it wasn't a concert grand, but  
it was a baby grand, I guess,

216

00:11:36,890 --> 00:11:38,110

piano.

217

00:11:38,110 --> 00:11:41,422

And that was the signal for  
my father that this thing--

218

00:11:41,422 --> 00:11:43,380

this Hitler thing-- was  
not going to blow over.

219

00:11:43,380 --> 00:11:44,760

That it was serious.

220

00:11:44,760 --> 00:11:47,730

Because this was a  
man, this pianist,

221

00:11:47,730 --> 00:11:50,160

who was an amateur  
pianist of course,

222

00:11:50,160 --> 00:11:52,990

but evidently some  
sort of intellectual.

223

00:11:52,990 --> 00:12:03,270  
And my father realized if people  
of erudition and education

224  
00:12:03,270 --> 00:12:06,720  
took this madman  
Hitler seriously,

225  
00:12:06,720 --> 00:12:08,910  
then it was time to leave.

226  
00:12:08,910 --> 00:12:10,980  
That was for him the signal.

227  
00:12:10,980 --> 00:12:12,785  
Do you remember leaving Essen?

228  
00:12:12,785 --> 00:12:15,330  
Is that part in your memory?

229  
00:12:15,330 --> 00:12:18,240  
No, I don't, no.

230  
00:12:18,240 --> 00:12:20,740  
I imagine we went by train.

231  
00:12:20,740 --> 00:12:24,570  
Now, your brothers  
were already born?

232  
00:12:24,570 --> 00:12:25,500  
Yes, they were.

233  
00:12:25,500 --> 00:12:27,780  
Do you remember your brothers--

234  
00:12:27,780 --> 00:12:30,740  
do you remember  
becoming a big brother?

235  
00:12:30,740 --> 00:12:31,890  
Not really, no.

236

00:12:31,890 --> 00:12:38,700  
I was three years, eight months,  
I think, when they were born.

237

00:12:38,700 --> 00:12:41,090  
So your family then went to?

238

00:12:41,090 --> 00:12:44,760  
To Prague, Czechoslovakia--  
what was then Czechoslovakia.

239

00:12:44,760 --> 00:12:48,510  
And why did they  
decide to go to Prague?

240

00:12:48,510 --> 00:12:50,880  
The firm my father  
worked for, which

241

00:12:50,880 --> 00:12:56,160  
was headquartered interestingly  
enough in Argentina,

242

00:12:56,160 --> 00:13:01,200  
an opening appeared  
in the Prague office.

243

00:13:01,200 --> 00:13:04,920  
The man who-- it was a  
one man office, I think.

244

00:13:04,920 --> 00:13:07,440  
The man who held  
the job was Italian.

245

00:13:07,440 --> 00:13:10,620  
He wanted to go back  
to Italy, and the firm

246

00:13:10,620 --> 00:13:12,910  
offered this post to my father.

247

00:13:12,910 --> 00:13:14,770

So we moved to Prague.

248

00:13:14,770 --> 00:13:18,600

In later years, my father

would say we left Germany,

249

00:13:18,600 --> 00:13:21,910

but we first went in

the wrong direction.

250

00:13:21,910 --> 00:13:24,850

What month in 1936, do you know?

251

00:13:24,850 --> 00:13:27,390

I don't know, no.

252

00:13:27,390 --> 00:13:28,210

I don't remember.

253

00:13:28,210 --> 00:13:30,730

Or a season, or time of

year-- beginning, middle?

254

00:13:30,730 --> 00:13:33,904

No, I have no

recollection of that.

255

00:13:33,904 --> 00:13:36,090

OK.

256

00:13:36,090 --> 00:13:37,380

Now you're living in Prague.

257

00:13:37,380 --> 00:13:40,290

Where did your

family live, again,

258

00:13:40,290 --> 00:13:42,390

in relation to the

center of the city?

259

00:13:42,390 --> 00:13:44,760

We lived in the center.

260

00:13:44,760 --> 00:13:48,270

It was an apartment house.

261

00:13:48,270 --> 00:13:51,170

I think we lived on  
the ground floor.

262

00:13:51,170 --> 00:13:55,400

And we may have, in fact,  
lived in more than one place

263

00:13:55,400 --> 00:13:59,366

in the approximately three  
years we lived there.

264

00:13:59,366 --> 00:14:02,330

I certainly remember that  
one of those apartment houses

265

00:14:02,330 --> 00:14:05,090

was across the street  
from a park, which

266

00:14:05,090 --> 00:14:08,900

had a sandbox and  
kind of a playground

267

00:14:08,900 --> 00:14:12,500

for kids where I played.

268

00:14:12,500 --> 00:14:16,160

Were your parents able to  
bring everything with them?

269

00:14:16,160 --> 00:14:17,660

Not a thing.

270

00:14:17,660 --> 00:14:19,780

Nothing.

271  
00:14:19,780 --> 00:14:22,360  
What did they bring?

272  
00:14:22,360 --> 00:14:25,530  
Just the clothes on their  
backs-- on our backs.

273  
00:14:25,530 --> 00:14:27,790  
That was about it.

274  
00:14:27,790 --> 00:14:31,570  
We had a gigantic  
duffel bag, which

275  
00:14:31,570 --> 00:14:34,000  
is bigger than any duffel bag  
that you would find today.

276  
00:14:34,000 --> 00:14:37,720  
It was given to us by a  
woman by the name of Molly.

277  
00:14:37,720 --> 00:14:40,000  
I don't remember the connection.

278  
00:14:40,000 --> 00:14:42,025  
She was not a relative,  
I don't think.

279  
00:14:42,025 --> 00:14:46,930  
And it was referred to for years  
in the family as Molly's sack.

280  
00:14:46,930 --> 00:14:50,680  
And we stuffed a whole  
lot of stuff in that.

281  
00:14:50,680 --> 00:14:54,680  
Did you have any favorite  
game or toy at that time?

282



00:14:54,680 --> 00:14:57,310

283

00:14:57,310 --> 00:15:00,950

I liked to play with flashlight  
batteries and a little flash

284

00:15:00,950 --> 00:15:03,850

light bulbs, and made  
little theater prosceniums

285

00:15:03,850 --> 00:15:05,338

and that sort of thing.

286

00:15:05,338 --> 00:15:06,880

But it was difficult,  
because I never

287

00:15:06,880 --> 00:15:10,750

had any money to buy anything.

288

00:15:10,750 --> 00:15:15,070

Would you describe your parents  
as middle class, upper middle?

289

00:15:15,070 --> 00:15:19,810

I would say middle,  
probably-- yes, middle class.

290

00:15:19,810 --> 00:15:21,760

Yes.

291

00:15:21,760 --> 00:15:25,390

So now you're living in Prague,  
and your father's working.

292

00:15:25,390 --> 00:15:27,920

It's sometime in 1936.

293

00:15:27,920 --> 00:15:30,830

And what is your mother doing?

294

00:15:30,830 --> 00:15:35,900

My mother was working  
at getting us out.

295

00:15:35,900 --> 00:15:37,940

I guess in the beginning  
she worked at home.

296

00:15:37,940 --> 00:15:41,690

I mean, she was a housewife.

297

00:15:41,690 --> 00:15:45,110

But she evidently  
carried the brunt

298

00:15:45,110 --> 00:15:50,180

of trying to get  
us papers to leave.

299

00:15:50,180 --> 00:15:56,660

And she struck up a  
friendship with some Nazi.

300

00:15:56,660 --> 00:15:58,610

My mother, I might  
interject at this point,

301

00:15:58,610 --> 00:16:00,350

was a rather beautiful woman.

302

00:16:00,350 --> 00:16:02,300

She did not look at all Jewish.

303

00:16:02,300 --> 00:16:04,430

No one believed she was Jewish.

304

00:16:04,430 --> 00:16:05,930

And my brothers, I  
don't think we've

305

00:16:05,930 --> 00:16:08,900

established that they  
were twins, my brother.

306

00:16:08,900 --> 00:16:13,100

They were not just blonde,  
they were white blonde.

307

00:16:13,100 --> 00:16:16,070

So the assumption  
was that my mother

308

00:16:16,070 --> 00:16:19,760

had married a Jewish man,  
and was not herself Jewish.

309

00:16:19,760 --> 00:16:23,180

That helped us enormously  
evidently in those years.

310

00:16:23,180 --> 00:16:26,780

And she played on  
that, and worked

311

00:16:26,780 --> 00:16:30,410

hard at getting the exit visas  
and whatever other papers were

312

00:16:30,410 --> 00:16:32,480

required to get us out.

313

00:16:32,480 --> 00:16:33,470

How did she do that?

314

00:16:33,470 --> 00:16:35,550

Do you know?

315

00:16:35,550 --> 00:16:45,580

She-- I think it was  
a matter of standing

316

00:16:45,580 --> 00:16:48,970

in line at the consulate day in,  
day out, from early morning til

317

00:16:48,970 --> 00:16:50,680  
early evening.

318  
00:16:50,680 --> 00:16:52,100  
My mother was fearless.

319  
00:16:52,100 --> 00:16:53,170  
She was aggressive.

320  
00:16:53,170 --> 00:16:55,150  
She was a tiny woman.

321  
00:16:55,150 --> 00:16:57,570  
She had sharp elbows  
when she needed them.

322  
00:16:57,570 --> 00:17:00,730  
And she didn't take any  
guff from anyone, not even

323  
00:17:00,730 --> 00:17:02,080  
the Gestapo.

324  
00:17:02,080 --> 00:17:10,630  
And the Jews needed a  
red J in their passport,

325  
00:17:10,630 --> 00:17:13,420  
which my parents didn't  
have when they left Germany.

326  
00:17:13,420 --> 00:17:16,599  
And that was object  
number one to get

327  
00:17:16,599 --> 00:17:19,540  
that while they were in Prague.

328  
00:17:19,540 --> 00:17:24,970  
A Gestapo guy that my  
mother was referred to

329

00:17:24,970 --> 00:17:32,440  
promised to take care of that  
for them for 4,000 kroner.

330  
00:17:32,440 --> 00:17:35,410  
I don't know what that  
would be in today's dollars,

331  
00:17:35,410 --> 00:17:37,720  
but I know the amount  
was 4,000 kroner.

332  
00:17:37,720 --> 00:17:40,000  
In other words, a bribe.

333  
00:17:40,000 --> 00:17:43,330  
My parents scraped  
together this money.

334  
00:17:43,330 --> 00:17:46,690  
I don't know what it represented  
in terms of their annual income

335  
00:17:46,690 --> 00:17:47,300  
in those days.

336  
00:17:47,300 --> 00:17:49,000  
But my mother did  
sell her jewelry

337  
00:17:49,000 --> 00:17:50,860  
in order to raise that money.

338  
00:17:50,860 --> 00:17:53,350  
And this man disappeared.

339  
00:17:53,350 --> 00:17:57,520  
My mother then kept a  
vigil at the window.

340  
00:17:57,520 --> 00:18:00,310  
She went without sleep,  
evidently, for a long time,

341  
00:18:00,310 --> 00:18:01,930  
for some weeks.

342  
00:18:01,930 --> 00:18:04,720  
I mean, she didn't deprive  
herself of sleep for weeks,

343  
00:18:04,720 --> 00:18:08,230  
but she must have taken catnaps.

344  
00:18:08,230 --> 00:18:11,770  
But she did spot the guy  
one day and charged out,

345  
00:18:11,770 --> 00:18:15,310  
and told him that  
she was the friend

346  
00:18:15,310 --> 00:18:18,360  
or relative of some high  
muckety muck in the government.

347  
00:18:18,360 --> 00:18:20,440  
It's a pure cock and bull story.

348  
00:18:20,440 --> 00:18:22,060  
But the guy believed it.

349  
00:18:22,060 --> 00:18:25,630  
And my mother threatened him,  
and he took it seriously.

350  
00:18:25,630 --> 00:18:29,620  
And the next day they  
had their passports.

351  
00:18:29,620 --> 00:18:33,540  
Why did they want the J,  
the red J and the passport?

352  
00:18:33,540 --> 00:18:35,170

The red J was a requirement.

353

00:18:35,170 --> 00:18:40,610

It stood for Jew, and it  
was a requirement of the--

354

00:18:40,610 --> 00:18:41,860

I guess the German government.

355

00:18:41,860 --> 00:18:43,550

Every German  
passport had to have

356

00:18:43,550 --> 00:18:47,000

that, as well as the Israeli--

357

00:18:47,000 --> 00:18:49,480

the Hebrew name Sara and Israel.

358

00:18:49,480 --> 00:18:51,430

Those my parents  
also did not have.

359

00:18:51,430 --> 00:18:54,730

So your parents wanted to  
be known as Jews rather than

360

00:18:54,730 --> 00:18:56,260

as Gentiles?

361

00:18:56,260 --> 00:18:57,430

Yes, absolutely.

362

00:18:57,430 --> 00:19:00,280

My mother just did not  
correct people when--

363

00:19:00,280 --> 00:19:03,100

particularly not  
government types

364

00:19:03,100 --> 00:19:04,990

who assumed that  
she was Gentile.

365  
00:19:04,990 --> 00:19:08,680  
Because it was going to  
stand her in good stead.

366  
00:19:08,680 --> 00:19:12,005  
And in fact, it did.

367  
00:19:12,005 --> 00:19:14,830  
Did you go to school in Prague?

368  
00:19:14,830 --> 00:19:16,030  
I went to school in Prague.

369  
00:19:16,030 --> 00:19:18,490  
I went to a Jewish school.

370  
00:19:18,490 --> 00:19:23,980  
And I had my first love  
affair in the first grade.

371  
00:19:23,980 --> 00:19:26,800  
Because I was the  
smallest kid in the class,

372  
00:19:26,800 --> 00:19:28,792  
and sat in the first row.

373  
00:19:28,792 --> 00:19:30,250  
And I fell in love  
with my teacher,

374  
00:19:30,250 --> 00:19:33,370  
whose name was Fraulein Baga.

375  
00:19:33,370 --> 00:19:39,730  
Somehow, I was as impulsive  
at that age as I am today,

376  
00:19:39,730 --> 00:19:42,130



and unable to restrain  
myself one day.

377  
00:19:42,130 --> 00:19:45,880  
I jumped on my desk and threw  
my arms around Fraulein Baga,

378  
00:19:45,880 --> 00:19:47,370  
and hugged and kissed her.

379  
00:19:47,370 --> 00:19:51,100  
This somehow led to a  
meeting with Fraulein Baga

380  
00:19:51,100 --> 00:19:53,920  
with my parents in the school.

381  
00:19:53,920 --> 00:19:56,290  
And, of course,  
after all these years

382  
00:19:56,290 --> 00:19:59,920  
I can't explain what  
happened, but a friendship

383  
00:19:59,920 --> 00:20:04,160  
developed between this young  
teacher and my parents.

384  
00:20:04,160 --> 00:20:05,260  
And she got married.

385  
00:20:05,260 --> 00:20:07,360  
And I do remember  
going to her wedding

386  
00:20:07,360 --> 00:20:10,410  
and crying bitterly that she  
was marrying somebody else.

387  
00:20:10,410 --> 00:20:12,160  
I would love to know  
whether she survived.

388  
00:20:12,160 --> 00:20:14,950  
I don't know.

389  
00:20:14,950 --> 00:20:16,840  
This was a Jewish wedding?

390  
00:20:16,840 --> 00:20:18,290  
This was a Jewish wedding, yes.

391  
00:20:18,290 --> 00:20:21,790  
And there was no problem  
with that at the time?

392  
00:20:21,790 --> 00:20:24,790  
You don't remember any  
difficulty with the wedding?

393  
00:20:24,790 --> 00:20:25,630  
I don't know.

394  
00:20:25,630 --> 00:20:27,310  
I just-- I was too young to--

395  
00:20:27,310 --> 00:20:32,290  
I was-- I would not have  
noticed anything, no.

396  
00:20:32,290 --> 00:20:36,128  
When did you first hear, or when  
were you first aware of a man

397  
00:20:36,128 --> 00:20:36,670  
named Hitler?

398  
00:20:36,670 --> 00:20:39,450

399  
00:20:39,450 --> 00:20:43,620  
I'm not sure I know  
the answer to that.

400

00:20:43,620 --> 00:20:46,100

I think my parents  
tried to shield us

401

00:20:46,100 --> 00:20:50,420

as much as possible  
from what was going on.

402

00:20:50,420 --> 00:20:53,150

Whether they spoke of Hitler  
in the home, I don't know.

403

00:20:53,150 --> 00:20:55,250

I don't remember.

404

00:20:55,250 --> 00:21:01,280

Certainly, there was always  
a great sense of agitation

405

00:21:01,280 --> 00:21:05,000

and anxiety in the home.

406

00:21:05,000 --> 00:21:06,770

How did you know that?

407

00:21:06,770 --> 00:21:09,090

Well, when your  
parents are anxious,

408

00:21:09,090 --> 00:21:13,460

I think kids pick up on that.

409

00:21:13,460 --> 00:21:19,310

Hushed conversations with  
friends, just looking worried,

410

00:21:19,310 --> 00:21:20,630

I think.

411

00:21:20,630 --> 00:21:23,060

You can't hide that  
thing from kids.

412  
00:21:23,060 --> 00:21:27,590  
Did you talk this over with  
your parents, your concerns?

413  
00:21:27,590 --> 00:21:29,300  
No, I don't think I did.

414  
00:21:29,300 --> 00:21:30,710  
No.

415  
00:21:30,710 --> 00:21:34,270  
I think to the extent that  
it's possible at that age

416  
00:21:34,270 --> 00:21:39,355  
and in those circumstances, I  
had a fairly happy childhood.

417  
00:21:39,355 --> 00:21:40,730  
I think my parents  
did their best

418  
00:21:40,730 --> 00:21:46,970  
to protect us from the anxiety  
that they were enduring.

419  
00:21:46,970 --> 00:21:48,770  
You said you went  
to a Jewish school?

420  
00:21:48,770 --> 00:21:53,810  
Did you have any non-Jewish  
friends in Prague?

421  
00:21:53,810 --> 00:21:55,480  
I only remember one.

422  
00:21:55,480 --> 00:21:58,750  
His name was Herbert.

423  
00:21:58,750 --> 00:22:00,380

And that's all I  
remember about him.

424  
00:22:00,380 --> 00:22:02,810  
We were pals, we  
did things together.

425  
00:22:02,810 --> 00:22:05,990  
But beyond that, I  
don't remember, no.

426  
00:22:05,990 --> 00:22:09,950  
What did you do besides  
going to school in Prague?

427  
00:22:09,950 --> 00:22:12,740  
I think the same thing that  
anybody in those days did.

428  
00:22:12,740 --> 00:22:15,290  
We went to the park  
in the afternoons,

429  
00:22:15,290 --> 00:22:18,300  
or I should say afternoon  
weekends with my parents.

430  
00:22:18,300 --> 00:22:20,270  
We had picnics.

431  
00:22:20,270 --> 00:22:24,290  
I think we did a lot  
of walking in the city.

432  
00:22:24,290 --> 00:22:31,790  
I remember crossing the bridge  
across the Danube on walks.

433  
00:22:31,790 --> 00:22:33,960  
One of the family stories  
is that my brothers--

434  
00:22:33,960 --> 00:22:38,630

who were devils, particularly  
my brother George--

435  
00:22:38,630 --> 00:22:43,670  
they were not much  
older than six or seven

436  
00:22:43,670 --> 00:22:46,950  
when they had their first  
brush with the police, in fact.

437  
00:22:46,950 --> 00:22:49,710  
They used to urinate off  
the bridge into the Danube,

438  
00:22:49,710 --> 00:22:52,220  
and making a spectacle  
of themselves

439  
00:22:52,220 --> 00:22:55,040  
just for the fun of it.

440  
00:22:55,040 --> 00:22:58,010  
Were you a very  
physically active child?

441  
00:22:58,010 --> 00:23:00,140  
Did you like sports?

442  
00:23:00,140 --> 00:23:04,220  
No, I didn't, and I don't like  
sports to this day, not even

443  
00:23:04,220 --> 00:23:06,047  
spectator sports.

444  
00:23:06,047 --> 00:23:06,755  
What about music?

445  
00:23:06,755 --> 00:23:09,252  
You said that's part  
of your heritage.

446

00:23:09,252 --> 00:23:10,460

Yes, I'm a great music lover.

447

00:23:10,460 --> 00:23:13,310

I think music is my  
one and only passion.

448

00:23:13,310 --> 00:23:16,220

I think because I grew  
up hearing my father

449

00:23:16,220 --> 00:23:20,060

playing with his friends and  
by himself, violin and piano,

450

00:23:20,060 --> 00:23:23,580

and the radio was always  
on to classical music.

451

00:23:23,580 --> 00:23:29,120

So I knew all the  
major classical works,

452

00:23:29,120 --> 00:23:32,090

probably before I was in--

453

00:23:32,090 --> 00:23:35,090

before I was bar  
mitzvah, certainly.

454

00:23:35,090 --> 00:23:37,910

Did you take music lessons?

455

00:23:37,910 --> 00:23:40,610

I took more music  
lessons than most people.

456

00:23:40,610 --> 00:23:45,480

I took violin lessons on three  
separate occasions in my life.

457

00:23:45,480 --> 00:23:49,940

I took piano lessons on  
two separate occasions.

458  
00:23:49,940 --> 00:23:53,600  
The last time I took music  
lessons was as a 40-year-old I

459  
00:23:53,600 --> 00:23:55,502  
took piano lessons.

460  
00:23:55,502 --> 00:23:56,960  
The first time I  
took piano lessons

461  
00:23:56,960 --> 00:24:00,650  
I even was taking them with a  
private teacher in Juilliard,

462  
00:24:00,650 --> 00:24:01,820  
in New York.

463  
00:24:01,820 --> 00:24:03,320  
I never could get  
the hang of it.

464  
00:24:03,320 --> 00:24:05,420  
I cannot play any  
musical instrument.

465  
00:24:05,420 --> 00:24:07,010  
I cannot read music.

466  
00:24:07,010 --> 00:24:09,710  
It is one of the great--

467  
00:24:09,710 --> 00:24:12,650  
tragedies is  
overstating it-- but I'm

468  
00:24:12,650 --> 00:24:15,322  
sorry that I just don't  
have that facility.



469

00:24:15,322 --> 00:24:17,030

But when you were in  
Prague, you didn't--

470

00:24:17,030 --> 00:24:19,040

as a little child,  
you didn't take--

471

00:24:19,040 --> 00:24:20,480

did you take lessons?

472

00:24:20,480 --> 00:24:24,830

No, the first time I took  
music lessons was in New York.

473

00:24:24,830 --> 00:24:26,900

Now, you said your  
mother was not religious.

474

00:24:26,900 --> 00:24:28,660

Did you have  
anything in the home?

475

00:24:28,660 --> 00:24:30,070

Did you celebrate the Sabbath?

476

00:24:30,070 --> 00:24:34,830

Was there anything done in the  
home when you were very young?

477

00:24:34,830 --> 00:24:38,660

We celebrated the  
high holy days--

478

00:24:38,660 --> 00:24:41,665

Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Yom  
Kippur, and that sort of thing.

479

00:24:41,665 --> 00:24:44,330

But my mother always  
rebelled against it.

480

00:24:44,330 --> 00:24:47,570  
She did not see any point to it.

481  
00:24:47,570 --> 00:24:50,000  
She was very Jewish  
in her feeling.

482  
00:24:50,000 --> 00:24:58,470  
She was very pro-Israel,  
but anti organized religion.

483  
00:24:58,470 --> 00:25:03,320  
Did you know you were  
Jewish in a strong sense?

484  
00:25:03,320 --> 00:25:03,820  
Yes, I did.

485  
00:25:03,820 --> 00:25:05,790  
There was no  
question about that.

486  
00:25:05,790 --> 00:25:11,200  
And there was no denying  
that I was Jewish.

487  
00:25:11,200 --> 00:25:14,080  
In fact, one of the  
stories they tell

488  
00:25:14,080 --> 00:25:17,290  
about me was riding with  
my mother in a streetcar

489  
00:25:17,290 --> 00:25:23,290  
in Prague, I offered  
a seat to what seemed

490  
00:25:23,290 --> 00:25:25,450  
to me then a lovely lady.

491  
00:25:25,450 --> 00:25:28,860  
And she said, what

a nice boy you are.

492

00:25:28,860 --> 00:25:32,418

And I babbled, yes,  
and I'm Jewish.

493

00:25:32,418 --> 00:25:33,460

And I have twin brothers.

494

00:25:33,460 --> 00:25:38,470

495

00:25:38,470 --> 00:25:44,470

When did you notice difficult  
circumstances in Prague?

496

00:25:44,470 --> 00:25:50,160

When did things start  
to get more tense?

497

00:25:50,160 --> 00:25:55,710

I think the air raids  
in Prague, which

498

00:25:55,710 --> 00:26:01,380

seemed like the actual war  
for me, were very frightening.

499

00:26:01,380 --> 00:26:04,960

We did have gas masks.

500

00:26:04,960 --> 00:26:07,140

I don't remember ever  
seeing the masks themselves.

501

00:26:07,140 --> 00:26:11,200

They were in canisters on top  
of my parents clothes closet--

502

00:26:11,200 --> 00:26:13,800

the wardrobe.

503

00:26:13,800 --> 00:26:19,800  
And there was always a lot  
of talk among my parents

504  
00:26:19,800 --> 00:26:23,230  
and their friends about  
getting visas and affidavits.

505  
00:26:23,230 --> 00:26:27,420  
So you picked up the pieces of  
conversation here and there.

506  
00:26:27,420 --> 00:26:29,780  
You became aware that there  
was some kind of a threat,

507  
00:26:29,780 --> 00:26:33,150  
that we were in danger.

508  
00:26:33,150 --> 00:26:36,360  
Now, the Germans occupied  
Prague in March of '30.

509  
00:26:36,360 --> 00:26:40,700  
So you are talking  
about air raids when?

510  
00:26:40,700 --> 00:26:42,450  
I said air raids, I  
didn't mean air raids.

511  
00:26:42,450 --> 00:26:44,720  
I meant air raid drills--

512  
00:26:44,720 --> 00:26:48,420  
excuse me-- practice air raids.

513  
00:26:48,420 --> 00:26:50,430  
But they were very  
realistic, for some reason.

514  
00:26:50,430 --> 00:26:54,960  
Because in addition to

sirens and such, they were--

515

00:26:54,960 --> 00:27:00,270

if I remember correctly--  
there were explosions--

516

00:27:00,270 --> 00:27:02,552

simulated explosions.

517

00:27:02,552 --> 00:27:04,260

How did your parents  
explain this to you?

518

00:27:04,260 --> 00:27:07,180

You're only seven  
or eight years old.

519

00:27:07,180 --> 00:27:10,470

I don't remember what they  
told us, I really don't.

520

00:27:10,470 --> 00:27:14,430

I do remember seeing the  
sky lit up with what one

521

00:27:14,430 --> 00:27:16,680

could describe as fireworks.

522

00:27:16,680 --> 00:27:23,080

And I do remember  
the anxiety I felt.

523

00:27:23,080 --> 00:27:25,360

But beyond that,  
I don't remember.

524

00:27:25,360 --> 00:27:28,810

Did you stay in your  
apartment during these drills?

525

00:27:28,810 --> 00:27:32,050

I believe we had a terrace,  
and we stood on the terrace

526  
00:27:32,050 --> 00:27:34,670  
looking out over the scene, yes.

527  
00:27:34,670 --> 00:27:39,640  
There were searchlights, of  
course, piercing the sky.

528  
00:27:39,640 --> 00:27:44,170  
And did you wear the gas masks?

529  
00:27:44,170 --> 00:27:46,840  
If memory serves, the children  
did not have gas masks.

530  
00:27:46,840 --> 00:27:50,440  
There were just two of these  
canisters for the adults.

531  
00:27:50,440 --> 00:27:51,330  
I don't know why.

532  
00:27:51,330 --> 00:27:55,700  
And I'm not sure I remember that  
correctly, but I think I do.

533  
00:27:55,700 --> 00:27:58,526  
Did you have any--

534  
00:27:58,526 --> 00:28:02,020  
were you the butt of than  
any antisemitic experiences

535  
00:28:02,020 --> 00:28:05,080  
while you were in Prague?

536  
00:28:05,080 --> 00:28:07,710  
I probably did, but I  
don't remember them, no.

537  
00:28:07,710 --> 00:28:09,970  
The first ones I

remember vividly

538

00:28:09,970 --> 00:28:11,455

came later, but not in Prague.

539

00:28:11,455 --> 00:28:14,790

540

00:28:14,790 --> 00:28:19,950

There well were from school  
age kids on the streets,

541

00:28:19,950 --> 00:28:22,010

but that's speculation.

542

00:28:22,010 --> 00:28:24,960

That's conjecture on my part.

543

00:28:24,960 --> 00:28:27,250

So life went on  
for you in Prague?

544

00:28:27,250 --> 00:28:31,320

And you went through the  
drills, and then what happened?

545

00:28:31,320 --> 00:28:35,490

Well, we finally got those the  
necessary papers to get out.

546

00:28:35,490 --> 00:28:37,680

And Italy was one place we went.

547

00:28:37,680 --> 00:28:39,450

I don't know why it was Italy.

548

00:28:39,450 --> 00:28:41,850

One went where one could.

549

00:28:41,850 --> 00:28:44,970

I guess it seemed like a  
safe haven at the time.

550  
00:28:44,970 --> 00:28:50,130  
We lived in a place  
called Nervi, N-E-R-V-I ,

551  
00:28:50,130 --> 00:28:51,800  
which was on the  
outskirts of Genoa.

552  
00:28:51,800 --> 00:28:54,920  
I understand nowadays it  
may not exist any longer.

553  
00:28:54,920 --> 00:28:57,720  
I think it has been  
incorporated into Genoa Proper.

554  
00:28:57,720 --> 00:29:00,602  
Let's back up a little bit  
before we get to Italy.

555  
00:29:00,602 --> 00:29:02,310  
You hear that you're  
going to be leaving.

556  
00:29:02,310 --> 00:29:03,570  
Your parents tell you.

557  
00:29:03,570 --> 00:29:05,610  
What were your thoughts  
about having to leave?

558  
00:29:05,610 --> 00:29:08,340  
Here you've left  
one home already.

559  
00:29:08,340 --> 00:29:10,020  
You left Essen to  
come to Prague.

560  
00:29:10,020 --> 00:29:12,840  
Now your parents are telling  
you you have to leave again.



561  
00:29:12,840 --> 00:29:15,780  
As a young child, what  
did that mean to you?

562  
00:29:15,780 --> 00:29:17,760  
I'm blessed or  
cursed, whichever way

563  
00:29:17,760 --> 00:29:20,188  
you want to look at  
it, with a memory that

564  
00:29:20,188 --> 00:29:21,480  
doesn't remember that far back.

565  
00:29:21,480 --> 00:29:23,130  
You also were very young, right?

566  
00:29:23,130 --> 00:29:25,140  
Yes, I was young.

567  
00:29:25,140 --> 00:29:32,250  
But I do remember the train  
ride from Prague to Genoa.

568  
00:29:32,250 --> 00:29:36,600  
Because the train was stopped  
in the middle of nowhere.

569  
00:29:36,600 --> 00:29:43,490  
And several Gestapo came aboard  
and took all our passports.

570  
00:29:43,490 --> 00:29:44,750  
And--

571  
00:29:44,750 --> 00:29:47,300  
Did you know what  
the Gestapo was?

572  
00:29:47,300 --> 00:29:51,710

I think by that time my  
parents must have told us.

573  
00:29:51,710 --> 00:29:57,230  
Because my parents  
were frightened.

574  
00:29:57,230 --> 00:30:01,580  
You couldn't be anything  
but paralyzed with fright.

575  
00:30:01,580 --> 00:30:03,720  
I don't remember  
there being a station.

576  
00:30:03,720 --> 00:30:06,140  
I think there was just a shack  
that they disappeared to.

577  
00:30:06,140 --> 00:30:11,870  
And for a long, long time, a  
couple of hours maybe, and then

578  
00:30:11,870 --> 00:30:14,060  
they reappeared and  
gave back the passports.

579  
00:30:14,060 --> 00:30:15,800  
And we went out on our way.

580  
00:30:15,800 --> 00:30:17,750  
You stayed on the  
train during this time?

581  
00:30:17,750 --> 00:30:22,460  
Were you in a compartment,  
or just in a seating car?

582  
00:30:22,460 --> 00:30:23,780  
I think in a compartment.

583  
00:30:23,780 --> 00:30:26,450  
I think most European

trains in those days

584

00:30:26,450 --> 00:30:28,570  
had compartments, yes.

585

00:30:28,570 --> 00:30:32,150  
Did you take anything special  
with you on that trip,

586

00:30:32,150 --> 00:30:35,390  
knowing that you were  
moving to a new city--

587

00:30:35,390 --> 00:30:38,390  
a child's?

588

00:30:38,390 --> 00:30:39,180  
I don't think so.

589

00:30:39,180 --> 00:30:43,190  
I don't-- if I had any toys,  
I sure don't remember them.

590

00:30:43,190 --> 00:30:48,260  
Toys we're always a  
scarcity in my life.

591

00:30:48,260 --> 00:30:52,040  
I don't remember having  
had anything that I recall

592

00:30:52,040 --> 00:30:56,440  
before I was nine years old.

593

00:30:56,440 --> 00:30:57,680  
And that was years--

594

00:30:57,680 --> 00:30:59,450  
that was in New York already.

595

00:30:59,450 --> 00:31:03,480  
Did you feel bad about

not having a lot of toys?

596

00:31:03,480 --> 00:31:05,430

Oh, I think yes.

597

00:31:05,430 --> 00:31:09,225

I think these

deprivations, if you will,

598

00:31:09,225 --> 00:31:11,530

is something that you

feel all your life.

599

00:31:11,530 --> 00:31:15,182

It has a psychological

impact on you.

600

00:31:15,182 --> 00:31:20,660

It tends to make you either

covetous of other people's

601

00:31:20,660 --> 00:31:25,310

material belongings, or happy

with little that you have

602

00:31:25,310 --> 00:31:26,680

as you get older.

603

00:31:26,680 --> 00:31:29,210

604

00:31:29,210 --> 00:31:32,500

You're on the train

ride to Italy.

605

00:31:32,500 --> 00:31:34,990

Any other stops that you

made besides the one time

606

00:31:34,990 --> 00:31:37,280

that the Gestapo stopped you?

607

00:31:37,280 --> 00:31:40,320

No, I don't think so.

608

00:31:40,320 --> 00:31:43,640

It was-- and I don't know  
how long that trip was.

609

00:31:43,640 --> 00:31:46,520

A few hours, I imagine.

610

00:31:46,520 --> 00:31:48,100

And then you arrived in Italy?

611

00:31:48,100 --> 00:31:49,360

Yes.

612

00:31:49,360 --> 00:31:52,404

You are still only speaking  
German at this point?

613

00:31:52,404 --> 00:31:54,260

Yes.

614

00:31:54,260 --> 00:31:57,060

To back up, did you have  
any religious training?

615

00:31:57,060 --> 00:31:59,230

Did you have any--

616

00:31:59,230 --> 00:32:01,150

when you were in  
Prague, did you have

617

00:32:01,150 --> 00:32:04,180

any extra religious training  
besides the Jewish school

618

00:32:04,180 --> 00:32:06,910

that you went to?

619

00:32:06,910 --> 00:32:09,590

I went to synagogue with  
my father in Prague.

620  
00:32:09,590 --> 00:32:13,730

621  
00:32:13,730 --> 00:32:17,230  
I believe there was  
one seemed class

622  
00:32:17,230 --> 00:32:20,138  
Torah, when we arrived and  
all the candy for the kids

623  
00:32:20,138 --> 00:32:20,930  
had been given out.

624  
00:32:20,930 --> 00:32:22,140  
And my father was furious.

625  
00:32:22,140 --> 00:32:24,570  
I do remember that.

626  
00:32:24,570 --> 00:32:26,690  
But you went on a regular  
basis with your father

627  
00:32:26,690 --> 00:32:28,100  
to the synagogue?

628  
00:32:28,100 --> 00:32:30,470  
I don't think we  
went every week, no.

629  
00:32:30,470 --> 00:32:36,240  
But I guess we went  
with some regularity.

630  
00:32:36,240 --> 00:32:38,850

631  
00:32:38,850 --> 00:32:41,100

Did you understand any Hebrew?

632

00:32:41,100 --> 00:32:43,470

No.

633

00:32:43,470 --> 00:32:46,640

So when you get to Italy  
your only language now

634

00:32:46,640 --> 00:32:48,328

is still German?

635

00:32:48,328 --> 00:32:48,870

That's right.

636

00:32:48,870 --> 00:32:51,800

OK, now you're in Italy.

637

00:32:51,800 --> 00:32:57,960

And you-- what were  
your first impressions?

638

00:32:57,960 --> 00:33:00,235

It was a nice climate.

639

00:33:00,235 --> 00:33:03,840

640

00:33:03,840 --> 00:33:09,820

It was warm, and my parents  
had no work and no money.

641

00:33:09,820 --> 00:33:13,430

I don't know, frankly,  
how they lived--

642

00:33:13,430 --> 00:33:16,780

how we lived, what we lived on.

643

00:33:16,780 --> 00:33:20,590

All I know is that I was  
in charge of my brothers,

644

00:33:20,590 --> 00:33:24,100  
and took them to  
a park every day,

645

00:33:24,100 --> 00:33:30,590  
which seemed like the  
rational thing for my parents

646

00:33:30,590 --> 00:33:32,990  
to do while they went  
scrounging for work,

647

00:33:32,990 --> 00:33:39,140  
as well as for the next exit  
visa to the next way station.

648

00:33:39,140 --> 00:33:46,220  
But the park was a daily misery  
for us, because we were Jewish

649

00:33:46,220 --> 00:33:47,630  
and we spoke German.

650

00:33:47,630 --> 00:33:49,880  
That is to say we did  
not speak Italian.

651

00:33:49,880 --> 00:33:58,580  
So the kids not only taunted  
us, but actually beat us.

652

00:33:58,580 --> 00:34:02,300  
Actually beat us with  
chains and things like that.

653

00:34:02,300 --> 00:34:04,160  
We never had any money.

654

00:34:04,160 --> 00:34:08,300  
There were concessions in  
that park, little pedal



655

00:34:08,300 --> 00:34:13,170

cars, but whatever

it was that they

656

00:34:13,170 --> 00:34:14,730

cost we never had the money.

657

00:34:14,730 --> 00:34:20,909

We never had a cent or the

Italian equivalent of cent.

658

00:34:20,909 --> 00:34:24,449

So we would hang around

this little amusement park.

659

00:34:24,449 --> 00:34:28,440

And when kids were

finished with a ride

660

00:34:28,440 --> 00:34:34,080

we would try to push the

cars to their parking place

661

00:34:34,080 --> 00:34:38,350

and arrange them before the

owner caught up with us.

662

00:34:38,350 --> 00:34:42,270

So we would maybe ride the

car a couple of feet for free.

663

00:34:42,270 --> 00:34:46,830

But that was a rare occurrence

and a rare luxury for us.

664

00:34:46,830 --> 00:34:49,230

But the longing

to have the money

665

00:34:49,230 --> 00:34:51,719

to ride one of those

things was always there.

666

00:34:51,719 --> 00:34:55,050

And to run away  
from these toughs

667

00:34:55,050 --> 00:34:58,680

who were always after us.

668

00:34:58,680 --> 00:35:01,350

Did you understand  
what they were saying?

669

00:35:01,350 --> 00:35:02,100

No, I don't.

670

00:35:02,100 --> 00:35:07,530

But when you are chased with  
chains and sticks and fists

671

00:35:07,530 --> 00:35:11,730

and so forth, that's sort  
of a universal language.

672

00:35:11,730 --> 00:35:15,654

So you are an eight-year-old in  
charge of two four-year-olds?

673

00:35:15,654 --> 00:35:20,740

674

00:35:20,740 --> 00:35:25,440

What were your thoughts about  
having to move to Italy?

675

00:35:25,440 --> 00:35:27,770

I don't know that I had  
a particular thought.

676

00:35:27,770 --> 00:35:32,452

It just seemed my  
parents moved there, you

677

00:35:32,452 --> 00:35:34,910

don't do a lot of questioning  
when you are eight years old,

678  
00:35:34,910 --> 00:35:37,010  
and that's where we went.

679  
00:35:37,010 --> 00:35:41,630  
I imagined that my parents  
explained to at least me

680  
00:35:41,630 --> 00:35:43,940  
why we were moving.

681  
00:35:43,940 --> 00:35:48,110  
I think they instilled in  
me a sense of responsibility

682  
00:35:48,110 --> 00:35:54,860  
for my brothers, which in a  
way made me grow up very fast.

683  
00:35:54,860 --> 00:35:58,600  
And I might add, my brothers  
have never really forgiven me

684  
00:35:58,600 --> 00:36:00,140  
for.

685  
00:36:00,140 --> 00:36:02,452  
You said you left  
Prague in 1939.

686  
00:36:02,452 --> 00:36:06,500  
What month in 1939?

687  
00:36:06,500 --> 00:36:07,130  
I don't know.

688  
00:36:07,130 --> 00:36:08,250  
I think it was the summer.

689  
00:36:08,250 --> 00:36:12,840

It was certainly after  
the Germans marched in.

690  
00:36:12,840 --> 00:36:14,610  
But it was before  
the war had started?

691  
00:36:14,610 --> 00:36:17,620  
Before September  
invasion of Poland?

692  
00:36:17,620 --> 00:36:18,120  
Yes.

693  
00:36:18,120 --> 00:36:20,850

694  
00:36:20,850 --> 00:36:24,898  
What did the Germans look  
like to you in Prague?

695  
00:36:24,898 --> 00:36:27,617  
Were they frightening?

696  
00:36:27,617 --> 00:36:28,575  
Were they overwhelming?

697  
00:36:28,575 --> 00:36:32,163  
What impressions as a  
young boy did you have?

698  
00:36:32,163 --> 00:36:32,955  
They were soldiers.

699  
00:36:32,955 --> 00:36:35,640

700  
00:36:35,640 --> 00:36:38,980  
I remember what the  
uniforms looked like.

701  
00:36:38,980 --> 00:36:40,710

What did they look like?

702

00:36:40,710 --> 00:36:43,470

They looked big,  
but not menacing.

703

00:36:43,470 --> 00:36:44,790

They played with us.

704

00:36:44,790 --> 00:36:47,680

That is to say, they  
patted us on the cheek,

705

00:36:47,680 --> 00:36:50,280

and watched us we--

706

00:36:50,280 --> 00:36:52,860

by we I mean my brothers  
and other kids--

707

00:36:52,860 --> 00:36:56,370

played in the sandlot, and  
whatever other equipment

708

00:36:56,370 --> 00:36:59,210

was in that playground.

709

00:36:59,210 --> 00:37:03,270

And they just-- I think they  
were bivouacked in that park.

710

00:37:03,270 --> 00:37:05,210

And they were just--

711

00:37:05,210 --> 00:37:08,670

the kids there were a  
distraction for these soldiers.

712

00:37:08,670 --> 00:37:11,100

They were something  
to be amused by.

713

00:37:11,100 --> 00:37:14,880

And they had no idea that  
we were Jewish, of course.

714

00:37:14,880 --> 00:37:18,260

They just left us alone.

715

00:37:18,260 --> 00:37:20,300

So you didn't have any  
particularly frightening

716

00:37:20,300 --> 00:37:22,500

experience with German soldiers?

717

00:37:22,500 --> 00:37:23,000

Not at all.

718

00:37:23,000 --> 00:37:26,360

They seemed to be friendly.

719

00:37:26,360 --> 00:37:28,850

Did you think of  
them as your enemy?

720

00:37:28,850 --> 00:37:29,870

No, I don't think so.

721

00:37:29,870 --> 00:37:32,480

No, certainly not  
that I think of it.

722

00:37:32,480 --> 00:37:35,870

Because I don't think  
my parents questioned us

723

00:37:35,870 --> 00:37:41,700

about any fraternization,  
for lack of a better word,

724

00:37:41,700 --> 00:37:42,200

with them.

725

00:37:42,200 --> 00:37:45,830  
No, I think they just went about  
their business, more or less,

726  
00:37:45,830 --> 00:37:51,127  
and we went about our business  
of playing in the playground.

727  
00:37:51,127 --> 00:38:02,830

728  
00:38:02,830 --> 00:38:05,800  
This is tape one,  
side B, and we were

729  
00:38:05,800 --> 00:38:08,860  
talking about the year 1939.

730  
00:38:08,860 --> 00:38:10,990  
And you have arrived  
in Italy, and you

731  
00:38:10,990 --> 00:38:15,100  
were in charge of your two  
little brothers in the park.

732  
00:38:15,100 --> 00:38:20,140  
What other memories do you  
have from that time in Italy?

733  
00:38:20,140 --> 00:38:22,630  
The weekends, or  
at least Sundays,

734  
00:38:22,630 --> 00:38:26,050  
were spent with my parents  
and their small circle

735  
00:38:26,050 --> 00:38:29,845  
of friends who were all like  
us, refugees from Germany.

736  
00:38:29,845 --> 00:38:32,932

737

00:38:32,932 --> 00:38:34,390

Let's talk a little  
bit about that.

738

00:38:34,390 --> 00:38:39,280

When you left Essen  
to come to Prague,

739

00:38:39,280 --> 00:38:43,090

did your parents come with other  
relatives in a bigger group?

740

00:38:43,090 --> 00:38:45,640

Or were you just  
the five of you?

741

00:38:45,640 --> 00:38:47,950

It was just the five of us.

742

00:38:47,950 --> 00:38:50,420

There was only one  
grandparent still alive.

743

00:38:50,420 --> 00:38:53,710

She was my father's mother.

744

00:38:53,710 --> 00:38:58,390

She lived with an  
uncle in Amsterdam.

745

00:38:58,390 --> 00:39:01,000

And she later  
perished in Auschwitz.

746

00:39:01,000 --> 00:39:04,720

747

00:39:04,720 --> 00:39:08,110

And then when you  
were in Prague,



748

00:39:08,110 --> 00:39:10,240

were there other  
relatives around?

749

00:39:10,240 --> 00:39:11,650

No.

750

00:39:11,650 --> 00:39:15,350

Did you have friends  
from Essen in Prague?

751

00:39:15,350 --> 00:39:16,400

No, I don't think so.

752

00:39:16,400 --> 00:39:19,910

I think we were  
basically by ourselves.

753

00:39:19,910 --> 00:39:23,260

And then you went to  
Italy by yourself?

754

00:39:23,260 --> 00:39:25,610

But you said once  
you got into Italy

755

00:39:25,610 --> 00:39:27,290

there were German friends?

756

00:39:27,290 --> 00:39:28,430

There were others like us.

757

00:39:28,430 --> 00:39:32,945

And the people-- refugees--  
have a way of congregating,

758

00:39:32,945 --> 00:39:35,000

of finding each other out--

759

00:39:35,000 --> 00:39:41,480

people who are in  
the same situation.

760  
00:39:41,480 --> 00:39:43,490  
It was a comfort,  
a moral support.

761  
00:39:43,490 --> 00:39:46,970  
It was a way of  
exchanging information.

762  
00:39:46,970 --> 00:39:53,630  
It was a way of having  
some kind of a tie to there

763  
00:39:53,630 --> 00:39:54,920  
being no community any longer.

764  
00:39:54,920 --> 00:39:57,920  
That was what constituted, the  
closest thing to a community

765  
00:39:57,920 --> 00:40:03,800  
was a small group of  
similarly situated friends.

766  
00:40:03,800 --> 00:40:05,260  
Was this also true in Prague?

767  
00:40:05,260 --> 00:40:11,120  
Did your parents congregate and  
mix with other German refugees?

768  
00:40:11,120 --> 00:40:12,290  
Yes, yes.

769  
00:40:12,290 --> 00:40:13,440  
Not many, I don't think.

770  
00:40:13,440 --> 00:40:18,410  
There were two bachelor  
brothers who were, I think,

771  
00:40:18,410 --> 00:40:21,416

living in the same apartment  
house whom they befriended.

772  
00:40:21,416 --> 00:40:23,910  
It was a very small circle.

773  
00:40:23,910 --> 00:40:27,050  
We were basically alone.

774  
00:40:27,050 --> 00:40:29,430  
What did you do  
besides go in the park?

775  
00:40:29,430 --> 00:40:31,940

776  
00:40:31,940 --> 00:40:33,410  
That was about it.

777  
00:40:33,410 --> 00:40:35,750  
Looking forward to  
Saturdays and Sundays

778  
00:40:35,750 --> 00:40:38,120  
and being with my parents.

779  
00:40:38,120 --> 00:40:43,340  
And I seem to remember there  
was a water-- not waterfront,

780  
00:40:43,340 --> 00:40:44,600  
but a beach.

781  
00:40:44,600 --> 00:40:46,100  
Maybe it was--

782  
00:40:46,100 --> 00:40:49,310  
I guess Genoa was close  
enough to the ocean, yes.

783  
00:40:49,310 --> 00:40:51,650  
Sort of a Mediterranean

setting, and walking

784

00:40:51,650 --> 00:40:53,870  
along the strand with my  
parents and their friends.

785

00:40:53,870 --> 00:40:56,900

786

00:40:56,900 --> 00:41:01,640  
As I said earlier, I don't know  
how my parents bought food,

787

00:41:01,640 --> 00:41:03,230  
but I do remember  
that it was scarce.

788

00:41:03,230 --> 00:41:08,990  
I know when my mother came  
home with cherries or grapes

789

00:41:08,990 --> 00:41:11,150  
and things like that,  
they were carefully

790

00:41:11,150 --> 00:41:14,140  
counted out and divided  
equally among all of us.

791

00:41:14,140 --> 00:41:16,780

792

00:41:16,780 --> 00:41:17,650  
What about clothes?

793

00:41:17,650 --> 00:41:20,970  
Did you have enough  
good clothes to wear?

794

00:41:20,970 --> 00:41:24,520  
Clothes were always a  
problem, even in later years.

795

00:41:24,520 --> 00:41:26,110

I don't think we  
had a heck of a lot.

796

00:41:26,110 --> 00:41:28,870

797

00:41:28,870 --> 00:41:31,540

But I just had a thought--

798

00:41:31,540 --> 00:41:33,250

going back to the  
previous question--

799

00:41:33,250 --> 00:41:38,890

I think, but I'm not sure,  
that my father's company,

800

00:41:38,890 --> 00:41:41,020

although he did not  
work for the company

801

00:41:41,020 --> 00:41:44,163

during the stay in Italy, I  
think that may have helped.

802

00:41:44,163 --> 00:41:45,580

Because otherwise  
I don't know how

803

00:41:45,580 --> 00:41:48,720

my parents could have survived.

804

00:41:48,720 --> 00:41:52,380

Did your mother do any  
kind of work in Italy?

805

00:41:52,380 --> 00:41:54,750

No, there was no  
opportunity at all.

806

00:41:54,750 --> 00:41:57,750

If for no other reason  
than that there was no--

807  
00:41:57,750 --> 00:42:00,630  
she didn't know the language.

808  
00:42:00,630 --> 00:42:03,402  
Did you pick up any  
of the language?

809  
00:42:03,402 --> 00:42:04,110  
I don't think so.

810  
00:42:04,110 --> 00:42:06,870  
Maybe a smattering of words.

811  
00:42:06,870 --> 00:42:09,960  
But I don't think so, no.

812  
00:42:09,960 --> 00:42:11,530  
What are your  
memories of this time?

813  
00:42:11,530 --> 00:42:13,270  
Was it a very difficult time?

814  
00:42:13,270 --> 00:42:16,050  
And for how long were you there?

815  
00:42:16,050 --> 00:42:20,730  
We were in this little town  
of Nervi about six months.

816  
00:42:20,730 --> 00:42:23,550  
It was difficult only  
because every morning

817  
00:42:23,550 --> 00:42:25,590  
was the same routine of  
being sent to the park

818  
00:42:25,590 --> 00:42:30,390

and being in fear of going.

819

00:42:30,390 --> 00:42:33,930

Did you tell your mother  
you were afraid of going?

820

00:42:33,930 --> 00:42:35,400

I don't remember.

821

00:42:35,400 --> 00:42:37,230

Probably not.

822

00:42:37,230 --> 00:42:38,550

Why not?

823

00:42:38,550 --> 00:42:40,830

I felt a sense of  
responsibility,

824

00:42:40,830 --> 00:42:44,400

and so I think I  
kept my mouth shut.

825

00:42:44,400 --> 00:42:45,910

This is at eight  
years old you felt

826

00:42:45,910 --> 00:42:48,150

the sense of responsibility?

827

00:42:48,150 --> 00:42:49,260

I think so, yes.

828

00:42:49,260 --> 00:42:51,240

It was a, I think,  
a heavy burden.

829

00:42:51,240 --> 00:42:54,000

830

00:42:54,000 --> 00:42:56,220

And that, too, has

left its scars.

831

00:42:56,220 --> 00:43:04,600

832

00:43:04,600 --> 00:43:10,960

Any other memories of  
your time in Italy?

833

00:43:10,960 --> 00:43:15,900

No, I do remember one  
particularly amusing man,

834

00:43:15,900 --> 00:43:17,290

one of my parents' friends.

835

00:43:17,290 --> 00:43:19,780

He was a women's  
fashion designer,

836

00:43:19,780 --> 00:43:23,640

and I remember that  
he wore a monocle.

837

00:43:23,640 --> 00:43:26,770

And he had a big mustache  
that he used to twirl.

838

00:43:26,770 --> 00:43:32,080

He was very engaging,  
and highly educated,

839

00:43:32,080 --> 00:43:34,170

and always told amusing stories.

840

00:43:34,170 --> 00:43:38,140

And my parents, I think,  
doted on his company

841

00:43:38,140 --> 00:43:46,090

because he had a way  
of making them feel--



842

00:43:46,090 --> 00:43:49,480

he was kind of an entertainment  
for them, if you will.

843

00:43:49,480 --> 00:43:51,730

Because there sure were no  
theater or movies or things

844

00:43:51,730 --> 00:43:53,370

like that for them.

845

00:43:53,370 --> 00:43:59,360

He you had a way of helping them  
get their minds off the crisis

846

00:43:59,360 --> 00:44:01,510

that they were living in.

847

00:44:01,510 --> 00:44:04,060

Now, there were  
restrictions, racial laws

848

00:44:04,060 --> 00:44:07,000

enacted in 1938 in Italy.

849

00:44:07,000 --> 00:44:08,290

Were you aware of them?

850

00:44:08,290 --> 00:44:11,530

Did you feel any restrictions?

851

00:44:11,530 --> 00:44:13,630

No, I was not.

852

00:44:13,630 --> 00:44:15,580

I was not.

853

00:44:15,580 --> 00:44:18,370

But that may also explain why my  
parents couldn't get any work.

854

00:44:18,370 --> 00:44:22,050

855

00:44:22,050 --> 00:44:24,210

Were you limited to  
where you could be,

856

00:44:24,210 --> 00:44:26,850

or times of day or evening?

857

00:44:26,850 --> 00:44:28,530

Not that I'm aware of.

858

00:44:28,530 --> 00:44:33,840

I think our role was very  
circumscribed from apartment

859

00:44:33,840 --> 00:44:37,130

house to the park to the beach.

860

00:44:37,130 --> 00:44:37,880

That was about it.

861

00:44:37,880 --> 00:44:40,510

862

00:44:40,510 --> 00:44:43,630

Did you feel comfortable  
near the water?

863

00:44:43,630 --> 00:44:45,262

Yes, I think I did.

864

00:44:45,262 --> 00:44:47,740

It was nice strolling there.

865

00:44:47,740 --> 00:44:49,690

Did you go swimming?

866

00:44:49,690 --> 00:44:51,220

I don't remember that.

867

00:44:51,220 --> 00:44:52,120

I don't think so.

868

00:44:52,120 --> 00:44:54,870

That may explain why

I'm still a bad swimmer.

869

00:44:54,870 --> 00:44:59,110

Now, what did you know about

this man named Hitler, now

870

00:44:59,110 --> 00:45:01,660

that you're eight years old?

871

00:45:01,660 --> 00:45:04,030

Strange as it may

sound, I don't know.

872

00:45:04,030 --> 00:45:06,790

I don't know that--

873

00:45:06,790 --> 00:45:10,120

I don't remember him

being talked about.

874

00:45:10,120 --> 00:45:12,940

875

00:45:12,940 --> 00:45:17,320

Whether it was probably

because of my age.

876

00:45:17,320 --> 00:45:20,950

That's the only

thing I can explain.

877

00:45:20,950 --> 00:45:26,230

The first time he actually

came into a conversation,

878

00:45:26,230 --> 00:45:31,430

that I recall, was later on when

we were living in our next way

879

00:45:31,430 --> 00:45:31,930  
station.

880

00:45:31,930 --> 00:45:37,020

881

00:45:37,020 --> 00:45:39,600

Now, what month did you  
say you came to Italy,

882

00:45:39,600 --> 00:45:41,850  
or what time of the year?

883

00:45:41,850 --> 00:45:45,840  
I think it was during  
the summer of '39.

884

00:45:45,840 --> 00:45:48,210  
And then the war  
started, World War

885

00:45:48,210 --> 00:45:51,390  
Two, and when Germany  
invaded Poland in September,

886

00:45:51,390 --> 00:45:54,600  
does that bring back  
any memories for you?

887

00:45:54,600 --> 00:45:55,410  
It does not.

888

00:45:55,410 --> 00:46:00,385  
But I can't imagine not  
hearing about it at the time.

889

00:46:00,385 --> 00:46:02,010  
Certainly, my parents  
and their friends

890

00:46:02,010 --> 00:46:03,093  
must have talked about it.

891  
00:46:03,093 --> 00:46:05,260  
It's inconceivable that  
we didn't hear about it.

892  
00:46:05,260 --> 00:46:07,950  
But to actually remember it, no.

893  
00:46:07,950 --> 00:46:10,350  
Do you have any memories--  
just going back a year--

894  
00:46:10,350 --> 00:46:11,910  
of Kristallnacht at all?

895  
00:46:11,910 --> 00:46:14,510  
Of people talking about  
it, of knowing about it,

896  
00:46:14,510 --> 00:46:16,680  
of hearing about?

897  
00:46:16,680 --> 00:46:17,760  
No, I didn't.

898  
00:46:17,760 --> 00:46:19,652  
I really didn't.

899  
00:46:19,652 --> 00:46:22,630

900  
00:46:22,630 --> 00:46:25,480  
Now, your mother, your  
parents are trying desperately

901  
00:46:25,480 --> 00:46:27,050  
to leave Italy.

902  
00:46:27,050 --> 00:46:31,000  
And where were they

talking about going to?

903

00:46:31,000 --> 00:46:35,740

They were willing to go  
anywhere that was possible.

904

00:46:35,740 --> 00:46:39,100

My details are  
very, very sketchy,

905

00:46:39,100 --> 00:46:45,100

but I do know that ultimately  
at the choice of Ecuador

906

00:46:45,100 --> 00:46:48,400

or Australia they chose Ecuador.

907

00:46:48,400 --> 00:46:50,830

I don't know why.

908

00:46:50,830 --> 00:46:54,520

I think Ecuador, certainly,  
was one of the few countries

909

00:46:54,520 --> 00:46:57,880

in the world that let Jews in.

910

00:46:57,880 --> 00:47:00,490

911

00:47:00,490 --> 00:47:03,430

Why they chose  
Ecuador, I don't know.

912

00:47:03,430 --> 00:47:06,570

How did your family  
arrange for you to leave?

913

00:47:06,570 --> 00:47:09,250

Again, the long process  
of standing in line

914

00:47:09,250 --> 00:47:11,860  
at the consulates,  
getting the exit

915  
00:47:11,860 --> 00:47:19,250  
visas, the passports,  
the affidavits.

916  
00:47:19,250 --> 00:47:22,950  
Somebody in Ecuador must  
have provided an affidavit,

917  
00:47:22,950 --> 00:47:24,940  
I would think.

918  
00:47:24,940 --> 00:47:28,250  
But who that was, I don't know.

919  
00:47:28,250 --> 00:47:31,130  
Again, it may have been my  
father's company that helped.

920  
00:47:31,130 --> 00:47:34,022

921  
00:47:34,022 --> 00:47:38,940  
The company probably  
paid for our passage.

922  
00:47:38,940 --> 00:47:41,880  
Did you notice any change  
in your father's demeanor

923  
00:47:41,880 --> 00:47:44,960  
during this time as the  
situation got more tense?

924  
00:47:44,960 --> 00:47:47,930

925  
00:47:47,930 --> 00:47:51,500  
No, I don't remember that.

926

00:47:51,500 --> 00:47:53,960

No, I don't.

927

00:47:53,960 --> 00:47:59,405

There was never time for  
horseplay or lightheartedness.

928

00:47:59,405 --> 00:48:06,885

There was always tension  
somehow that a young kid senses.

929

00:48:06,885 --> 00:48:09,880

930

00:48:09,880 --> 00:48:13,340

And certainly there never was  
any money for entertainment

931

00:48:13,340 --> 00:48:14,945

or doing anything that was fun.

932

00:48:14,945 --> 00:48:20,002

933

00:48:20,002 --> 00:48:21,710

I'm not saying this  
in a complaining way.

934

00:48:21,710 --> 00:48:23,690

It was not a--

935

00:48:23,690 --> 00:48:27,500

obviously, not a  
carefree childhood.

936

00:48:27,500 --> 00:48:31,910

You must have felt much  
older than your years?

937

00:48:31,910 --> 00:48:33,320

Yes, I still do.



938

00:48:33,320 --> 00:48:36,980

Someone said to me recently  
that I never had a childhood.

939

00:48:36,980 --> 00:48:39,110

I don't know that  
I agree with that,

940

00:48:39,110 --> 00:48:46,530

but I certainly had more  
careers and responsibilities

941

00:48:46,530 --> 00:48:48,790

than a kid born in this  
country at the same age.

942

00:48:48,790 --> 00:48:52,390

943

00:48:52,390 --> 00:48:53,960

Did you say anything  
to your brothers

944

00:48:53,960 --> 00:48:55,490

as they got a little older?

945

00:48:55,490 --> 00:48:57,640

Of course, obviously  
in 1939 they

946

00:48:57,640 --> 00:48:59,040

were, what, four years old?

947

00:48:59,040 --> 00:49:03,810

So did you try to  
explain anything to them?

948

00:49:03,810 --> 00:49:10,230

No, I think all I did was try  
to encourage them to behave.

949

00:49:10,230 --> 00:49:15,810

Not to be rambunctious  
and things like that.

950  
00:49:15,810 --> 00:49:19,710  
But they never cooperated.

951  
00:49:19,710 --> 00:49:21,880  
They always gave  
me a hard time--

952  
00:49:21,880 --> 00:49:25,120  
still do.

953  
00:49:25,120 --> 00:49:30,720  
And now your parents were  
able to get papers to leave.

954  
00:49:30,720 --> 00:49:34,180  
What were your thoughts  
then, on the next move?

955  
00:49:34,180 --> 00:49:37,770  
We're now going  
to Quito, Ecuador.

956  
00:49:37,770 --> 00:49:39,450  
Had you ever heard  
of that place?

957  
00:49:39,450 --> 00:49:42,720  
Certainly not, no.

958  
00:49:42,720 --> 00:49:49,410  
And it must have been  
a traumatic decision

959  
00:49:49,410 --> 00:49:50,420  
for my parents.

960  
00:49:50,420 --> 00:49:54,210  
I mean, my father then  
was approaching 40.

961

00:49:54,210 --> 00:49:56,080

My mother was a year older.

962

00:49:56,080 --> 00:49:59,640

The thought of going to a  
Latin American country where

963

00:49:59,640 --> 00:50:02,040

they had no facility  
with the language,

964

00:50:02,040 --> 00:50:04,320

and no way to earn a living.

965

00:50:04,320 --> 00:50:08,983

But at least they had the  
foresight to get out of Europe.

966

00:50:08,983 --> 00:50:10,400

And I'm forever  
grateful for that.

967

00:50:10,400 --> 00:50:13,360

968

00:50:13,360 --> 00:50:16,730

And you packed your  
bags to go to Ecuador?

969

00:50:16,730 --> 00:50:18,980

And again, by that time, did  
you have anything special

970

00:50:18,980 --> 00:50:20,570

to take with you?

971

00:50:20,570 --> 00:50:21,180

No, I didn't.

972

00:50:21,180 --> 00:50:23,340

And you say bags, it  
again was Molly's sack,

973  
00:50:23,340 --> 00:50:25,340  
that great big duffel bag.

974  
00:50:25,340 --> 00:50:28,880  
I think the whole family's  
belongings fit into that thing.

975  
00:50:28,880 --> 00:50:31,900  
No, I didn't have any toys  
or anything like that--

976  
00:50:31,900 --> 00:50:33,830  
notebooks, nothing.

977  
00:50:33,830 --> 00:50:35,900  
Did you like to read?

978  
00:50:35,900 --> 00:50:36,590  
Yes, I did.

979  
00:50:36,590 --> 00:50:39,350

980  
00:50:39,350 --> 00:50:45,200  
Unfortunately, I think  
because of the many languages

981  
00:50:45,200 --> 00:50:49,310  
that I had to learn, I  
vocalize to this day.

982  
00:50:49,310 --> 00:50:54,170  
And although I read constantly,  
I'm a very slow reader.

983  
00:50:54,170 --> 00:50:57,490  
I have actually tried to  
rid myself of this habit.

984  
00:50:57,490 --> 00:51:02,000  
I've gone to reading

school, but to no avail.

985  
00:51:02,000 --> 00:51:02,725  
I enjoy reading.

986  
00:51:02,725 --> 00:51:03,350  
I love reading.

987  
00:51:03,350 --> 00:51:08,450  
But I can't read as  
much as I would love to.

988  
00:51:08,450 --> 00:51:10,490  
You said your father  
was very musical.

989  
00:51:10,490 --> 00:51:15,890  
Did he or your mother  
ever sing songs to you?

990  
00:51:15,890 --> 00:51:18,400  
I don't remember that, no.

991  
00:51:18,400 --> 00:51:20,570  
No.

992  
00:51:20,570 --> 00:51:23,100  
European parents  
had, at that time,

993  
00:51:23,100 --> 00:51:25,030  
had a different  
relationship with their kids

994  
00:51:25,030 --> 00:51:27,650  
than is the case nowadays.

995  
00:51:27,650 --> 00:51:32,060  
Kids were to be  
seen and not heard,

996  
00:51:32,060 --> 00:51:33,910

and whatever the expression is.

997

00:51:33,910 --> 00:51:40,410

They were expected  
to live by a series--

998

00:51:40,410 --> 00:51:44,060

by the set of decorous  
standards that certainly

999

00:51:44,060 --> 00:51:47,310

wouldn't obtain  
nowadays anymore.

1000

00:51:47,310 --> 00:51:50,540

And there were  
severe punishments

1001

00:51:50,540 --> 00:51:56,810

for stepping out of  
line, including being

1002

00:51:56,810 --> 00:52:00,102

sent to bed without dinner.

1003

00:52:00,102 --> 00:52:02,060

Which nowadays would be  
considered child abuse,

1004

00:52:02,060 --> 00:52:02,560

probably.

1005

00:52:02,560 --> 00:52:07,570

1006

00:52:07,570 --> 00:52:12,280

If I can backtrack for  
a moment, my father

1007

00:52:12,280 --> 00:52:17,410

tried to the best of  
his ability to teach me

1008

00:52:17,410 --> 00:52:19,630

a few things that I  
would have been learning

1009

00:52:19,630 --> 00:52:21,940

if I'd gone to school in Italy.

1010

00:52:21,940 --> 00:52:25,003

He taught me the multiplication  
tables and things like that.

1011

00:52:25,003 --> 00:52:26,170

He was very strict about it.

1012

00:52:26,170 --> 00:52:31,930

It was not a good  
pedagogue, but it

1013

00:52:31,930 --> 00:52:37,340

was a lot of browbeating and  
learning by memorization.

1014

00:52:37,340 --> 00:52:39,280

But it was the  
closest thing I had

1015

00:52:39,280 --> 00:52:40,890

to his schooling  
during that time.

1016

00:52:40,890 --> 00:52:49,400

1017

00:52:49,400 --> 00:52:53,480

You say your family has packed  
the bag-- packed Molly's bag,

1018

00:52:53,480 --> 00:52:57,980

and now you are told  
you're going to Quito.

1019

00:52:57,980 --> 00:52:59,640

We went on an Italian steamer.

1020

00:52:59,640 --> 00:53:02,600

The name was the Conte Grande.

1021

00:53:02,600 --> 00:53:07,620

And I have two  
memories of that trip.

1022

00:53:07,620 --> 00:53:13,070

A constant seasickness,  
a lot of throwing up,

1023

00:53:13,070 --> 00:53:18,770

and a lot of smells of oils  
and other fats emanating

1024

00:53:18,770 --> 00:53:20,870

from the kitchen.

1025

00:53:20,870 --> 00:53:24,980

Were there many other  
refugees on the boat with you?

1026

00:53:24,980 --> 00:53:26,780

I don't recall.

1027

00:53:26,780 --> 00:53:27,800

I don't recall.

1028

00:53:27,800 --> 00:53:34,485

I had the sense that we  
were always by ourselves,

1029

00:53:34,485 --> 00:53:35,360

but I could be wrong.

1030

00:53:35,360 --> 00:53:38,330

1031

00:53:38,330 --> 00:53:40,940

What did you do on the boat?



1032  
00:53:40,940 --> 00:53:46,130  
Besides throwing  
up, what one usually

1033  
00:53:46,130 --> 00:53:48,140  
does on a boat as  
a kid, I guess.

1034  
00:53:48,140 --> 00:53:51,980  
Just walking around,  
trying to get fresh air,

1035  
00:53:51,980 --> 00:53:54,650  
nothing memorable.

1036  
00:53:54,650 --> 00:53:56,555  
Nothing that I really remember.

1037  
00:53:56,555 --> 00:53:59,120

1038  
00:53:59,120 --> 00:54:01,700  
Watching the ocean,  
got of an aversion

1039  
00:54:01,700 --> 00:54:06,430  
to the smell of the  
sea from that point on.

1040  
00:54:06,430 --> 00:54:07,790  
Did it make any stops?

1041  
00:54:07,790 --> 00:54:10,760

1042  
00:54:10,760 --> 00:54:11,825  
I don't think so.

1043  
00:54:11,825 --> 00:54:14,600  
[CLEARS THROAT] Excuse me.

1044

00:54:14,600 --> 00:54:19,750

1045

00:54:19,750 --> 00:54:22,180

Well, we went through  
the Panama Canal.

1046

00:54:22,180 --> 00:54:24,580

And I do remember that.

1047

00:54:24,580 --> 00:54:31,390

The ship was towed by mules  
in those days rather than--

1048

00:54:31,390 --> 00:54:34,780

I think they were  
drawn by mules.

1049

00:54:34,780 --> 00:54:37,240

I could be wrong.

1050

00:54:37,240 --> 00:54:38,260

But it was--

1051

00:54:38,260 --> 00:54:40,880

I do remember the sight of  
being pulled through the Panama

1052

00:54:40,880 --> 00:54:41,380

Canal.

1053

00:54:41,380 --> 00:54:43,840

Of course, it was the  
first of two trips.

1054

00:54:43,840 --> 00:54:45,820

We ultimately went  
back through the canal

1055

00:54:45,820 --> 00:54:48,950

in the other direction.

1056

00:54:48,950 --> 00:54:52,510

This is summer of 1939?

1057

00:54:52,510 --> 00:54:53,405

As far as I recall.

1058

00:54:53,405 --> 00:54:55,030

You asked me earlier

if we made a stop.

1059

00:54:55,030 --> 00:54:58,100

I think we stopped on the

Canary Islands for a few hours,

1060

00:54:58,100 --> 00:55:01,150

but insignificant.

1061

00:55:01,150 --> 00:55:05,560

What did the canal look like

to you as an eight-year-old?

1062

00:55:05,560 --> 00:55:08,920

It looked like a

fascinating spectacle,

1063

00:55:08,920 --> 00:55:14,550

which I don't think I

understood how it worked.

1064

00:55:14,550 --> 00:55:16,270

I'm not sure I

understand it now.

1065

00:55:16,270 --> 00:55:21,100

But it was a great sight

to see the ship going

1066

00:55:21,100 --> 00:55:25,140

into the locks, the locks

closing, the water rising--

1067

00:55:25,140 --> 00:55:28,030

that is to say the lock  
filling with water and the ship

1068  
00:55:28,030 --> 00:55:30,188  
rising, moving  
onto the next one.

1069  
00:55:30,188 --> 00:55:31,480  
It was fascinating to see that.

1070  
00:55:31,480 --> 00:55:33,250  
It took many hours, as I recall.

1071  
00:55:33,250 --> 00:55:36,490  
And I think I watched  
the whole thing.

1072  
00:55:36,490 --> 00:55:39,960  
Was there now a difference  
in your parent's demeanor?

1073  
00:55:39,960 --> 00:55:43,300  
Were they a little more relaxed  
now that they hadn't gotten out

1074  
00:55:43,300 --> 00:55:43,990  
of Europe?

1075  
00:55:43,990 --> 00:55:48,880  
Did you sense any difference?

1076  
00:55:48,880 --> 00:55:49,540  
I think so.

1077  
00:55:49,540 --> 00:55:52,390  
I think by nature  
the ocean voyage

1078  
00:55:52,390 --> 00:55:55,440  
must have been a  
tonic effect on them.

1079

00:55:55,440 --> 00:55:58,710

1080

00:55:58,710 --> 00:56:03,010

But I don't remember  
any particulars.

1081

00:56:03,010 --> 00:56:06,340

My mother was, what you  
would call nowadays--

1082

00:56:06,340 --> 00:56:08,560

I don't think the  
term even existed

1083

00:56:08,560 --> 00:56:11,470

in those days-- a  
manic depressive,

1084

00:56:11,470 --> 00:56:14,570

or at least she had  
those tendencies.

1085

00:56:14,570 --> 00:56:19,330

And while I remember her  
being mostly depressed,

1086

00:56:19,330 --> 00:56:23,230

there were moments when she  
was in the opposite phase.

1087

00:56:23,230 --> 00:56:27,478

And she would laugh hysterically  
and tell hysterical stories,

1088

00:56:27,478 --> 00:56:29,020

the same stories  
over and over again.

1089

00:56:29,020 --> 00:56:35,730

But she would laugh at a pitch  
that attracted attention.

1090

00:56:35,730 --> 00:56:37,530

I do remember that.

1091

00:56:37,530 --> 00:56:41,170

And she was fun to be with then.

1092

00:56:41,170 --> 00:56:46,270

But you did notice a relaxation  
on the part of your parents?

1093

00:56:46,270 --> 00:56:49,120

I think so, yes, yes.

1094

00:56:49,120 --> 00:56:51,250

At this time, did  
you talk to them

1095

00:56:51,250 --> 00:56:56,390

at any greater length about  
what was going on in Europe?

1096

00:56:56,390 --> 00:56:59,310

What was your  
perception of what was--

1097

00:56:59,310 --> 00:57:01,210

what was an eight  
year old's perception

1098

00:57:01,210 --> 00:57:02,260

of what was going on?

1099

00:57:02,260 --> 00:57:04,960

1100

00:57:04,960 --> 00:57:07,730

Strange as it may sound,  
I don't really recall.

1101

00:57:07,730 --> 00:57:13,740

I imagine that my parents  
told me why we were going.

1102

00:57:13,740 --> 00:57:15,220

The Nazis were bad guys.

1103

00:57:15,220 --> 00:57:18,910

That they were going  
to do bad things to us.

1104

00:57:18,910 --> 00:57:22,330

Obviously, a kid of that age  
is going to ask questions.

1105

00:57:22,330 --> 00:57:23,140

I'm sure I did.

1106

00:57:23,140 --> 00:57:25,550

I'm sure I got some answers.

1107

00:57:25,550 --> 00:57:28,000

But I do not remember  
specifics, no.

1108

00:57:28,000 --> 00:57:31,330

1109

00:57:31,330 --> 00:57:36,940

And so did you mix with any  
non-Jews on the passage?

1110

00:57:36,940 --> 00:57:41,650

I vaguely remember other people  
sitting at the table for meals.

1111

00:57:41,650 --> 00:57:44,500

But I don't have any  
concrete recollections

1112

00:57:44,500 --> 00:57:47,560

of any specific person, no.

1113

00:57:47,560 --> 00:57:50,210

Did you tell them why  
you were leaving Europe,

1114  
00:57:50,210 --> 00:57:53,020  
or what your story was?

1115  
00:57:53,020 --> 00:57:53,680  
I don't know.

1116  
00:57:53,680 --> 00:57:55,996  
I don't remember.

1117  
00:57:55,996 --> 00:57:59,040  
And were there are other  
children on the boat?

1118  
00:57:59,040 --> 00:58:00,840  
There must have been.

1119  
00:58:00,840 --> 00:58:05,254  
It was a pretty big  
ship for those days.

1120  
00:58:05,254 --> 00:58:12,730  
A two-stacker I think it was,  
but no concrete memories.

1121  
00:58:12,730 --> 00:58:15,790  
And you had a private  
room with your family?

1122  
00:58:15,790 --> 00:58:17,250  
I think we all had--

1123  
00:58:17,250 --> 00:58:20,710  
we shared-- the five of  
us shared one cabin, yes.

1124  
00:58:20,710 --> 00:58:23,040  
Very cramped.

1125  
00:58:23,040 --> 00:58:26,410  
And now you've landed in Quito?



1126

00:58:26,410 --> 00:58:29,140

Actually, the ship stops in  
Guayaquil, of course, Quito

1127

00:58:29,140 --> 00:58:30,630

being up in the mountains.

1128

00:58:30,630 --> 00:58:31,130

Yes.

1129

00:58:31,130 --> 00:58:34,080

1130

00:58:34,080 --> 00:58:37,330

And I do remember the  
pilot both coming out,

1131

00:58:37,330 --> 00:58:43,840

and the customs, and  
again, the uniforms

1132

00:58:43,840 --> 00:58:47,110

creating anxiety that was  
palpable, even though that

1133

00:58:47,110 --> 00:58:48,650

wasn't necessary at that point.

1134

00:58:48,650 --> 00:58:50,440

But it's just one  
of those things

1135

00:58:50,440 --> 00:58:54,730

that you live with,  
you can't shake it.

1136

00:58:54,730 --> 00:59:01,780

And I believe the process  
of health examinations,

1137

00:59:01,780 --> 00:59:06,450

the immigration papers, and

all that took forever and ever.

1138  
00:59:06,450 --> 00:59:08,260  
The long lines--  
on the ship we had

1139  
00:59:08,260 --> 00:59:14,650  
to stand in line until it  
came our turn to disembark.

1140  
00:59:14,650 --> 00:59:18,580  
I'm not positive,  
but I think we had

1141  
00:59:18,580 --> 00:59:20,590  
to leave the ship on a tender.

1142  
00:59:20,590 --> 00:59:23,350  
I don't think the ship  
docked at a wharf.

1143  
00:59:23,350 --> 00:59:26,040  
I could be wrong.

1144  
00:59:26,040 --> 00:59:30,430  
And that was scary for me,  
because I do have this tendency

1145  
00:59:30,430 --> 00:59:31,120  
to get seasick.

1146  
00:59:31,120 --> 00:59:32,830  
I get carsick as  
well to this day.

1147  
00:59:32,830 --> 00:59:35,490

1148  
00:59:35,490 --> 00:59:40,390  
And again, you said seeing  
uniforms or whatever upset you.

1149

00:59:40,390 --> 00:59:43,930  
Did you verbally express  
this to your parents?

1150  
00:59:43,930 --> 00:59:45,360  
No, I don't think so.

1151  
00:59:45,360 --> 00:59:46,960  
I think the fear was--

1152  
00:59:46,960 --> 00:59:48,910  
the anxiety was not only mine.

1153  
00:59:48,910 --> 00:59:50,020  
I think it was my parents.

1154  
00:59:50,020 --> 00:59:51,220  
I think it rubbed off on me.

1155  
00:59:51,220 --> 00:59:59,610

1156  
00:59:59,610 --> 01:00:05,880  
I don't know that my  
parents ever said anything

1157  
01:00:05,880 --> 01:00:09,420  
to assuage our anxiety.

1158  
01:00:09,420 --> 01:00:12,870  
I think that they were just  
so anxious that they perhaps

1159  
01:00:12,870 --> 01:00:15,810  
didn't know how to do that  
or didn't think of doing it.

1160  
01:00:15,810 --> 01:00:19,380  
You just felt it  
through them, even

1161  
01:00:19,380 --> 01:00:22,950

if you didn't feel it directly.

1162  
01:00:22,950 --> 01:00:26,160  
Do you think your little  
brothers experienced that also?

1163  
01:00:26,160 --> 01:00:31,110  
No, they were blissfully  
out of it, I think.

1164  
01:00:31,110 --> 01:00:34,140  
Now you're in Ecuador,  
and where did you settle?

1165  
01:00:34,140 --> 01:00:35,970  
We moved to Quito right away.

1166  
01:00:35,970 --> 01:00:39,720  
A long, long train ride, and  
Quito is up in the mountains.

1167  
01:00:39,720 --> 01:00:42,780  
And the train ride, in  
those days at least,

1168  
01:00:42,780 --> 01:00:44,610  
was interminable.

1169  
01:00:44,610 --> 01:00:48,150  
The train would go  
forward and backwards.

1170  
01:00:48,150 --> 01:00:51,180  
It was sort of a stepped  
kind of railway line.

1171  
01:00:51,180 --> 01:00:56,440  
It didn't make the trip  
in one continuous path.

1172  
01:00:56,440 --> 01:00:58,230  
So it took a long, long time.

1173

01:00:58,230 --> 01:00:59,940

I got sick on the train.

1174

01:00:59,940 --> 01:01:03,510

I remember standing between  
two cars, my father holding me,

1175

01:01:03,510 --> 01:01:04,655

and throwing up.

1176

01:01:04,655 --> 01:01:10,110

But yes, we then ultimately  
settled in Quito.

1177

01:01:10,110 --> 01:01:12,630

And--

1178

01:01:12,630 --> 01:01:16,520

What's it like for a  
child to land in a country

1179

01:01:16,520 --> 01:01:19,810

and hear language that  
he's not familiar with?

1180

01:01:19,810 --> 01:01:20,950

Is it very confusing?

1181

01:01:20,950 --> 01:01:23,670

1182

01:01:23,670 --> 01:01:26,250

It sure is, it sure is.

1183

01:01:26,250 --> 01:01:29,000

And in this case, of  
course, my parents

1184

01:01:29,000 --> 01:01:31,830

didn't know the language either.

1185

01:01:31,830 --> 01:01:34,770

So I imagine that the  
first months, at least,

1186

01:01:34,770 --> 01:01:38,220

were very difficult.

Finding a place to live,

1187

01:01:38,220 --> 01:01:44,310

finding a place to purchase  
goods, getting money somehow.

1188

01:01:44,310 --> 01:01:47,100

I'm not sure how that  
worked in the beginning.

1189

01:01:47,100 --> 01:01:49,670

But somehow my parents managed.

1190

01:01:49,670 --> 01:01:53,475

How did they know what to do  
when they got on dry land?

1191

01:01:53,475 --> 01:01:55,440

You said we did this,  
we took a train.

1192

01:01:55,440 --> 01:01:56,250

How did they know?

1193

01:01:56,250 --> 01:01:59,250

Did someone meet them?

1194

01:01:59,250 --> 01:02:01,770

In Ecuador, I don't know.

1195

01:02:01,770 --> 01:02:09,210

I think there were other German  
refugees who had preceded us

1196

01:02:09,210 --> 01:02:11,830

and helped us.

1197

01:02:11,830 --> 01:02:20,250

I think there was sort  
of a community of people

1198

01:02:20,250 --> 01:02:21,240

who helped one another.

1199

01:02:21,240 --> 01:02:23,810

1200

01:02:23,810 --> 01:02:28,530

The later arrivals then  
subsequently turned around

1201

01:02:28,530 --> 01:02:30,980

and helped those  
who came after them.

1202

01:02:30,980 --> 01:02:36,000

It was a very small German  
Jewish community, I believe.

1203

01:02:36,000 --> 01:02:37,920

Not enough for a synagogue.

1204

01:02:37,920 --> 01:02:42,540

I don't recall ever going to a  
religious service in Ecuador.

1205

01:02:42,540 --> 01:02:46,980

So whatever religious  
observance we had was at home.

1206

01:02:46,980 --> 01:02:49,630

1207

01:02:49,630 --> 01:02:52,780

And of course, it's  
a Catholic country.

1208

01:02:52,780 --> 01:02:55,690

We stood out not only as Jews.

1209

01:02:55,690 --> 01:02:58,640

We stood out as speaking German.

1210

01:02:58,640 --> 01:03:01,720

1211

01:03:01,720 --> 01:03:05,420

But I went to school.

1212

01:03:05,420 --> 01:03:09,310

I was-- I went to a  
private school, in fact.

1213

01:03:09,310 --> 01:03:11,950

But when I say  
private school, it

1214

01:03:11,950 --> 01:03:13,950

doesn't mean what it might  
mean in this country.

1215

01:03:13,950 --> 01:03:16,320

It was really the  
only decent school.

1216

01:03:16,320 --> 01:03:22,030

It's where the diplomats and  
the wealthier people of Quito,

1217

01:03:22,030 --> 01:03:28,380

and perhaps other cities of  
Ecuador, would send their kids.

1218

01:03:28,380 --> 01:03:32,750

It was very strict,  
very demanding.

1219

01:03:32,750 --> 01:03:34,780

The standards were  
incredibly high

1220



01:03:34,780 --> 01:03:36,910  
compared to the United States.

1221  
01:03:36,910 --> 01:03:39,580  
I remember learning things  
in the United States

1222  
01:03:39,580 --> 01:03:45,080  
in junior high school that I had  
learned years ago in Ecuador.

1223  
01:03:45,080 --> 01:03:47,560  
So it was a fantastic school.

1224  
01:03:47,560 --> 01:03:49,855  
The classes were  
taught in Spanish?

1225  
01:03:49,855 --> 01:03:51,610  
The classes were  
taught in Spanish.

1226  
01:03:51,610 --> 01:03:54,840  
I was called Ernesto  
then by the teacher.

1227  
01:03:54,840 --> 01:03:57,610  
And if you did something  
that displeased him,

1228  
01:03:57,610 --> 01:04:01,840  
he would pick up by  
your side burns--

1229  
01:04:01,840 --> 01:04:04,330  
very painful.

1230  
01:04:04,330 --> 01:04:07,090  
Was it difficult for  
you to pick up Spanish?

1231  
01:04:07,090 --> 01:04:09,010  
No, actually Spanish is

one of those languages

1232

01:04:09,010 --> 01:04:12,430

that is, relatively  
speaking, easy to pick up.

1233

01:04:12,430 --> 01:04:14,500

And for a kid it was quite easy.

1234

01:04:14,500 --> 01:04:16,330

So although I don't  
speak it any longer,

1235

01:04:16,330 --> 01:04:19,720

I learned it fluently  
very quickly.

1236

01:04:19,720 --> 01:04:24,685

And was quite good in  
school, to my great surprise.

1237

01:04:24,685 --> 01:04:27,230

1238

01:04:27,230 --> 01:04:28,910

But always stood out.

1239

01:04:28,910 --> 01:04:30,710

My clothes were different.

1240

01:04:30,710 --> 01:04:32,270

In what way?

1241

01:04:32,270 --> 01:04:34,970

Well, we lived  
from hand-me-downs.

1242

01:04:34,970 --> 01:04:36,710

I don't know incidentally  
how my parents

1243

01:04:36,710 --> 01:04:38,360

got the money for the tuition.

1244

01:04:38,360 --> 01:04:40,880

Again, I think my father  
may have gotten money

1245

01:04:40,880 --> 01:04:43,383

from the company  
that employed him.

1246

01:04:43,383 --> 01:04:45,050

My father had started  
with this company,

1247

01:04:45,050 --> 01:04:48,020

by the way, when he was 13.

1248

01:04:48,020 --> 01:04:55,002

And he may have received  
loans from them.

1249

01:04:55,002 --> 01:04:56,210

He never told me about those.

1250

01:04:56,210 --> 01:04:58,190

I don't know.

1251

01:04:58,190 --> 01:05:00,620

What was the name  
of the company?

1252

01:05:00,620 --> 01:05:02,940

It was Kaufman.

1253

01:05:02,940 --> 01:05:05,450

They were well known,  
they still exist today,

1254

01:05:05,450 --> 01:05:08,420

although on a much  
smaller scale.

1255

01:05:08,420 --> 01:05:13,250

It was a hide and skin  
exporting company.

1256

01:05:13,250 --> 01:05:16,310

And I think at one  
time, or various times

1257

01:05:16,310 --> 01:05:21,350

during our sojourn in Quito, my  
father did some freelance work

1258

01:05:21,350 --> 01:05:22,110

for the company.

1259

01:05:22,110 --> 01:05:25,250

In that he went to  
slaughter houses

1260

01:05:25,250 --> 01:05:28,370

and bought hides,  
and made arrangements

1261

01:05:28,370 --> 01:05:31,760

to have them sold and  
exported to other countries.

1262

01:05:31,760 --> 01:05:37,910

But early on, he teamed  
up with a Czech engineer,

1263

01:05:37,910 --> 01:05:43,100

who in fact lived with  
us in a two family house.

1264

01:05:43,100 --> 01:05:45,540

The name was [? Rovichek, ?]  
it just came to me.

1265

01:05:45,540 --> 01:05:48,790

And they made margarine  
in an abandoned garage,

1266

01:05:48,790 --> 01:05:52,430  
margarine out of  
vegetable oils, I think.

1267  
01:05:52,430 --> 01:05:53,980  
Very primitive.

1268  
01:05:53,980 --> 01:05:57,260  
They employed a  
few Indios, which

1269  
01:05:57,260 --> 01:06:01,100  
is the native Indians  
are called Indios.

1270  
01:06:01,100 --> 01:06:04,160  
And the water out  
of the margarine

1271  
01:06:04,160 --> 01:06:09,230  
was squeezed out by hand,  
made into balls of margarine.

1272  
01:06:09,230 --> 01:06:10,760  
That was our first--

1273  
01:06:10,760 --> 01:06:13,160  
that was my parents'  
first income.

1274  
01:06:13,160 --> 01:06:15,700  
They as well got the idea--

1275  
01:06:15,700 --> 01:06:19,880  
I don't know how it originated--  
to make thermos boxes, very

1276  
01:06:19,880 --> 01:06:21,860  
primitive thermos boxes.

1277  
01:06:21,860 --> 01:06:25,520  
Two layers of wood with--

1278

01:06:25,520 --> 01:06:28,430

what do you call that  
packing material, excelsior--

1279

01:06:28,430 --> 01:06:29,990

in between as insulation.

1280

01:06:29,990 --> 01:06:34,580

This goes years before Styrofoam  
and all that, and plastic.

1281

01:06:34,580 --> 01:06:41,270

And they made these food storage  
containers which they sold.

1282

01:06:41,270 --> 01:06:46,400

And he was also a Jewish  
refugee, Mr. [? Rovichek? ?]

1283

01:06:46,400 --> 01:06:48,560

Yes, he was.

1284

01:06:48,560 --> 01:06:51,390

He was-- it was someone that  
your father met in Prague?

1285

01:06:51,390 --> 01:06:53,390

You said he was Czech.

1286

01:06:53,390 --> 01:06:56,390

I think they met in Quito.

1287

01:06:56,390 --> 01:07:00,440

Again there was this  
network of people.

1288

01:07:00,440 --> 01:07:02,720

You didn't need a telephone,  
which didn't exist.

1289

01:07:02,720 --> 01:07:07,220

People knew about you in the

small German Jewish refugee

1290

01:07:07,220 --> 01:07:09,290  
community.

1291

01:07:09,290 --> 01:07:11,780  
They clung to one  
another, actually.

1292

01:07:11,780 --> 01:07:15,410  
And it was this network  
of helping people out.

1293

01:07:15,410 --> 01:07:17,570  
I think that's  
how it came about.

1294

01:07:17,570 --> 01:07:20,630  
Were you aware that  
World War II had started?

1295

01:07:20,630 --> 01:07:22,880  
Yes, I do remember  
my mother telling me

1296

01:07:22,880 --> 01:07:26,000  
that Hitler and Stalin  
had signed this agreement.

1297

01:07:26,000 --> 01:07:27,170  
I don't remember what--

1298

01:07:27,170 --> 01:07:30,190  
I don't remember what she  
said about it, or what it--

1299

01:07:30,190 --> 01:07:31,900  
what the implication of it was.

1300

01:07:31,900 --> 01:07:35,092  
But I do remember  
her telling me that.

1301

01:07:35,092 --> 01:07:37,520

And the invasion of Poland?

1302

01:07:37,520 --> 01:07:39,110

I do not remember that, no.

1303

01:07:39,110 --> 01:07:42,140

1304

01:07:42,140 --> 01:07:45,555

We had no radio, of course.

1305

01:07:45,555 --> 01:07:47,180

My parents couldn't  
read the newspaper,

1306

01:07:47,180 --> 01:07:49,220

so there were no  
newspapers in the house.

1307

01:07:49,220 --> 01:07:51,440

Whatever news there was  
came from word of mouth.

1308

01:07:51,440 --> 01:07:56,450

1309

01:07:56,450 --> 01:07:59,480

Can you describe the  
living conditions?

1310

01:07:59,480 --> 01:08:05,510

Relatively primitive, the  
buildings were made of clay,

1311

01:08:05,510 --> 01:08:07,410

I guess it is.

1312

01:08:07,410 --> 01:08:10,710

And once there was a--

1313



01:08:10,710 --> 01:08:13,880  
well, of course, Ecuador  
has a lot of tropical rains.

1314  
01:08:13,880 --> 01:08:17,300  
And once we actually had  
to leave our house and move

1315  
01:08:17,300 --> 01:08:20,359  
to another house  
because the roof just

1316  
01:08:20,359 --> 01:08:24,196  
caved in from the  
weight of the water.

1317  
01:08:24,196 --> 01:08:25,279  
But it was very primitive.

1318  
01:08:25,279 --> 01:08:31,569  
The-- strange as it may  
sound, our next door neighbor

1319  
01:08:31,569 --> 01:08:33,710  
lived in a cave.

1320  
01:08:33,710 --> 01:08:37,149  
He was a tin smith,  
or some metal worker,

1321  
01:08:37,149 --> 01:08:39,520  
may have been an ironmonger.

1322  
01:08:39,520 --> 01:08:41,020  
But it was a cave.

1323  
01:08:41,020 --> 01:08:42,899  
And our house was--

1324  
01:08:42,899 --> 01:08:45,910  
the house that we lived in  
before we had to abandon it--

1325

01:08:45,910 --> 01:08:48,520  
was right next to that.

1326

01:08:48,520 --> 01:08:50,080  
The streets were not--

1327

01:08:50,080 --> 01:08:53,050  
where we lived, we lived  
on the outskirts of Quito--

1328

01:08:53,050 --> 01:08:54,410  
were not paved.

1329

01:08:54,410 --> 01:09:01,359  
There were a muddy  
mess when it rained.

1330

01:09:01,359 --> 01:09:03,040  
And much of the  
shopping was done

1331

01:09:03,040 --> 01:09:07,660  
by Indios coming to the  
house with their trays

1332

01:09:07,660 --> 01:09:10,250  
of fresh fruits and vegetables.

1333

01:09:10,250 --> 01:09:13,479  
Which incidentally had to  
be very thoroughly washed

1334

01:09:13,479 --> 01:09:18,900  
in some pink stuff that my  
mother got that would disinfect

1335

01:09:18,900 --> 01:09:22,300  
it-- disinfectant it was.

1336

01:09:22,300 --> 01:09:26,680  
How secure did you feel?

1337

01:09:26,680 --> 01:09:28,870

I never felt secure.

1338

01:09:28,870 --> 01:09:35,164

I had one friend, also the  
son of a refugee family,

1339

01:09:35,164 --> 01:09:37,359

I seem to think  
his name was Klaus,

1340

01:09:37,359 --> 01:09:44,020

but I cannot say that  
with any security.

1341

01:09:44,020 --> 01:09:47,080

And there were no,  
again, no spending money,

1342

01:09:47,080 --> 01:09:50,200

no toys to play with.

1343

01:09:50,200 --> 01:09:53,240

This fellow, Klaus, or  
whatever his name was,

1344

01:09:53,240 --> 01:09:59,360

we would go after school  
to a local canning factory

1345

01:09:59,360 --> 01:10:00,950

and play with the  
scraps of metal.

1346

01:10:00,950 --> 01:10:03,190

Which was, by the  
way, kind of dangerous

1347

01:10:03,190 --> 01:10:05,050

because it was easy  
to cut yourself with.

1348

01:10:05,050 --> 01:10:09,130  
But we made soldier uniforms.

1349  
01:10:09,130 --> 01:10:12,110  
We made a belt and Sam  
Brown belt kind of thing

1350  
01:10:12,110 --> 01:10:15,790  
out for this scrap metal,  
hats and such, and swords.

1351  
01:10:15,790 --> 01:10:16,890  
That was our playtime.

1352  
01:10:16,890 --> 01:10:19,610

1353  
01:10:19,610 --> 01:10:23,870  
Did you consider yourself  
German at that time?

1354  
01:10:23,870 --> 01:10:26,820  
German as a nationalistic  
German, or--

1355  
01:10:26,820 --> 01:10:29,180  
no, I don't think so.

1356  
01:10:29,180 --> 01:10:31,440  
No, we wanted to assimilate.

1357  
01:10:31,440 --> 01:10:33,680  
That is to say we wanted to be--

1358  
01:10:33,680 --> 01:10:36,440  
live in peace,  
and be left alone.

1359  
01:10:36,440 --> 01:10:38,840  
So we did what had to be done.

1360  
01:10:38,840 --> 01:10:40,445

My parents learned Spanish--

1361  
01:10:40,445 --> 01:10:43,040

1362  
01:10:43,040 --> 01:10:45,630  
learned quite well, in fact.

1363  
01:10:45,630 --> 01:10:51,230  
And we tried to live  
with our neighbors.

1364  
01:10:51,230 --> 01:10:55,160  
The second house we lived  
in then was one of a--

1365  
01:10:55,160 --> 01:10:56,390  
we lived in a compound.

1366  
01:10:56,390 --> 01:10:59,240  
A rich family that  
had this guesthouse,

1367  
01:10:59,240 --> 01:11:02,450  
we then moved to  
this guesthouse.

1368  
01:11:02,450 --> 01:11:04,730  
And one of the things I  
remember the great excitement

1369  
01:11:04,730 --> 01:11:07,340  
when they were going to  
show a movie, to which we

1370  
01:11:07,340 --> 01:11:08,110  
were invited.

1371  
01:11:08,110 --> 01:11:14,460  
Black and white, of course,  
and it was the Story of Jesus.

1372

01:11:14,460 --> 01:11:17,443  
Which I didn't quite understand.

1373  
01:11:17,443 --> 01:11:18,860  
And I asked one  
of the daughters--

1374  
01:11:18,860 --> 01:11:22,850  
I think that two  
daughters, this family--

1375  
01:11:22,850 --> 01:11:25,520  
some question about  
what this was all about.

1376  
01:11:25,520 --> 01:11:28,820  
Some question about the  
movie I didn't understand.

1377  
01:11:28,820 --> 01:11:31,910  
And she said to me-- and  
that was not the first time

1378  
01:11:31,910 --> 01:11:33,490  
in my life I heard that--

1379  
01:11:33,490 --> 01:11:37,280  
well, you killed Jesus, and  
you should know all about this.

1380  
01:11:37,280 --> 01:11:42,925  
That was the first  
experience of antisemitism--

1381  
01:11:42,925 --> 01:11:45,050  
not that I experienced,  
but certainly the first one

1382  
01:11:45,050 --> 01:11:48,050  
that I vividly recall.

1383  
01:11:48,050 --> 01:11:49,290  
I was very upset.

1384  
01:11:49,290 --> 01:11:52,130  
I went to my parents  
to ask them what

1385  
01:11:52,130 --> 01:11:56,150  
this girl, who was I guess  
my age or a little older,

1386  
01:11:56,150 --> 01:11:57,198  
was talking about it.

1387  
01:11:57,198 --> 01:11:58,740  
I don't remember  
what they responded,

1388  
01:11:58,740 --> 01:12:01,505  
but I remember being very  
upset by this incident.

1389  
01:12:01,505 --> 01:12:04,310

1390  
01:12:04,310 --> 01:12:09,500  
Were you frightened after  
what you had left in Europe?

1391  
01:12:09,500 --> 01:12:11,640  
I think I was always frightened.

1392  
01:12:11,640 --> 01:12:16,080  
I think I was always--

1393  
01:12:16,080 --> 01:12:17,690  
if not frightened,  
at least uneasy.

1394  
01:12:17,690 --> 01:12:20,810  
Because my clothes were  
different from my classmates.

1395  
01:12:20,810 --> 01:12:22,804

The food I ate was different.

1396

01:12:22,804 --> 01:12:25,470

1397

01:12:25,470 --> 01:12:29,390

My Spanish, I'm sure,  
was with an accent.

1398

01:12:29,390 --> 01:12:33,230

So I always stood  
out, little Ernesto.

1399

01:12:33,230 --> 01:12:37,355

And that was always  
a sense of discomfort

1400

01:12:37,355 --> 01:12:40,650

and never feeling quite at home.

1401

01:12:40,650 --> 01:12:45,170

Never feeling quite  
one of the boys.

1402

01:12:45,170 --> 01:12:50,930

It was an all boys school,  
incidentally, no girls.

1403

01:12:50,930 --> 01:12:53,930

Were there many other refugee  
children in your school?

1404

01:12:53,930 --> 01:12:55,100

No, I was the only one.

1405

01:12:55,100 --> 01:12:55,880

I don't know why.

1406

01:12:55,880 --> 01:12:56,840

I was the only Jew.

1407

01:12:56,840 --> 01:12:59,690



1408  
01:12:59,690 --> 01:13:03,630  
I still have my report cards,  
by the way, from that school.

1409  
01:13:03,630 --> 01:13:07,790  
And I have a picture  
of me with the teacher.

1410  
01:13:07,790 --> 01:13:14,662  
There were probably about  
15 or 20 kids to this class.

1411  
01:13:14,662 --> 01:13:17,150  
It was very rigorous.

1412  
01:13:17,150 --> 01:13:21,380  
Did the teacher ask you  
about your past history?

1413  
01:13:21,380 --> 01:13:22,403  
I don't think so.

1414  
01:13:22,403 --> 01:13:23,570  
If he did, I don't remember.

1415  
01:13:23,570 --> 01:13:27,770

1416  
01:13:27,770 --> 01:13:30,500  
This was, I think,  
the other kids

1417  
01:13:30,500 --> 01:13:32,670  
were probably from  
elite families.

1418  
01:13:32,670 --> 01:13:35,930  
So I guess there was a  
certain amount of discretion

1419

01:13:35,930 --> 01:13:40,340  
on the part of the  
administration.

1420  
01:13:40,340 --> 01:13:44,580  
It was not the school where  
ordinary kids would go.

1421  
01:13:44,580 --> 01:13:49,500  
And I guess I was lucky  
to be able to go there.

1422  
01:13:49,500 --> 01:13:54,920  
Now, things are tightening up  
in Europe even more and more so.

1423  
01:13:54,920 --> 01:13:56,870  
Were your parents aware of that?

1424  
01:13:56,870 --> 01:13:59,930  
And if so, how did they  
get the information?

1425  
01:13:59,930 --> 01:14:03,710  
Again, the network and I guess  
somebody had shortwave radio.

1426  
01:14:03,710 --> 01:14:10,170  
And there was-- sure the  
news of Europe reached them.

1427  
01:14:10,170 --> 01:14:13,340  
And again, the process of  
getting out and getting

1428  
01:14:13,340 --> 01:14:15,080  
on the quota.

1429  
01:14:15,080 --> 01:14:18,140  
Ecuador, of course,  
had a separate quota--

1430  
01:14:18,140 --> 01:14:20,930

I mean, the United States had  
a separate quota of Ecuador.

1431  
01:14:20,930 --> 01:14:23,760  
And that helped.

1432  
01:14:23,760 --> 01:14:27,320  
So we spent something  
like two-and-a-half years

1433  
01:14:27,320 --> 01:14:31,610  
in Ecuador, '39 to '41.

1434  
01:14:31,610 --> 01:14:33,020  
I went to two grades of school.

1435  
01:14:33,020 --> 01:14:35,600

1436  
01:14:35,600 --> 01:14:41,450  
And I don't know how difficult  
it was for my parents

1437  
01:14:41,450 --> 01:14:47,510  
to get the affidavit and exit  
visa and all the other papers

1438  
01:14:47,510 --> 01:14:48,390  
that were required.

1439  
01:14:48,390 --> 01:14:51,590  
But they managed,  
once again, to do so.

1440  
01:14:51,590 --> 01:14:54,590  
Did you want to leave?

1441  
01:14:54,590 --> 01:14:59,615  
Yes, I'm sure there was--

1442  
01:14:59,615 --> 01:15:04,100

1443  
01:15:04,100 --> 01:15:07,135  
I don't think there was any  
fear of a concentration camp

1444  
01:15:07,135 --> 01:15:08,510  
or anything like  
that in Ecuador.

1445  
01:15:08,510 --> 01:15:10,070  
Surely not.

1446  
01:15:10,070 --> 01:15:12,260  
But it was not--

1447  
01:15:12,260 --> 01:15:18,940  
it was just such a primitive  
country to live in.

1448  
01:15:18,940 --> 01:15:23,390  
And I think my  
father felt that he

1449  
01:15:23,390 --> 01:15:24,800  
could do better economically.

1450  
01:15:24,800 --> 01:15:29,330  
And the United States was  
the Mecca, if you will,

1451  
01:15:29,330 --> 01:15:32,900  
that all the refugees  
there wanted to go to.

1452  
01:15:32,900 --> 01:15:37,100  
All aspired to go to America.

1453  
01:15:37,100 --> 01:15:40,670  
Were you taunted at  
all for being Jewish?

1454  
01:15:40,670 --> 01:15:43,940

Oh, yes, that was always--

1455

01:15:43,940 --> 01:15:47,660

always being chased and  
beaten and pummeled.

1456

01:15:47,660 --> 01:15:51,640

And it was a never ending thing.

1457

01:15:51,640 --> 01:15:56,000