

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,980

2

00:00:01,980 --> 00:00:05,370

This is the United States
Holocaust Memorial Museum

3

00:00:05,370 --> 00:00:09,540

volunteer collection interview
with Ruth Harvey conducted

4

00:00:09,540 --> 00:00:15,360

by Margaret Garrett on August
22, 1997 in Bethesda, Maryland.

5

00:00:15,360 --> 00:00:18,240

This interview is part
of the museum's project

6

00:00:18,240 --> 00:00:22,110

to interview Holocaust survivors
and witnesses who are also

7

00:00:22,110 --> 00:00:25,860

volunteers with the
museum, tape number one,

8

00:00:25,860 --> 00:00:31,330

side A. Would you state
your name at birth?

9

00:00:31,330 --> 00:00:35,580

My name at birth was
Ruth Abel, A-B-E-L.

10

00:00:35,580 --> 00:00:37,800

And your date of birth?

11

00:00:37,800 --> 00:00:40,980

October 9, 1928.

12

00:00:40,980 --> 00:00:42,240
And place of birth.

13
00:00:42,240 --> 00:00:44,310
Berlin.

14
00:00:44,310 --> 00:00:50,500
Would you talk about your
parents and your grandparents?

15
00:00:50,500 --> 00:00:53,820
I only knew my
maternal grandparents.

16
00:00:53,820 --> 00:00:56,740
And they were gentle people.

17
00:00:56,740 --> 00:00:59,290
But I always thought they
were a bit forbidding.

18
00:00:59,290 --> 00:01:02,280
They didn't have a
great way with children.

19
00:01:02,280 --> 00:01:04,230
And their religion?

20
00:01:04,230 --> 00:01:06,700
They were Jewish.

21
00:01:06,700 --> 00:01:08,630
And your mother?

22
00:01:08,630 --> 00:01:11,410
My mother, as well, was Jewish.

23
00:01:11,410 --> 00:01:14,140
And what about your
father and his parents?

24
00:01:14,140 --> 00:01:17,630

My father's father was Jewish.

25

00:01:17,630 --> 00:01:20,800

But in those days, you
were German first, and then

26

00:01:20,800 --> 00:01:22,720

whatever religion you were.

27

00:01:22,720 --> 00:01:26,080

He happened to fall in
love with a Christian girl

28

00:01:26,080 --> 00:01:30,970

and switched religions in
order to be able to marry her.

29

00:01:30,970 --> 00:01:31,720

In order to--

30

00:01:31,720 --> 00:01:32,290

Became a Christian.

31

00:01:32,290 --> 00:01:32,800

Yeah.

32

00:01:32,800 --> 00:01:35,950

In order to be able to marry
her because of her parents, or--

33

00:01:35,950 --> 00:01:38,170

Now, this is something
I do not know.

34

00:01:38,170 --> 00:01:39,990

I don't know.

35

00:01:39,990 --> 00:01:40,980

So you--

36

00:01:40,980 --> 00:01:42,510

This was quite a long time ago.

37

00:01:42,510 --> 00:01:44,123

But you were just told that--

38

00:01:44,123 --> 00:01:44,790

I was told that.

39

00:01:44,790 --> 00:01:48,160

--he could not marry her unless
he converted. but you don't--

40

00:01:48,160 --> 00:01:48,670

I do not--

41

00:01:48,670 --> 00:01:49,170

--know why.

42

00:01:49,170 --> 00:01:52,140

--know whether it
was a must situation,

43

00:01:52,140 --> 00:01:54,870

or whether it was just
something he chose to do.

44

00:01:54,870 --> 00:01:57,780

Probably, her parents
might have objected.

45

00:01:57,780 --> 00:02:00,910

But I don't know any
of those circumstances.

46

00:02:00,910 --> 00:02:05,230

So your father was
raised Christian?

47

00:02:05,230 --> 00:02:09,009

Yes, although
secularly, really--

48

00:02:09,009 --> 00:02:13,570

observing the major holidays,
but nothing much in between.

49
00:02:13,570 --> 00:02:15,655
And do you know whether
he was Catholic or--

50
00:02:15,655 --> 00:02:16,155
No.

51
00:02:16,155 --> 00:02:16,655
No--

52
00:02:16,655 --> 00:02:17,230
--Protestant?

53
00:02:17,230 --> 00:02:18,070
--Protestant.

54
00:02:18,070 --> 00:02:18,910
Lutheran or--

55
00:02:18,910 --> 00:02:20,960
Yes, Lutheran Protestant.

56
00:02:20,960 --> 00:02:23,230
So Protestant Lutheran.

57
00:02:23,230 --> 00:02:24,490
Yes.

58
00:02:24,490 --> 00:02:28,870
And so his family
were secular Lutherans

59
00:02:28,870 --> 00:02:33,990
and were not very observant,
as far as you know.

60
00:02:33,990 --> 00:02:35,830
I wish I could tell you.

61

00:02:35,830 --> 00:02:40,840

But my father was already

40 when I was born.

62

00:02:40,840 --> 00:02:43,230

His parents were long dead.

63

00:02:43,230 --> 00:02:44,400

I never knew them.

64

00:02:44,400 --> 00:02:48,120

All I knew was the

stories he told me.

65

00:02:48,120 --> 00:02:51,280

And what kinds of stories did

he tell you about his parents?

66

00:02:51,280 --> 00:02:54,000

Well, I mean the

history of the fact

67

00:02:54,000 --> 00:02:56,460

that he never knew his mother.

68

00:02:56,460 --> 00:03:01,560

Only after she died he heard

some aunt saying, the poor boy.

69

00:03:01,560 --> 00:03:03,730

And that was actually

his first memory,

70

00:03:03,730 --> 00:03:05,970

because he couldn't

remember his mother.

71

00:03:05,970 --> 00:03:07,710

She was the Christian.

72

00:03:07,710 --> 00:03:12,800

And his father, he was

extremely close to, very, very.

73

00:03:12,800 --> 00:03:15,480

He loved him and honored
and respected him.

74

00:03:15,480 --> 00:03:19,970

In fact, all during my
childhood, not a day

75

00:03:19,970 --> 00:03:23,000

would pass that he
wouldn't mention his papa

76

00:03:23,000 --> 00:03:25,910

in one nice way or another.

77

00:03:25,910 --> 00:03:33,650

So you had an idea of him, even
though you didn't know him.

78

00:03:33,650 --> 00:03:39,070

Oh, I saw photos of him,
a man with very big eyes,

79

00:03:39,070 --> 00:03:40,480

worried looking.

80

00:03:40,480 --> 00:03:42,750

He had been widowed
so very early.

81

00:03:42,750 --> 00:03:45,190

He was never remarried.

82

00:03:45,190 --> 00:03:47,590

So your father was Lutheran.

83

00:03:47,590 --> 00:03:50,380

And your mother was Jewish.

84

00:03:50,380 --> 00:03:53,370

And what was your
household like?

85
00:03:53,370 --> 00:03:55,560
Did your family--

86
00:03:55,560 --> 00:04:03,230
Well, my parents were not
churchgoers or temple goers

87
00:04:03,230 --> 00:04:04,700
as such.

88
00:04:04,700 --> 00:04:07,580
My mother, sometimes
with friends,

89
00:04:07,580 --> 00:04:12,650
might go to temple for high holy
days, Jewish high holy days.

90
00:04:12,650 --> 00:04:15,530
But other than
that, she never did.

91
00:04:15,530 --> 00:04:19,459
And my father simply was not
a churchgoer, although he

92
00:04:19,459 --> 00:04:21,680
was a very religious man.

93
00:04:21,680 --> 00:04:24,980
When I was a teenager,
I spoke to him once.

94
00:04:24,980 --> 00:04:28,200
And he didn't answer
me, didn't answer me.

95
00:04:28,200 --> 00:04:31,298
And after about five
minutes, he looked at me.

96
00:04:31,298 --> 00:04:33,090
And he said, I'm sorry
I didn't answer you.

97
00:04:33,090 --> 00:04:34,970
I was praying.

98
00:04:34,970 --> 00:04:36,170
That was his religion.

99
00:04:36,170 --> 00:04:38,330
And it was very deep.

100
00:04:38,330 --> 00:04:39,800
But he was not a churchgoer.

101
00:04:39,800 --> 00:04:43,250
But he accomplished miracles,
as you will later find out.

102
00:04:43,250 --> 00:04:45,950
I'm sure it had something to
do with this relationship he

103
00:04:45,950 --> 00:04:48,620
had with a higher being.

104
00:04:48,620 --> 00:04:51,690
And were you baptized?

105
00:04:51,690 --> 00:04:56,270
I was actually baptized
when I was a young child.

106
00:04:56,270 --> 00:04:58,820
No, no, I mean I wasn't
a toddler or an infant.

107
00:04:58,820 --> 00:05:00,620
I was already--

108

00:05:00,620 --> 00:05:03,650

I can't remember how old I was--

109

00:05:03,650 --> 00:05:06,420

maybe five, something like that.

110

00:05:06,420 --> 00:05:09,830

And they decided that

I should be baptized.

111

00:05:09,830 --> 00:05:12,860

And we went to Pastor

Niemöller's church,

112

00:05:12,860 --> 00:05:14,780

but he was not there.

113

00:05:14,780 --> 00:05:17,120

Someone else baptized

me with water

114

00:05:17,120 --> 00:05:19,460

from the river Spree in Berlin.

115

00:05:19,460 --> 00:05:23,070

And I remember we

came home from that.

116

00:05:23,070 --> 00:05:25,710

And my mother had a

close Jewish girlfriend

117

00:05:25,710 --> 00:05:27,360

who heartily disapproved.

118

00:05:27,360 --> 00:05:29,690

She said it was just terrible.

119

00:05:29,690 --> 00:05:31,560

And she told them that.

120

00:05:31,560 --> 00:05:35,580

Then she invited them in for
coffee and cake to celebrate.

121

00:05:35,580 --> 00:05:41,330

So this would have
been 1933 about.

122

00:05:41,330 --> 00:05:44,270

Probably, or a little later.

123

00:05:44,270 --> 00:05:46,360

I don't know whether I was--

124

00:05:46,360 --> 00:05:48,650

I cannot remember
what age I was.

125

00:05:48,650 --> 00:05:50,120

I might have been older.

126

00:05:50,120 --> 00:05:52,250

Probably, they
might have done it

127

00:05:52,250 --> 00:05:55,370

a little later when things were
beginning to look really bad.

128

00:05:55,370 --> 00:05:59,060

'33 was still fairly early.

129

00:05:59,060 --> 00:06:01,700

I wasn't aware of what
was really happening.

130

00:06:01,700 --> 00:06:04,520

But some persecution
had started in 1933.

131

00:06:04,520 --> 00:06:05,240

Yes.

132

00:06:05,240 --> 00:06:09,050

You have these roving bands
of Brown Shirts singing

133

00:06:09,050 --> 00:06:13,050

antisemitic songs,
and torch parades,

134

00:06:13,050 --> 00:06:16,050

a little bit awesome and
scary, that sort of thing.

135

00:06:16,050 --> 00:06:20,480

So you had a
baptismal certificate.

136

00:06:20,480 --> 00:06:24,800

If I ever had one, I don't
think I ever saw it, honestly.

137

00:06:24,800 --> 00:06:26,300

My mother must-- I don't know.

138

00:06:26,300 --> 00:06:28,720

I just don't--
I've never seen it.

139

00:06:28,720 --> 00:06:34,160

Do you think that, if you were
baptized, that one existed?

140

00:06:34,160 --> 00:06:37,580

This being Germany,
you can be darn sure.

141

00:06:37,580 --> 00:06:40,430

They had documentation
for everything.

142

00:06:40,430 --> 00:06:42,860

Yes.

143

00:06:42,860 --> 00:06:47,160
So you went to school.

144
00:06:47,160 --> 00:06:48,390
Yes.

145
00:06:48,390 --> 00:06:49,410
To a public school?

146
00:06:49,410 --> 00:06:57,700
A public school, until a certain
time period later, in the '30s.

147
00:06:57,700 --> 00:07:01,030
When Jewish children
were no longer

148
00:07:01,030 --> 00:07:07,600
allowed in public school,
under the logic of the Nazis,

149
00:07:07,600 --> 00:07:12,460
they had me figured out
as being 3/4 Jewish.

150
00:07:12,460 --> 00:07:15,310
So I went for a time--

151
00:07:15,310 --> 00:07:17,920
only for a time, because
then we left Germany--

152
00:07:17,920 --> 00:07:21,000
to a private Jewish school.

153
00:07:21,000 --> 00:07:23,067
Now, you said "they"
had you figured out.

154
00:07:23,067 --> 00:07:23,650
Who were they?

155

00:07:23,650 --> 00:07:24,340
The Nazis.

156
00:07:24,340 --> 00:07:24,990
The Nazis.

157
00:07:24,990 --> 00:07:26,990
Now, how did they know
that you were 3/4 Jewish?

158
00:07:26,990 --> 00:07:29,650
Well, it would be
like city hall.

159
00:07:29,650 --> 00:07:33,610
So they would have traced
who your grandparents were?

160
00:07:33,610 --> 00:07:34,870
Yes.

161
00:07:34,870 --> 00:07:36,520
Well, everything was documented.

162
00:07:36,520 --> 00:07:38,980
So they know exactly everyone.

163
00:07:38,980 --> 00:07:42,370
They knew my roots
better than I did.

164
00:07:42,370 --> 00:07:44,950
So you had to leave
the public school.

165
00:07:44,950 --> 00:07:45,550
Yes.

166
00:07:45,550 --> 00:07:46,990
Do you remember that?

167
00:07:46,990 --> 00:07:47,500

Yes.

168

00:07:47,500 --> 00:07:50,000

And what was that like for you,
to have to leave the school?

169

00:07:50,000 --> 00:07:53,240

Distressing, scary.

170

00:07:53,240 --> 00:07:55,630

All of a sudden, I
was taken out of my--

171

00:07:55,630 --> 00:07:59,950

although I must tell
you that public school

172

00:07:59,950 --> 00:08:01,990

was no longer a pleasure.

173

00:08:01,990 --> 00:08:05,380

There was one teacher
who was very antisemitic

174

00:08:05,380 --> 00:08:09,850

and was perfectly beastly
to us Jewish children.

175

00:08:09,850 --> 00:08:11,440

What did the teacher do?

176

00:08:11,440 --> 00:08:14,830

Oh, it was just her
sharpness and her nastiness.

177

00:08:14,830 --> 00:08:17,260

I don't remember details--

178

00:08:17,260 --> 00:08:21,598

very quick to slap faces,
and things like that.

179

00:08:21,598 --> 00:08:23,265

Do you remember your
face being slapped?

180

00:08:23,265 --> 00:08:23,765

Yes.

181

00:08:23,765 --> 00:08:26,360

182

00:08:26,360 --> 00:08:28,580

And did you tell your parents?

183

00:08:28,580 --> 00:08:33,299

Well, it was the custom
for teachers to do that.

184

00:08:33,299 --> 00:08:36,600

It wasn't-- now it would
be a shocking thing.

185

00:08:36,600 --> 00:08:38,179

In those days, it was done.

186

00:08:38,179 --> 00:08:41,850

187

00:08:41,850 --> 00:08:44,369

There were other Jewish
children in your class?

188

00:08:44,369 --> 00:08:47,410

189

00:08:47,410 --> 00:08:50,080

That is vague to me.

190

00:08:50,080 --> 00:08:56,500

I don't really remember
any particularly Jewish--

191

00:08:56,500 --> 00:08:58,570

none of us children
really paid attention

192
00:08:58,570 --> 00:09:00,460
to our different religions.

193
00:09:00,460 --> 00:09:02,300
We're just kids together.

194
00:09:02,300 --> 00:09:06,100
And until this day, I could not
tell you who was Jewish and who

195
00:09:06,100 --> 00:09:06,790
wasn't.

196
00:09:06,790 --> 00:09:10,030
I think there probably were
more non-Jewish children

197
00:09:10,030 --> 00:09:11,140
in that class.

198
00:09:11,140 --> 00:09:15,370
There may have been a
handful, besides myself.

199
00:09:15,370 --> 00:09:18,220
And did you think of
yourself as Jewish?

200
00:09:18,220 --> 00:09:22,250
I always thought of my--
well, thanks to the Nazis,

201
00:09:22,250 --> 00:09:26,860
I thought of myself as 3/4
Jewish and 1/4 Christian.

202
00:09:26,860 --> 00:09:31,900
And what did you think
that meant, being Jewish?

203

00:09:31,900 --> 00:09:38,670

Being 3/4 of one religion
and 1/4 of another religion.

204

00:09:38,670 --> 00:09:44,830

So what did Jewish in
particular mean to you?

205

00:09:44,830 --> 00:09:48,180

I wish I could really
explain it to you.

206

00:09:48,180 --> 00:09:53,250

Later, upon maturity, I realized
much more about what it means.

207

00:09:53,250 --> 00:09:54,180

But as a child.

208

00:09:54,180 --> 00:09:58,350

As a child, it was just a
religion that, for some reason,

209

00:09:58,350 --> 00:10:02,070

wasn't popular at that
time in that country.

210

00:10:02,070 --> 00:10:04,740

I was just a child.

211

00:10:04,740 --> 00:10:07,110

So you had to leave
the public school.

212

00:10:07,110 --> 00:10:08,370

Yes.

213

00:10:08,370 --> 00:10:10,890

Did the Jewish
children in your class

214

00:10:10,890 --> 00:10:13,450

go with you to the
same Jewish school?

215
00:10:13,450 --> 00:10:13,950
No.

216
00:10:13,950 --> 00:10:16,410
I remember going to this
Jewish school, which

217
00:10:16,410 --> 00:10:19,800
was in a nice suburb
there called Rosenthal,

218
00:10:19,800 --> 00:10:22,380
which means valley of roses.

219
00:10:22,380 --> 00:10:26,040
And not really.

220
00:10:26,040 --> 00:10:26,860
No, wait a minute.

221
00:10:26,860 --> 00:10:28,180
That may not have been there.

222
00:10:28,180 --> 00:10:30,690
But the lady, my
mother's best friend

223
00:10:30,690 --> 00:10:33,840
whom I stayed with for a
while, she lived in Rosenthal.

224
00:10:33,840 --> 00:10:37,830
I remember having to take
a bus in the mornings

225
00:10:37,830 --> 00:10:38,850
to get to the school.

226
00:10:38,850 --> 00:10:41,820

I can't tell you to
this day where it was.

227
00:10:41,820 --> 00:10:44,100
But it was a very nice school.

228
00:10:44,100 --> 00:10:46,110
And everyone there was Jewish.

229
00:10:46,110 --> 00:10:49,410
And they were all
new faces to me.

230
00:10:49,410 --> 00:10:52,320
Was the curriculum
very different

231
00:10:52,320 --> 00:10:53,460
from the public school?

232
00:10:53,460 --> 00:10:56,850

233
00:10:56,850 --> 00:10:59,610
The one big
difference was that I

234
00:10:59,610 --> 00:11:04,050
had to learn Hebrew,
which was very difficult.

235
00:11:04,050 --> 00:11:05,760
And of course, I never
really learned it.

236
00:11:05,760 --> 00:11:08,160
I just learned some
of the symbols,

237
00:11:08,160 --> 00:11:10,860
and how to pronounce them,
and how to read them.

238

00:11:10,860 --> 00:11:15,120

But that time period could
not have lasted very long,

239

00:11:15,120 --> 00:11:17,980

because I didn't
do that very long.

240

00:11:17,980 --> 00:11:21,590

And it must be shortly
thereafter that we left.

241

00:11:21,590 --> 00:11:24,400

That means, in other
words, that I didn't leave

242

00:11:24,400 --> 00:11:27,740

the German public school--

243

00:11:27,740 --> 00:11:32,850

well, I left Germany
in '39, probably '38.

244

00:11:32,850 --> 00:11:35,580

That you left the public school?

245

00:11:35,580 --> 00:11:36,120

Yes.

246

00:11:36,120 --> 00:11:38,160

So you were about 10.

247

00:11:38,160 --> 00:11:39,480

I think I was nine.

248

00:11:39,480 --> 00:11:41,340

I was 10 when I left.

249

00:11:41,340 --> 00:11:42,830

Yeah.

250

00:11:42,830 --> 00:11:48,440
And what else do you remember
from that time about what

251
00:11:48,440 --> 00:11:49,650
your life was like?

252
00:11:49,650 --> 00:11:51,360
Well, there was one
little instance.

253
00:11:51,360 --> 00:11:52,430
I was down--

254
00:11:52,430 --> 00:11:56,600
I don't know if it was
Wannsee, that great big bathing

255
00:11:56,600 --> 00:11:58,740
resort outside Berlin.

256
00:11:58,740 --> 00:12:01,970
I was at the beach,
playing in the sand.

257
00:12:01,970 --> 00:12:03,380
And a little girl came over.

258
00:12:03,380 --> 00:12:05,670
And she said, may
I play with you?

259
00:12:05,670 --> 00:12:08,450
And I was just about to
say, yes, when she added,

260
00:12:08,450 --> 00:12:10,460
but not if you're
Jewish, my mommy

261
00:12:10,460 --> 00:12:13,400
doesn't let me play
with Jewish children.

262
00:12:13,400 --> 00:12:15,560
So I said, well, I am.

263
00:12:15,560 --> 00:12:17,460
Well, you can't, or something.

264
00:12:17,460 --> 00:12:19,320
And that was the end of that.

265
00:12:19,320 --> 00:12:21,590
But I remember it to this day.

266
00:12:21,590 --> 00:12:26,250
And I'm now 67 years.

267
00:12:26,250 --> 00:12:28,700
But you must admit
that that is--

268
00:12:28,700 --> 00:12:32,330
others had much
worse experiences.

269
00:12:32,330 --> 00:12:34,860
And even though this
was a small thing,

270
00:12:34,860 --> 00:12:37,880
it was a pinprick that lasted.

271
00:12:37,880 --> 00:12:38,720
And let me see.

272
00:12:38,720 --> 00:12:39,620
What else?

273
00:12:39,620 --> 00:12:41,630
Well, you just
want me to tell you

274

00:12:41,630 --> 00:12:45,950
about things that went on around
me and my reactions to them?

275
00:12:45,950 --> 00:12:46,790
Sure.

276
00:12:46,790 --> 00:12:48,800
Well, there were
Hitler's speeches

277
00:12:48,800 --> 00:12:51,960
on the loudspeakers
in the streets.

278
00:12:51,960 --> 00:12:56,090
I would hear this male voice
shouting and, of course,

279
00:12:56,090 --> 00:12:57,920
this Austrian accent.

280
00:12:57,920 --> 00:13:03,110
I never was able to understand a
word that the man was shouting.

281
00:13:03,110 --> 00:13:05,360
He could have been
talking another language.

282
00:13:05,360 --> 00:13:07,340
I didn't understand
what he said.

283
00:13:07,340 --> 00:13:10,400
And there were all sorts of
things in the newspapers, which

284
00:13:10,400 --> 00:13:11,540
of course I didn't read.

285
00:13:11,540 --> 00:13:13,880
But I heard my

father and my mother

286

00:13:13,880 --> 00:13:16,430

discussing them at
home in the evening.

287

00:13:16,430 --> 00:13:20,480

And he would furrow his
brow and be very worried.

288

00:13:20,480 --> 00:13:23,360

And he always thought
that this couldn't last.

289

00:13:23,360 --> 00:13:26,317

This was just something
that would go away.

290

00:13:26,317 --> 00:13:27,150

This is your father?

291

00:13:27,150 --> 00:13:28,190

My father.

292

00:13:28,190 --> 00:13:29,480

Sorry, my father.

293

00:13:29,480 --> 00:13:33,560

And he just couldn't believe
that this madness could stay.

294

00:13:33,560 --> 00:13:35,450

And they would be talking.

295

00:13:35,450 --> 00:13:39,740

There was a current joke
that went around in Berlin.

296

00:13:39,740 --> 00:13:45,230

It ended with, the Jews
and the bicyclists.

297

00:13:45,230 --> 00:13:49,250

And then the question
was, why the bicyclist?

298

00:13:49,250 --> 00:13:52,874

And then the answer
would be, why the Jews?

299

00:13:52,874 --> 00:13:56,210

And that at that time was
one of the current jokes

300

00:13:56,210 --> 00:13:59,510

that was going-- it
sounds better in German.

301

00:13:59,510 --> 00:14:00,800

And let me see.

302

00:14:00,800 --> 00:14:02,660

What else?

303

00:14:02,660 --> 00:14:06,830

There was just a
general feeling of--

304

00:14:06,830 --> 00:14:09,710

I don't know-- something
dark surrounding us.

305

00:14:09,710 --> 00:14:13,050

And of course-- should I go
on about when my father left?

306

00:14:13,050 --> 00:14:15,800

Or do you want to
ask me that later?

307

00:14:15,800 --> 00:14:17,370

Well, before we get to that--

308

00:14:17,370 --> 00:14:17,870

Yes.

309
00:14:17,870 --> 00:14:20,120
--what was your
father's occupation?

310
00:14:20,120 --> 00:14:21,110
All right.

311
00:14:21,110 --> 00:14:25,010
He had his own
export-import firm.

312
00:14:25,010 --> 00:14:28,610
And then he hired
a new secretary.

313
00:14:28,610 --> 00:14:30,380
And this was my mother-to-be.

314
00:14:30,380 --> 00:14:33,260

315
00:14:33,260 --> 00:14:35,780
She was his secretary
for about four years.

316
00:14:35,780 --> 00:14:38,750
And it was a one-man company.

317
00:14:38,750 --> 00:14:41,630
But of course-- no, he had
people that worked for him.

318
00:14:41,630 --> 00:14:42,560
They were salesmen.

319
00:14:42,560 --> 00:14:43,790
It was export-import.

320
00:14:43,790 --> 00:14:45,560
And it was doing quite nicely.

321
00:14:45,560 --> 00:14:47,450
What export-import--

322
00:14:47,450 --> 00:14:53,300
Oh, I remember he had British
Yardley soap, and things

323
00:14:53,300 --> 00:14:56,210
like that, all sorts
of different things.

324
00:14:56,210 --> 00:15:00,320
And everything went along well.

325
00:15:00,320 --> 00:15:03,440
My parents got married after
they had known each other

326
00:15:03,440 --> 00:15:04,850
for four years.

327
00:15:04,850 --> 00:15:06,630
I was born the next year.

328
00:15:06,630 --> 00:15:09,470
By then, it was 1928.

329
00:15:09,470 --> 00:15:11,450
And his business folded.

330
00:15:11,450 --> 00:15:14,210
Times were bad, horrible.

331
00:15:14,210 --> 00:15:17,180
And he ended up
scrounging around

332
00:15:17,180 --> 00:15:19,070
for all sorts of different jobs.

333
00:15:19,070 --> 00:15:20,480

Now, was the business folding--

334
00:15:20,480 --> 00:15:22,920
was that a result
of persecution?

335
00:15:22,920 --> 00:15:25,770
I believe so.

336
00:15:25,770 --> 00:15:26,550
I don't know.

337
00:15:26,550 --> 00:15:29,370
I think it was the
economic climate.

338
00:15:29,370 --> 00:15:33,110
I don't know if it was a
depression that touched Germany

339
00:15:33,110 --> 00:15:33,830
as well.

340
00:15:33,830 --> 00:15:36,740
I'm not clear about
the economic reasons.

341
00:15:36,740 --> 00:15:40,340
I just know that,
before I was born,

342
00:15:40,340 --> 00:15:43,010
or while I was still an
infant, this business

343
00:15:43,010 --> 00:15:46,410
was no longer supporting him.

344
00:15:46,410 --> 00:15:52,790
If his father was born Jewish,
was he considered a Jew?

345

00:15:52,790 --> 00:15:54,500
You mean his father?

346
00:15:54,500 --> 00:15:55,740
No, your father's father--

347
00:15:55,740 --> 00:15:56,750
Oh, my father.

348
00:15:56,750 --> 00:15:58,130
--was born Jewish.

349
00:15:58,130 --> 00:16:03,950
So was your father considered
a Jew by the Nazis?

350
00:16:03,950 --> 00:16:04,920
Yes.

351
00:16:04,920 --> 00:16:08,810
For the same reason that I
was considered 3/4 Jewish,

352
00:16:08,810 --> 00:16:11,245
he was considered
one half Jewish.

353
00:16:11,245 --> 00:16:11,810
Yes.

354
00:16:11,810 --> 00:16:13,038
I wondered whether that--

355
00:16:13,038 --> 00:16:13,580
He had been--

356
00:16:13,580 --> 00:16:14,580
--affected his business.

357
00:16:14,580 --> 00:16:18,500
In World War I, he had gotten
the Iron Cross, second class.

358
00:16:18,500 --> 00:16:21,630
And he had been a
patriotic German.

359
00:16:21,630 --> 00:16:24,330
And he was 40 when I was born.

360
00:16:24,330 --> 00:16:29,000
He had had a very happy
young manhood in Berlin,

361
00:16:29,000 --> 00:16:32,450
enjoying himself,
enjoying life in Germany.

362
00:16:32,450 --> 00:16:34,730
And all of this came
like a bad dream.

363
00:16:34,730 --> 00:16:38,540
And he couldn't believe
that it was going to last.

364
00:16:38,540 --> 00:16:42,590
So backing up a bit, there
was bad economic times,

365
00:16:42,590 --> 00:16:44,880
and his business got
into bad trouble.

366
00:16:44,880 --> 00:16:46,460
And so then what happened?

367
00:16:46,460 --> 00:16:47,780
Oh, he scrounged around.

368
00:16:47,780 --> 00:16:50,240
He sold vacuum cleaners.

369
00:16:50,240 --> 00:16:51,740

He was a wine salesman.

370

00:16:51,740 --> 00:16:55,640

You see, his great
gift to salesmanship.

371

00:16:55,640 --> 00:16:57,380

His nickname was Fridl.

372

00:16:57,380 --> 00:17:02,110

They used to joke, Fridl could
sell refrigerators to Eskimos.

373

00:17:02,110 --> 00:17:05,060

He really could.

374

00:17:05,060 --> 00:17:07,430

So he kept us afloat with that.

375

00:17:07,430 --> 00:17:11,690

And my mother, when I was older,
she went and got herself a job

376

00:17:11,690 --> 00:17:14,780

at something called
the Palästina Amt,

377

00:17:14,780 --> 00:17:18,740

the Office for Palestine, a
Jewish organization near where

378

00:17:18,740 --> 00:17:19,800

we lived.

379

00:17:19,800 --> 00:17:23,810

And she had a regular office
job there, secretarial.

380

00:17:23,810 --> 00:17:26,540

And she had that job,
actually, until we left.

381

00:17:26,540 --> 00:17:31,220

Oh, but before she got
that, she tried everything.

382

00:17:31,220 --> 00:17:34,080

I'm going to jump ahead
and say, when my dad left--

383

00:17:34,080 --> 00:17:34,580

OK.

384

00:17:34,580 --> 00:17:39,140

--she took on a job as a
housekeeper for a very nice,

385

00:17:39,140 --> 00:17:42,590

well-to-do Jewish family.

386

00:17:42,590 --> 00:17:46,880

And it was really
nice, because there

387

00:17:46,880 --> 00:17:51,560

was a young woman there whom she
became very good friends with.

388

00:17:51,560 --> 00:17:55,190

Her grandfather, the
young woman's grandfather

389

00:17:55,190 --> 00:17:58,460

and her mother, who seemed
to be a little bit retarded

390

00:17:58,460 --> 00:18:01,550

or had some kind of
emotional problems--

391

00:18:01,550 --> 00:18:04,580

her grandfather was a
marvelous old gentleman.

392

00:18:04,580 --> 00:18:08,930

And they adopted me as the child
of the house and spoiled me.

393

00:18:08,930 --> 00:18:11,450

And my mother did
cleaning and cooking.

394

00:18:11,450 --> 00:18:13,460

And it was something she
had never done before.

395

00:18:13,460 --> 00:18:18,080

But she was really great, very
adaptable and hard working,

396

00:18:18,080 --> 00:18:19,860

just to keep us going.

397

00:18:19,860 --> 00:18:22,160

So she was doing
this to support you.

398

00:18:22,160 --> 00:18:22,880

Yes.

399

00:18:22,880 --> 00:18:27,170

And also, we started out
in a lovely apartment

400

00:18:27,170 --> 00:18:28,400

when I was four.

401

00:18:28,400 --> 00:18:32,490

Then we went to a slightly
less wonderful argument,

402

00:18:32,490 --> 00:18:35,870

and finally ended up
in a furnished room.

403

00:18:35,870 --> 00:18:38,315

Things were really, really bad.

404

00:18:38,315 --> 00:18:39,185

We were poor.

405

00:18:39,185 --> 00:18:42,550

406

00:18:42,550 --> 00:18:45,370

So going back to
your father leaving,

407

00:18:45,370 --> 00:18:46,870

how did that come about?

408

00:18:46,870 --> 00:18:48,550

All right.

409

00:18:48,550 --> 00:18:52,300

This was still
before Kristallnacht.

410

00:18:52,300 --> 00:18:54,220

But things were bad.

411

00:18:54,220 --> 00:18:55,510

And he was struggling.

412

00:18:55,510 --> 00:18:59,470

And one day, a letter
came from city hall

413

00:18:59,470 --> 00:19:04,870

to present himself there the
next day with his passport.

414

00:19:04,870 --> 00:19:06,595

And he knew something was up.

415

00:19:06,595 --> 00:19:09,040

He was very
intelligent and aware,

416

00:19:09,040 --> 00:19:11,690
even though he couldn't
believe that this would last.

417
00:19:11,690 --> 00:19:13,870
But he knew that things
were getting dangerous.

418
00:19:13,870 --> 00:19:15,690
What did he think
that was all about?

419
00:19:15,690 --> 00:19:16,570
Oh, I'll tell you.

420
00:19:16,570 --> 00:19:18,730
At that time, my mother
was already employed

421
00:19:18,730 --> 00:19:20,192
at the Pal stina Amt.

422
00:19:20,192 --> 00:19:23,090

423
00:19:23,090 --> 00:19:23,660
I don't know.

424
00:19:23,660 --> 00:19:24,770
I get confused.

425
00:19:24,770 --> 00:19:25,990
He called here at work.

426
00:19:25,990 --> 00:19:29,310
And he said, Edith, come
home and help me pack.

427
00:19:29,310 --> 00:19:31,680
Tonight, I have
to leave Germany.

428

00:19:31,680 --> 00:19:34,970
And he explained that they
wanted him to present himself

429
00:19:34,970 --> 00:19:36,440
with his passport at city hall.

430
00:19:36,440 --> 00:19:37,760
He knew what that meant.

431
00:19:37,760 --> 00:19:40,280
They were going to
put a J in it for Jew,

432
00:19:40,280 --> 00:19:43,460
which would mean that his travel
would be severely curtailed,

433
00:19:43,460 --> 00:19:45,140
if not made impossible.

434
00:19:45,140 --> 00:19:48,590
And he decided he going to flee
that night, get out of there.

435
00:19:48,590 --> 00:19:49,400
Before they put a--

436
00:19:49,400 --> 00:19:49,900
Absolutely.

437
00:19:49,900 --> 00:19:51,290
--J on his passport.

438
00:19:51,290 --> 00:19:53,670
Yes.

439
00:19:53,670 --> 00:19:56,850
And so how did he leave?

440
00:19:56,850 --> 00:20:01,470
Well, I think he went to

his great-aunt, Matilda,

441

00:20:01,470 --> 00:20:05,220
and borrowed some-- she was the
Christian part of the family,

442

00:20:05,220 --> 00:20:06,660
and quite well-off.

443

00:20:06,660 --> 00:20:08,850
And she lent him some money.

444

00:20:08,850 --> 00:20:13,740
And I think he took a train to--

445

00:20:13,740 --> 00:20:19,010

446

00:20:19,010 --> 00:20:22,130
somehow, he found-- there
was two places he went to.

447

00:20:22,130 --> 00:20:23,480
He was in Amsterdam.

448

00:20:23,480 --> 00:20:27,290
And he was in London trying
to find a stepping stone.

449

00:20:27,290 --> 00:20:29,930
I'm a little confused
where he went first.

450

00:20:29,930 --> 00:20:35,210
And then, eventually, he
ended up briefly in New York

451

00:20:35,210 --> 00:20:36,740
to gain a foothold.

452

00:20:36,740 --> 00:20:40,730
But in order to enter legally

into the United States,

453

00:20:40,730 --> 00:20:43,610

he needed a quote number, visa.

454

00:20:43,610 --> 00:20:46,610

And so in those days,
people in that position

455

00:20:46,610 --> 00:20:48,900

would either go to Canada.

456

00:20:48,900 --> 00:20:51,830

Some ended up in
China, in Shanghai.

457

00:20:51,830 --> 00:20:54,650

And he opted-- or maybe
it was the only choice

458

00:20:54,650 --> 00:20:59,120

he had-- to go to Havana,
Cuba, to wait for this.

459

00:20:59,120 --> 00:21:00,920

So that's what happened.

460

00:21:00,920 --> 00:21:03,960

In the meantime, we
had a year without him.

461

00:21:03,960 --> 00:21:06,450

And I must tell you, he
was a marvelous cook.

462

00:21:06,450 --> 00:21:08,370

He was a great cook.

463

00:21:08,370 --> 00:21:11,730

And he had made a
bouillabaisse this last day.

464

00:21:11,730 --> 00:21:14,170

And I remember,
after he had left--

465

00:21:14,170 --> 00:21:15,840

he had left in the evening.

466

00:21:15,840 --> 00:21:18,840

And I don't quite know what
mode of transportation.

467

00:21:18,840 --> 00:21:21,750

He must have taken
a train to Hamburg

468

00:21:21,750 --> 00:21:23,670

to take the boat
over to England,

469

00:21:23,670 --> 00:21:25,590

or something like that.

470

00:21:25,590 --> 00:21:28,290

There we were, with his
soup that he had left.

471

00:21:28,290 --> 00:21:31,410

And I remember my mother
and I eating that soup.

472

00:21:31,410 --> 00:21:33,960

And the tears were just
rolling down our cheeks.

473

00:21:33,960 --> 00:21:39,000

And for many, many, many years,
I couldn't stand bouillabaisse.

474

00:21:39,000 --> 00:21:40,800

I just couldn't stand it.

475

00:21:40,800 --> 00:21:43,920

Then, much later on, I

developed a real liking for it,

476

00:21:43,920 --> 00:21:45,670
because we were together again.

477

00:21:45,670 --> 00:21:47,460
But that was something.

478

00:21:47,460 --> 00:21:50,070
It was a terrible shock to
him him gone all of a sudden.

479

00:21:50,070 --> 00:21:51,780
But he saved himself.

480

00:21:51,780 --> 00:21:54,000
And he saved us by that action.

481

00:21:54,000 --> 00:21:56,640
So when he left, you
had some awareness

482

00:21:56,640 --> 00:21:57,690
of what was happening.

483

00:21:57,690 --> 00:21:59,140
Oh, a great deal of it.

484

00:21:59,140 --> 00:22:03,870
In fact, fear was our
constant companion,

485

00:22:03,870 --> 00:22:06,840
because then we
had Kristallnacht.

486

00:22:06,840 --> 00:22:08,610
November 9, wasn't it?

487

00:22:08,610 --> 00:22:12,610
1938, I believe.

488

00:22:12,610 --> 00:22:16,930

And my mother was
a real Berliner.

489

00:22:16,930 --> 00:22:19,190

There's an expression in Berlin.

490

00:22:19,190 --> 00:22:22,890

If somebody comes
at you all excited,

491

00:22:22,890 --> 00:22:27,870

you say, [GERMAN],, which
means, oh, so where's the fire?

492

00:22:27,870 --> 00:22:31,230

So at 4 O'clock in the
morning, or at 4:30 or 5:00,

493

00:22:31,230 --> 00:22:33,860

there's a pounding at the door.

494

00:22:33,860 --> 00:22:36,390

My mother gets up
out of her sleep--

495

00:22:36,390 --> 00:22:38,370

this is some time
after my father left,

496

00:22:38,370 --> 00:22:39,930

I don't know how long--

497

00:22:39,930 --> 00:22:41,190

all grumpy.

498

00:22:41,190 --> 00:22:42,930

And she goes to the
door and opens it.

499

00:22:42,930 --> 00:22:45,680

And she said, so

where's the fire?

500

00:22:45,680 --> 00:22:47,420

And the person
knocking on the door

501

00:22:47,420 --> 00:22:49,340

said, the temple
across the street

502

00:22:49,340 --> 00:22:51,530

is on fire, the Jewish temple.

503

00:22:51,530 --> 00:22:54,710

This was Fasanenstrasse.

504

00:22:54,710 --> 00:22:57,180

The corner had Hotel
Kempinski at it.

505

00:22:57,180 --> 00:22:59,900

That was the last
address we had in Berlin.

506

00:22:59,900 --> 00:23:02,480

And kitty corner from
across the street

507

00:23:02,480 --> 00:23:07,340

was a Jewish synagogue,
which is now,

508

00:23:07,340 --> 00:23:10,460

by the way, the Jewish
Community Center.

509

00:23:10,460 --> 00:23:13,260

I saw it in 1978.

510

00:23:13,260 --> 00:23:16,080

They did something very smart.

511

00:23:16,080 --> 00:23:18,005

They saved the front
of this temple.

512

00:23:18,005 --> 00:23:19,790

It had been a
beautiful building.

513

00:23:19,790 --> 00:23:24,350

They saved a doorway, and
made a modern building

514

00:23:24,350 --> 00:23:27,740

for the Jewish Community Center,
and put the doorway there.

515

00:23:27,740 --> 00:23:31,190

It was a striking and
very beautiful thing.

516

00:23:31,190 --> 00:23:34,190

It was a strange feeling to
go back after so many years

517

00:23:34,190 --> 00:23:35,180

and see that.

518

00:23:35,180 --> 00:23:39,890

But anyway, to get back to
that horrible night or morning,

519

00:23:39,890 --> 00:23:42,800

my mother must have gone out
the door to take a peek at it.

520

00:23:42,800 --> 00:23:43,670

I don't remember.

521

00:23:43,670 --> 00:23:45,290

She left me upstairs in bed.

522

00:23:45,290 --> 00:23:46,880

Or maybe I slept

through all this.

523

00:23:46,880 --> 00:23:48,340

I don't know.

524

00:23:48,340 --> 00:23:51,280

And I remember-- she
stayed home that day.

525

00:23:51,280 --> 00:23:53,352

And I remember
saying, oh, how nice.

526

00:23:53,352 --> 00:23:54,560

You don't have to go to work.

527

00:23:54,560 --> 00:23:55,520

You're staying with me.

528

00:23:55,520 --> 00:23:58,030

And I remember her sad smile.

529

00:23:58,030 --> 00:24:01,990

And she said, but what a reason.

530

00:24:01,990 --> 00:24:05,200

I was too young to understand
the horrible things that

531

00:24:05,200 --> 00:24:06,790

were going on around me.

532

00:24:06,790 --> 00:24:14,030

And another really
nightmare moment was--

533

00:24:14,030 --> 00:24:17,480

we, at this time, lived
in a furnished room.

534

00:24:17,480 --> 00:24:20,840

And I, in fact, slept

on a cot in the kitchen.

535

00:24:20,840 --> 00:24:23,750

It was a nice, big,
old Berlin apartment.

536

00:24:23,750 --> 00:24:27,590

And the lady who lived there
was a wonderful old lady.

537

00:24:27,590 --> 00:24:29,660

Her name was Mrs. Moses.

538

00:24:29,660 --> 00:24:31,280

I think her first
name was Martha.

539

00:24:31,280 --> 00:24:33,210

I'm not sure.

540

00:24:33,210 --> 00:24:36,930

She had a retarded daughter,
a little shriveled lady,

541

00:24:36,930 --> 00:24:39,210

must have been in
her 40s or 50s.

542

00:24:39,210 --> 00:24:43,440

Scared me terribly, because I
didn't know about retardation.

543

00:24:43,440 --> 00:24:48,270

But she was kindness itself,
very old and tired looking.

544

00:24:48,270 --> 00:24:51,420

And she was very good
to my mother and myself.

545

00:24:51,420 --> 00:24:53,730

She had some other
tenants there, too.

546
00:24:53,730 --> 00:24:57,490
She had her son living in
the apartment above her.

547
00:24:57,490 --> 00:25:03,500
And I think it was the
day after the fire,

548
00:25:03,500 --> 00:25:06,710
or very shortly
thereabouts, that there

549
00:25:06,710 --> 00:25:10,190
was talk of Jewish
men being searched

550
00:25:10,190 --> 00:25:13,490
for by hordes of SA men.

551
00:25:13,490 --> 00:25:15,290
Those were the Brown Shirts.

552
00:25:15,290 --> 00:25:23,030
And there was a brass door
sign next to the apartment door

553
00:25:23,030 --> 00:25:24,230
outside the front door.

554
00:25:24,230 --> 00:25:25,730
And it said Moses on it.

555
00:25:25,730 --> 00:25:27,410
That was her name.

556
00:25:27,410 --> 00:25:29,960
And some very smart
person across the way

557
00:25:29,960 --> 00:25:33,230
said, if I were you, I

would unscrew those screws

558

00:25:33,230 --> 00:25:34,410

and take that sign off.

559

00:25:34,410 --> 00:25:35,990

It's a very Jewish name.

560

00:25:35,990 --> 00:25:38,090

They're bound to come to you.

561

00:25:38,090 --> 00:25:41,780

And my mother, who was a
real feisty Berliner always

562

00:25:41,780 --> 00:25:43,790

said, oh, that's not necessary.

563

00:25:43,790 --> 00:25:46,190

She didn't want to do that.

564

00:25:46,190 --> 00:25:48,980

But reason prevailed,
and they did it.

565

00:25:48,980 --> 00:25:52,280

And it's a darn good thing,
because later on, we heard

566

00:25:52,280 --> 00:25:54,170

these boots on the stairs.

567

00:25:54,170 --> 00:25:58,850

My mother and I were inside
the pantry with her arms

568

00:25:58,850 --> 00:26:01,790

around me, shaking
like aspen leaves.

569

00:26:01,790 --> 00:26:05,000

We heard those pounding

boots coming up the stairs.

570

00:26:05,000 --> 00:26:07,790

And we heard somebody
say, oh, don't ring there,

571

00:26:07,790 --> 00:26:09,120

there's no Jews there.

572

00:26:09,120 --> 00:26:10,250

And they went on.

573

00:26:10,250 --> 00:26:15,230

I believe they got her son,
either that time, or later.

574

00:26:15,230 --> 00:26:15,920

I don't know.

575

00:26:15,920 --> 00:26:18,170

She and her daughter
must have ended up dead.

576

00:26:18,170 --> 00:26:20,280

It was just dreadful.

577

00:26:20,280 --> 00:26:25,230

Anyhow, that is a
moment that is probably

578

00:26:25,230 --> 00:26:29,480

the most frightening
moment of my life.

579

00:26:29,480 --> 00:26:31,160

Then we crept out of the pantry.

580

00:26:31,160 --> 00:26:33,170

The Nazis had gone.

581

00:26:33,170 --> 00:26:35,990

And then shortly

thereafter it must've

582
00:26:35,990 --> 00:26:39,470
been that word came
that we should go to--

583
00:26:39,470 --> 00:26:43,310
from my father who had, at
this point, reached Havana.

584
00:26:43,310 --> 00:26:47,930
And he said, he
wrote, go to Hamburg.

585
00:26:47,930 --> 00:26:49,610
Go to the Cuban consulate.

586
00:26:49,610 --> 00:26:52,130
And get all your documentation.

587
00:26:52,130 --> 00:26:56,640
And soon, I'll be
able to send for you.

588
00:26:56,640 --> 00:27:00,830
And so my mother and I took
an early morning train--

589
00:27:00,830 --> 00:27:02,390
it was still dark--

590
00:27:02,390 --> 00:27:03,720
from Berlin to Hamburg.

591
00:27:03,720 --> 00:27:05,780
Now, this was right
away, the next day?

592
00:27:05,780 --> 00:27:06,290
Or--

593
00:27:06,290 --> 00:27:11,390

As a child, your sense of
time is really nonexistent.

594
00:27:11,390 --> 00:27:13,730
It's fueled by events.

595
00:27:13,730 --> 00:27:15,620
I simply cannot tell.

596
00:27:15,620 --> 00:27:17,755
It must have been shortly
thereafter, I'm sure.

597
00:27:17,755 --> 00:27:21,240

598
00:27:21,240 --> 00:27:22,350
So there we were.

599
00:27:22,350 --> 00:27:24,750
I thought it was the
greatest treat in the world

600
00:27:24,750 --> 00:27:27,180
to sit in a dining
car, a little--

601
00:27:27,180 --> 00:27:30,480
no, white tablecloths,
with silver, and waiters.

602
00:27:30,480 --> 00:27:32,610
And I remember eating
a soft boiled egg

603
00:27:32,610 --> 00:27:34,770
and looking out
the train window.

604
00:27:34,770 --> 00:27:38,070
I took my enjoyment
where I found it.

605

00:27:38,070 --> 00:27:39,850

I thought that was great.

606

00:27:39,850 --> 00:27:41,790

But then we trudged
through Hamburg.

607

00:27:41,790 --> 00:27:43,530

And we went to the consulate.

608

00:27:43,530 --> 00:27:44,580

Everything was fine.

609

00:27:44,580 --> 00:27:45,990

It was lunchtime.

610

00:27:45,990 --> 00:27:48,090

And I was getting hungry.

611

00:27:48,090 --> 00:27:52,860

And my mother-- everywhere she
saw, at restaurants, it said,

612

00:27:52,860 --> 00:27:55,920

Jews unwanted,
forbidden to Jews.

613

00:27:55,920 --> 00:27:57,780

And she was a mother first.

614

00:27:57,780 --> 00:28:00,465

And she decided that,
heck with all this.

615

00:28:00,465 --> 00:28:01,590

She had a young child here.

616

00:28:01,590 --> 00:28:04,920

And she was going to see to it
that that child got some lunch.

617

00:28:04,920 --> 00:28:08,042

And so we just walked into one
of those restaurants and ate.

618

00:28:08,042 --> 00:28:09,750

And of course, it
didn't mean much to me.

619

00:28:09,750 --> 00:28:12,740

But you can imagine her feeling.

620

00:28:12,740 --> 00:28:17,720

And then, shortly after that,
I was able to leave the school.

621

00:28:17,720 --> 00:28:19,760

And the happy word came that--

622

00:28:19,760 --> 00:28:20,300

Pardon me.

623

00:28:20,300 --> 00:28:22,265

Did you go back to Berlin?

624

00:28:22,265 --> 00:28:23,390

Or did you stay in Hamburg?

625

00:28:23,390 --> 00:28:25,598

Oh, yeah, this was just a
trip to get documentation--

626

00:28:25,598 --> 00:28:26,270

I see.

627

00:28:26,270 --> 00:28:28,100

--from the Cuban consulate.

628

00:28:28,100 --> 00:28:29,000

And then shortly--

629

00:28:29,000 --> 00:28:30,375

So you went right

back to Berlin.

630
00:28:30,375 --> 00:28:32,510
We went right back to Berlin.

631
00:28:32,510 --> 00:28:33,080
And then--

632
00:28:33,080 --> 00:28:35,060
How long was the trip
from Berlin to Hamburg?

633
00:28:35,060 --> 00:28:37,680
You ask me something
I don't know.

634
00:28:37,680 --> 00:28:39,320
I could look at the map here.

635
00:28:39,320 --> 00:28:42,590
How far is Hamburg from Berlin?

636
00:28:42,590 --> 00:28:45,960
Maybe-- let's see, Hamburg.

637
00:28:45,960 --> 00:28:47,690
So you did it in a day?

638
00:28:47,690 --> 00:28:48,660
Oh, Yes.

639
00:28:48,660 --> 00:28:49,160
OK.

640
00:28:49,160 --> 00:28:49,660
Oh, yes.

641
00:28:49,660 --> 00:28:51,230
It was several hours.

642
00:28:51,230 --> 00:28:53,510

So you didn't have to
stay overnight in Hamburg.

643
00:28:53,510 --> 00:28:54,690
I don't remember that.

644
00:28:54,690 --> 00:28:56,356
It must have just
been a day trip.

645
00:28:56,356 --> 00:28:56,856
Yes.

646
00:28:56,856 --> 00:29:00,500

647
00:29:00,500 --> 00:29:05,765
So then the wonderful word came
that we would be able to leave.

648
00:29:05,765 --> 00:29:08,860

649
00:29:08,860 --> 00:29:10,870
Do you want to ask
me anything else?

650
00:29:10,870 --> 00:29:12,526
Or should I go on into that now?

651
00:29:12,526 --> 00:29:17,900

652
00:29:17,900 --> 00:29:19,070
Word came.

653
00:29:19,070 --> 00:29:23,610
And my mother got ready
and prepared everything.

654
00:29:23,610 --> 00:29:26,720
Now I have to go back

in childhood memories.

655

00:29:26,720 --> 00:29:31,115

Before I continue with
this, let me go back.

656

00:29:31,115 --> 00:29:34,730

When we started moving
from one nice apartment,

657

00:29:34,730 --> 00:29:38,540

to one less nice, to one less
nice, to a furnished room,

658

00:29:38,540 --> 00:29:42,140

I remember a lovely
place we had.

659

00:29:42,140 --> 00:29:44,990

Geisenheimer Strasse
was the place.

660

00:29:44,990 --> 00:29:47,690

It was outside of Berlin.

661

00:29:47,690 --> 00:29:50,420

And it was a little
apartment with a balcony.

662

00:29:50,420 --> 00:29:52,010

But it was on the ground floor.

663

00:29:52,010 --> 00:29:55,710

And I remember, at that
time, I was four years old.

664

00:29:55,710 --> 00:30:00,320

And I was just starting having
this impulse to draw pictures.

665

00:30:00,320 --> 00:30:04,000

And so I remember sitting at a
little table on a little chair

666
00:30:04,000 --> 00:30:05,240
on this balcony.

667
00:30:05,240 --> 00:30:08,400
It had a hedge around it to
separate it from the road.

668
00:30:08,400 --> 00:30:10,760
And I would sit there
with paper and pencil,

669
00:30:10,760 --> 00:30:13,610
and scribble and scribble,
happy as could be.

670
00:30:13,610 --> 00:30:16,850
I remember that clearly, the
first apartment I remember.

671
00:30:16,850 --> 00:30:21,330
In fact, my first memory
was waking up from a sleep.

672
00:30:21,330 --> 00:30:23,960
And my parents were in
the next room packing.

673
00:30:23,960 --> 00:30:27,620
And we were going to Denmark
the next day for a little trip.

674
00:30:27,620 --> 00:30:29,590
That was my very first memory.

675
00:30:29,590 --> 00:30:31,340
I was three then, or something.

676
00:30:31,340 --> 00:30:34,800
So that was a happy time when
you were a very small child--

677

00:30:34,800 --> 00:30:35,300
Oh, yes.

678
00:30:35,300 --> 00:30:36,920
--before all the
trouble starting.

679
00:30:36,920 --> 00:30:37,962
My parents were my world.

680
00:30:37,962 --> 00:30:38,990
I had no siblings.

681
00:30:38,990 --> 00:30:41,840
And they were always
absolutely wonderful parents.

682
00:30:41,840 --> 00:30:46,490
We had a happy
relationship, trouble free.

683
00:30:46,490 --> 00:30:48,590
But why did I go into that?

684
00:30:48,590 --> 00:30:54,260
Oh, later on, when I came
back with my mother in '78,

685
00:30:54,260 --> 00:30:56,750
we visited this
apartment, because that

686
00:30:56,750 --> 00:31:00,500
was the only place that
held happy memories for me.

687
00:31:00,500 --> 00:31:04,070
It was raining cats and dogs.

688
00:31:04,070 --> 00:31:06,290
And the apartment, the
whole neighborhood,

689

00:31:06,290 --> 00:31:12,020

was now filled with
Turkish labor immigrants.

690

00:31:12,020 --> 00:31:14,180

You've read about the Turks.

691

00:31:14,180 --> 00:31:16,100

And they were having
a very hard time

692

00:31:16,100 --> 00:31:19,280

in foreigner-hating Germany.

693

00:31:19,280 --> 00:31:21,610

And there were these
Turks in that apartment.

694

00:31:21,610 --> 00:31:23,810

And we couldn't make
ourselves understood

695

00:31:23,810 --> 00:31:26,930

that we used to live here,
that we wanted to see.

696

00:31:26,930 --> 00:31:28,410

It was a blank.

697

00:31:28,410 --> 00:31:30,430

And it was raining.

698

00:31:30,430 --> 00:31:32,060

I feel heartbroken.

699

00:31:32,060 --> 00:31:35,540

I don't know why,
but I felt so sad.

700

00:31:35,540 --> 00:31:36,560

Anyway, that was--

701

00:31:36,560 --> 00:31:37,730

I'm digressing here.

702

00:31:37,730 --> 00:31:39,800

I went back into the past.

703

00:31:39,800 --> 00:31:41,930

Now, this-- but

why did I do that?

704

00:31:41,930 --> 00:31:43,970

Now, what was I

trying to tell you?

705

00:31:43,970 --> 00:31:47,887

You started to talk

about leaving Germany.

706

00:31:47,887 --> 00:31:48,470

And then you--

707

00:31:48,470 --> 00:31:49,100

Yes.

708

00:31:49,100 --> 00:31:51,660

And then you went back to your

early childhood happiness.

709

00:31:51,660 --> 00:31:52,160

Oh, yes.

710

00:31:52,160 --> 00:31:54,710

Now, leaving that

neighborhood, we

711

00:31:54,710 --> 00:31:57,530

had to leave that apartment

because we just simply

712

00:31:57,530 --> 00:31:59,180

didn't have any more money.

713

00:31:59,180 --> 00:32:03,920

And that's when the
furnished room life started.

714

00:32:03,920 --> 00:32:08,520

No, I think there was one more
apartment high under the roof,

715

00:32:08,520 --> 00:32:09,620

which wasn't too bad.

716

00:32:09,620 --> 00:32:11,480

But then came the
furnished room.

717

00:32:11,480 --> 00:32:15,740

But anyway, the day that we had
to leave Geisenheimer Strasse,

718

00:32:15,740 --> 00:32:19,820

there was a neighborhood
Punch and Judy show.

719

00:32:19,820 --> 00:32:23,030

In German, it's called
Kasperle Theatre.

720

00:32:23,030 --> 00:32:26,590

And all the
neighborhood children

721

00:32:26,590 --> 00:32:30,440

were getting ready to sit and
watch it, and I had to leave.

722

00:32:30,440 --> 00:32:33,100

I had to drive away
with my parents.

723

00:32:33,100 --> 00:32:38,620

That very time,
I felt so bereft.

724

00:32:38,620 --> 00:32:40,360

So that was a sad thing.

725

00:32:40,360 --> 00:32:43,660

So it was, in many
ways, difficult

726

00:32:43,660 --> 00:32:46,252

for you to leave your home.

727

00:32:46,252 --> 00:32:48,310

Well, that home, yes.

728

00:32:48,310 --> 00:32:52,480

But then later, leaving
Fasanenstrasse to go on a boat

729

00:32:52,480 --> 00:32:57,160

to Cuba was
unbelievable happiness.

730

00:32:57,160 --> 00:32:59,940

I was not sorry to
leave that Germany.

731

00:32:59,940 --> 00:33:02,570

732

00:33:02,570 --> 00:33:06,230

So talk about that leaving.

733

00:33:06,230 --> 00:33:08,930

All right.

734

00:33:08,930 --> 00:33:12,170

I was never one for dolls,
but I had a lot of stuff toys.

735

00:33:12,170 --> 00:33:16,790

Particularly, I loved
a white stuffed cat,

736

00:33:16,790 --> 00:33:18,880

beautiful little
white stuffed cat

737

00:33:18,880 --> 00:33:22,620

with green glass eyes, a
little pink nose and mustache.

738

00:33:22,620 --> 00:33:23,960

I loved it.

739

00:33:23,960 --> 00:33:26,440

And for some reason,
with all the excitement

740

00:33:26,440 --> 00:33:32,090

of packing and getting ready
to leave, that got left behind.

741

00:33:32,090 --> 00:33:35,180

And I don't know whether we
were in a taxi to the train,

742

00:33:35,180 --> 00:33:36,710

or in the train, or what.

743

00:33:36,710 --> 00:33:38,150

All of a sudden, I remembered.

744

00:33:38,150 --> 00:33:41,600

And I said, oh, Mutti,
I forgot the cat.

745

00:33:41,600 --> 00:33:42,930

Can we back and get it?

746

00:33:42,930 --> 00:33:45,930

And she said, no, oh, no.

747

00:33:45,930 --> 00:33:48,320

Can you imagine, in
her mind, going back

748
00:33:48,320 --> 00:33:49,790
and getting snapped up?

749
00:33:49,790 --> 00:33:51,380
Of course not.

750
00:33:51,380 --> 00:33:55,631
But to this day, I have
regrets about that stuffed cat.

751
00:33:55,631 --> 00:33:59,180

752
00:33:59,180 --> 00:34:01,190
But other than that--

753
00:34:01,190 --> 00:34:01,920
Let's stop here--

754
00:34:01,920 --> 00:34:02,420
Oh.

755
00:34:02,420 --> 00:34:03,690
--because we have to
turn over the tape.

756
00:34:03,690 --> 00:34:04,190
Yes.

757
00:34:04,190 --> 00:34:04,986
Good.

758
00:34:04,986 --> 00:34:12,290
[AUDIO OUT]

759
00:34:12,290 --> 00:34:15,530
This is a continuation of
the United States Holocaust

760
00:34:15,530 --> 00:34:18,050

Memorial Museum
volunteer collection

761
00:34:18,050 --> 00:34:24,860
interview with Ruth Harvey,
take number one, side B.

762
00:34:24,860 --> 00:34:27,230
When we stopped,
you were talking

763
00:34:27,230 --> 00:34:31,450
about leaving your
animal behind--

764
00:34:31,450 --> 00:34:33,202
Well, it was not
a living animal.

765
00:34:33,202 --> 00:34:34,160
--your stuffed animal--

766
00:34:34,160 --> 00:34:35,160
It was a stuffed animal.

767
00:34:35,160 --> 00:34:39,820
--and how upsetting that
was for you to forget that.

768
00:34:39,820 --> 00:34:43,370
And then you were telling
me about a painting

769
00:34:43,370 --> 00:34:46,909
that you did, which you
now have in front of you.

770
00:34:46,909 --> 00:34:48,500
And the title of
the painting is--

771
00:34:48,500 --> 00:34:50,449
Childhood Memories.

772
00:34:50,449 --> 00:34:51,560
It is so strange.

773
00:34:51,560 --> 00:34:53,870
My art teacher
suggested a subject,

774
00:34:53,870 --> 00:34:56,239
because I was at a standstill.

775
00:34:56,239 --> 00:34:59,870
She said, why don't you paint
your childhood memories?

776
00:34:59,870 --> 00:35:03,200
And it unleashed
a torrent in me.

777
00:35:03,200 --> 00:35:05,810
And it had a very odd result.

778
00:35:05,810 --> 00:35:11,540
I had been planning a trip
through the Rhine country,

779
00:35:11,540 --> 00:35:16,340
picturesque German
towns along the river.

780
00:35:16,340 --> 00:35:19,460
When I got through
painting this painting,

781
00:35:19,460 --> 00:35:24,530
I had gotten so closely
back into my childhood self

782
00:35:24,530 --> 00:35:26,900
that I was totally
unable to go to Germany.

783

00:35:26,900 --> 00:35:29,555
And I changed my travel plans
and went to Greece instead.

784
00:35:29,555 --> 00:35:32,580

785
00:35:32,580 --> 00:35:35,010
So you had a lot of
very strong feelings.

786
00:35:35,010 --> 00:35:36,660
Oh, my lord, yes.

787
00:35:36,660 --> 00:35:39,960
And it was catharsis.

788
00:35:39,960 --> 00:35:41,460
It just came out.

789
00:35:41,460 --> 00:35:42,810
To do the painting?

790
00:35:42,810 --> 00:35:44,140
As I did the painting.

791
00:35:44,140 --> 00:35:44,640
Yes.

792
00:35:44,640 --> 00:35:47,910
Could you describe some of
the things in the painting?

793
00:35:47,910 --> 00:35:50,040
Yes, I'll be happy to.

794
00:35:50,040 --> 00:35:53,280
Down here, you see
this cornucopia

795
00:35:53,280 --> 00:35:55,847
with colorful objects

spilled out of it.

796

00:35:55,847 --> 00:35:57,180

This is in the lower right hand.

797

00:35:57,180 --> 00:35:57,847

The lower right.

798

00:35:57,847 --> 00:35:59,700

I'm going to go from

the lower right hand.

799

00:35:59,700 --> 00:36:03,360

Now, in Germany, when

children reached school age,

800

00:36:03,360 --> 00:36:05,430

their loving families

would present them

801

00:36:05,430 --> 00:36:09,030

with these cardboard

cornucopias filled with candy.

802

00:36:09,030 --> 00:36:11,880

This is a German tradition

for your first day of school.

803

00:36:11,880 --> 00:36:14,460

I remember mine

was just somewhere.

804

00:36:14,460 --> 00:36:17,640

I have a photo of myself

with that in my arms.

805

00:36:17,640 --> 00:36:19,140

It was this big.

806

00:36:19,140 --> 00:36:22,650

And it was filled with candy.

807

00:36:22,650 --> 00:36:25,110
And what this here
symbolizes-- it's

808
00:36:25,110 --> 00:36:29,440
lying on the ground with all
these colors spilled out of it.

809
00:36:29,440 --> 00:36:33,840
And I think of that as
my spoiled childhood.

810
00:36:33,840 --> 00:36:35,210
Spoiled childhood?

811
00:36:35,210 --> 00:36:35,710
Yes.

812
00:36:35,710 --> 00:36:37,230
Spilled, spoiled.

813
00:36:37,230 --> 00:36:37,800
Yes.

814
00:36:37,800 --> 00:36:39,920
What do you mean,
spoiled childhood?

815
00:36:39,920 --> 00:36:42,870
Well, instead of having
a normal childhood,

816
00:36:42,870 --> 00:36:46,890
going through the normal
schools and the normal way,

817
00:36:46,890 --> 00:36:52,290
it took all sorts of odd twists,
and turns, and humiliations,

818
00:36:52,290 --> 00:36:55,035
and scares, and
that sort of thing.

819
00:36:55,035 --> 00:36:57,450
OK.

820
00:36:57,450 --> 00:37:01,440
And what else in the painting
is especially important to you?

821
00:37:01,440 --> 00:37:04,320
Well, you see
there a little girl

822
00:37:04,320 --> 00:37:10,620
with her arms outstretched,
floating after a white toy cat.

823
00:37:10,620 --> 00:37:13,230
That's the story I told before.

824
00:37:13,230 --> 00:37:15,510
To this day, I'm
searching for that.

825
00:37:15,510 --> 00:37:17,740
Over here, then you speak
into the microphone.

826
00:37:17,740 --> 00:37:18,450
Thank you.

827
00:37:18,450 --> 00:37:20,760
Yes.

828
00:37:20,760 --> 00:37:21,990
So that is there.

829
00:37:21,990 --> 00:37:25,350
To the right of it is
the Punch and Judy show.

830
00:37:25,350 --> 00:37:28,350
If you look at it

very closely, there's

831
00:37:28,350 --> 00:37:30,780
a devil with a
pitchfork and horns.

832
00:37:30,780 --> 00:37:32,070
He's all red.

833
00:37:32,070 --> 00:37:36,690
And there's Kasperle-- or Punch,
as he is called in English--

834
00:37:36,690 --> 00:37:40,980
with his stick, and his
pointy cap, and his red nose.

835
00:37:40,980 --> 00:37:46,020
And later on, when I was
all filled anew with fury

836
00:37:46,020 --> 00:37:50,970
at what had happened, I
somehow thought of the Punch

837
00:37:50,970 --> 00:37:56,940
as a typical stupid
German, and the devil--

838
00:37:56,940 --> 00:37:59,310
namely, Hitler or Goebbels--

839
00:37:59,310 --> 00:38:00,500
leading him on.

840
00:38:00,500 --> 00:38:04,895
I thought of that later with
an adult mind fairly recently.

841
00:38:04,895 --> 00:38:07,020
As a child, I just thought
of it as Punch and Judy.

842

00:38:07,020 --> 00:38:12,340

But somehow, it fits into
that painting for that reason.

843

00:38:12,340 --> 00:38:16,560

Now, to the left of this,
you see a black rectangle

844

00:38:16,560 --> 00:38:18,660

with a white bulb on the top.

845

00:38:18,660 --> 00:38:20,730

And you see two shapes--

846

00:38:20,730 --> 00:38:23,730

a large female shape,
and a small female

847

00:38:23,730 --> 00:38:25,920

shape-- clutching each other.

848

00:38:25,920 --> 00:38:30,120

And that was my mother and I in
the pantry clutching each other

849

00:38:30,120 --> 00:38:31,650

in deadly fear.

850

00:38:31,650 --> 00:38:35,550

Behind it, you see
gray steps going up

851

00:38:35,550 --> 00:38:40,270

and a large red
swastika behind it.

852

00:38:40,270 --> 00:38:45,060

That was the sound we heard of
the Nazi boots on the stairs.

853

00:38:45,060 --> 00:38:46,740

Now, if there's

anything else in here

854

00:38:46,740 --> 00:38:48,670
that you want to ask me about--

855

00:38:48,670 --> 00:38:51,300
Well, is there
anything else that is

856

00:38:51,300 --> 00:38:54,780
particularly emotional for you?

857

00:38:54,780 --> 00:38:58,290
Well, all right, emotional--
it's both good and bad.

858

00:38:58,290 --> 00:39:03,000
Here, you see a gray ship going
through the ocean, bravely

859

00:39:03,000 --> 00:39:04,950
headed in a new direction.

860

00:39:04,950 --> 00:39:09,360
And that was the German
ship, the Orinoco.

861

00:39:09,360 --> 00:39:12,660
And my mother and I were
lucky to get tickets on that.

862

00:39:12,660 --> 00:39:17,340
We were in fourth
class, steerage.

863

00:39:17,340 --> 00:39:22,680
We were down below
in a huge room

864

00:39:22,680 --> 00:39:24,330
shared with many other women.

865

00:39:24,330 --> 00:39:28,290
I think there were 40 of them,
and lower bunks, and upper.

866
00:39:28,290 --> 00:39:31,210
My mother and I, of
course, were together.

867
00:39:31,210 --> 00:39:34,290
And I think it was a lower bunk.

868
00:39:34,290 --> 00:39:35,940
And what she had done--

869
00:39:35,940 --> 00:39:37,800
brave lady.

870
00:39:37,800 --> 00:39:40,093
We had a wonderful oil painting.

871
00:39:40,093 --> 00:39:41,010
It's right over there.

872
00:39:41,010 --> 00:39:46,830
It's a self portrait of a
great-great-grandfather of mine

873
00:39:46,830 --> 00:39:49,620
who had artistic talent.

874
00:39:49,620 --> 00:39:52,200
And he did this
painting of himself

875
00:39:52,200 --> 00:39:56,910
in the earlier part
of the 19th century.

876
00:39:56,910 --> 00:39:59,070
So she took it out of
the frame, because this

877

00:39:59,070 --> 00:40:05,400
was the one true antique that we
had of great sentimental value,

878
00:40:05,400 --> 00:40:07,560
a self portrait of an ancestor.

879
00:40:07,560 --> 00:40:09,180
And she rolled it up.

880
00:40:09,180 --> 00:40:12,580
And we slept with it between
us in a cardboard roll.

881
00:40:12,580 --> 00:40:15,000
That was the one thing
she managed to get out.

882
00:40:15,000 --> 00:40:17,610

883
00:40:17,610 --> 00:40:19,440
Now it's hanging there.

884
00:40:19,440 --> 00:40:24,270
Anyhow, that was a
pretty unpleasant trip,

885
00:40:24,270 --> 00:40:25,740
I mean the sleeping conditions.

886
00:40:25,740 --> 00:40:27,090
The food wasn't too bad.

887
00:40:27,090 --> 00:40:28,830
It was simple, but good.

888
00:40:28,830 --> 00:40:32,920
And I, as a child,
enjoyed everything.

889
00:40:32,920 --> 00:40:35,140

The adults, of course,
were worried sick.

890
00:40:35,140 --> 00:40:37,240
And I'm comfortable.

891
00:40:37,240 --> 00:40:39,900
Now, you were on a German ship.

892
00:40:39,900 --> 00:40:40,400
Yes.

893
00:40:40,400 --> 00:40:40,780
With a German--

894
00:40:40,780 --> 00:40:42,140
In fact, there's
something in there

895
00:40:42,140 --> 00:40:43,330
I'm going to tell you about.

896
00:40:43,330 --> 00:40:45,690
Yes, It was the first--

897
00:40:45,690 --> 00:40:48,507
OK, this here, what
you see here, is the--

898
00:40:48,507 --> 00:40:50,090
Now, you're talking
about the painting

899
00:40:50,090 --> 00:40:52,890
here, the upper right hand
corner of the painting.

900
00:40:52,890 --> 00:40:54,430
I'm still in the middle here.

901
00:40:54,430 --> 00:40:56,620
There's a black-and-white

tile floor.

902

00:40:56,620 --> 00:40:58,750

There are tables with
white tablecloths,

903

00:40:58,750 --> 00:41:03,250

an elegant French door,
palm trees, or palm bushes

904

00:41:03,250 --> 00:41:06,040

in pots, a very elegant salon.

905

00:41:06,040 --> 00:41:08,590

Well, there was a lady
on the ship who was

906

00:41:08,590 --> 00:41:10,840

a very well-to-do Jewish lady.

907

00:41:10,840 --> 00:41:13,400

And she was traveling
first class.

908

00:41:13,400 --> 00:41:15,160

My mother and she
were acquainted.

909

00:41:15,160 --> 00:41:20,110

And one day, she invited us
up to first class for tea.

910

00:41:20,110 --> 00:41:23,890

Now, we had been for quite
some time down in the hold.

911

00:41:23,890 --> 00:41:25,850

And here I am, a little girl.

912

00:41:25,850 --> 00:41:29,650

And when we went up there, I
heard violin music playing,

913

00:41:29,650 --> 00:41:33,460

and waiters scurrying
by with trays.

914

00:41:33,460 --> 00:41:35,530

And I saw all this luxury.

915

00:41:35,530 --> 00:41:39,880

And it made a very
deep impression on me.

916

00:41:39,880 --> 00:41:41,650

It really did.

917

00:41:41,650 --> 00:41:45,420

The next picture you
see is a man, my father,

918

00:41:45,420 --> 00:41:50,260

wearing his blue bow tie,
white shirt, and gray pants

919

00:41:50,260 --> 00:41:52,750

with his arms raised in the air.

920

00:41:52,750 --> 00:41:55,420

And he's standing
under a palm tree

921

00:41:55,420 --> 00:41:59,500

and bidding us welcome,
a very welcoming figure.

922

00:41:59,500 --> 00:42:03,310

And were we ever
happy to see him.

923

00:42:03,310 --> 00:42:05,420

And then it goes on.

924

00:42:05,420 --> 00:42:07,810

The painting swirls

up to the right above.

925

00:42:07,810 --> 00:42:10,000

And there's little
girls floating around.

926

00:42:10,000 --> 00:42:12,310

Those were the little
girls I became friends

927

00:42:12,310 --> 00:42:15,160

with once we settled in Cuba.

928

00:42:15,160 --> 00:42:17,350

And they were very lovely.

929

00:42:17,350 --> 00:42:19,240

And of course, I
didn't speak Spanish.

930

00:42:19,240 --> 00:42:21,010

And they didn't speak German.

931

00:42:21,010 --> 00:42:24,100

But I managed to learn
both Spanish and English,

932

00:42:24,100 --> 00:42:28,390

at least starting to, while
I had that year and a half

933

00:42:28,390 --> 00:42:30,550

in Havana.

934

00:42:30,550 --> 00:42:33,290

And the end of the painting,
at the upper right,

935

00:42:33,290 --> 00:42:36,850

you see these white
towers, skyscrapers.

936

00:42:36,850 --> 00:42:40,030

You see the stars in the
sky turning into the stars

937

00:42:40,030 --> 00:42:41,950

in the American flag.

938

00:42:41,950 --> 00:42:44,050

And this was the
land of our dreams,

939

00:42:44,050 --> 00:42:45,530

which I didn't know yet.

940

00:42:45,530 --> 00:42:49,310

And I saw these miraculous
skyscrapers up there.

941

00:42:49,310 --> 00:42:51,340

And we had to get there.

942

00:42:51,340 --> 00:42:54,220

And that was the
idealized version of it.

943

00:42:54,220 --> 00:42:56,410

That pretty well
describes everything.

944

00:42:56,410 --> 00:42:58,780

Oh, that's a very
interesting painting

945

00:42:58,780 --> 00:43:00,970

Thank you.

946

00:43:00,970 --> 00:43:05,110

Can we go back and fill in some
of the details of your trip?

947

00:43:05,110 --> 00:43:09,700

You and your mother were in
the taxicab going to the train.

948
00:43:09,700 --> 00:43:11,480
Or whatever conveyance.

949
00:43:11,480 --> 00:43:11,980
Yes.

950
00:43:11,980 --> 00:43:15,610
And then you got to the
train station in Berlin.

951
00:43:15,610 --> 00:43:18,580
All that is-- no, I don't
remember those things.

952
00:43:18,580 --> 00:43:19,210
You don't.

953
00:43:19,210 --> 00:43:19,710
No.

954
00:43:19,710 --> 00:43:23,395
I just remember-- I had never
had a terribly good memory.

955
00:43:23,395 --> 00:43:24,270
Well, you were just--

956
00:43:24,270 --> 00:43:24,560
I just remember--

957
00:43:24,560 --> 00:43:25,500
--also a small child.

958
00:43:25,500 --> 00:43:27,970
--the emotional parts
or the dramatic parts.

959
00:43:27,970 --> 00:43:30,640
How I get somewhere,
how long it took,

960

00:43:30,640 --> 00:43:34,670

this is all gray area,
something I honestly don't know.

961

00:43:34,670 --> 00:43:38,521

At that time, I was
about nine years old.

962

00:43:38,521 --> 00:43:40,730

Yeah.

963

00:43:40,730 --> 00:43:44,800

Do you remember on the ship, the
Orinoco-- it was a German ship.

964

00:43:44,800 --> 00:43:48,280

And I think you had said
it sailed from Hamburg?

965

00:43:48,280 --> 00:43:50,230

Yes, to Havana.

966

00:43:50,230 --> 00:43:52,390

Oh, and we stopped
in Antwerp once.

967

00:43:52,390 --> 00:43:56,140

All I remember there are
houses with blue tiles.

968

00:43:56,140 --> 00:43:59,080

We stopped there shortly.

969

00:43:59,080 --> 00:44:03,100

Do you remember on the ship
whether you were treated

970

00:44:03,100 --> 00:44:05,800

differently being Jewish?

971

00:44:05,800 --> 00:44:11,650

The German crew for the

fourth class were very decent.

972

00:44:11,650 --> 00:44:14,350

Nobody ever was rude or nasty.

973

00:44:14,350 --> 00:44:16,150

They were very decent.

974

00:44:16,150 --> 00:44:19,870

And in fact, my father always
had high regard for the German

975

00:44:19,870 --> 00:44:22,300

Navy, men who were at sea.

976

00:44:22,300 --> 00:44:24,460

He had wanted to
become a naval officer.

977

00:44:24,460 --> 00:44:29,470

But his astigmatism
kept him from that.

978

00:44:29,470 --> 00:44:30,340

No.

979

00:44:30,340 --> 00:44:33,010

There was not one
instance of any kind

980

00:44:33,010 --> 00:44:35,170

of rudeness or mistreatment.

981

00:44:35,170 --> 00:44:38,050

There were other very
interesting Jewish people

982

00:44:38,050 --> 00:44:38,680

who were--

983

00:44:38,680 --> 00:44:42,400

professional people, who were

also down there in steerage.

984

00:44:42,400 --> 00:44:45,220

And we enjoyed each
other's company.

985

00:44:45,220 --> 00:44:48,940

And I have a photo of that
little girl with a scarf

986

00:44:48,940 --> 00:44:51,820

and a little sailor doll--
must have brought on board--

987

00:44:51,820 --> 00:44:54,010

looking as happy as could be.

988

00:44:54,010 --> 00:44:57,460

Were most of the other
passengers Jewish?

989

00:44:57,460 --> 00:44:59,950

The people down at that
level certainly were.

990

00:44:59,950 --> 00:45:03,220

991

00:45:03,220 --> 00:45:08,330

So the trip was as you
described it before.

992

00:45:08,330 --> 00:45:11,770

Do you remember anything
else about the ship?

993

00:45:11,770 --> 00:45:17,080

Just a terrific contrast
between our steerage

994

00:45:17,080 --> 00:45:20,920

and that first class salon
with the violin music.

995
00:45:20,920 --> 00:45:22,315
It was unbelievable.

996
00:45:22,315 --> 00:45:24,970
I stood there thunderstruck.

997
00:45:24,970 --> 00:45:27,940
I thought I was dreaming it all.

998
00:45:27,940 --> 00:45:28,510
Yes.

999
00:45:28,510 --> 00:45:32,740
And of course, I enjoyed
seeing the gray North Atlantic.

1000
00:45:32,740 --> 00:45:34,960
I had never been
at the sea before.

1001
00:45:34,960 --> 00:45:37,780
No, I was at Wannsee,
which is a huge lake.

1002
00:45:37,780 --> 00:45:39,490
I had never been by the ocean.

1003
00:45:39,490 --> 00:45:40,760
I loved it.

1004
00:45:40,760 --> 00:45:42,280
I thought it was just wonderful.

1005
00:45:42,280 --> 00:45:44,540
I've loved it ever since.

1006
00:45:44,540 --> 00:45:46,930
So you arrived in Havana.

1007
00:45:46,930 --> 00:45:47,440

Yes.

1008
00:45:47,440 --> 00:45:50,200
I have a huge story to
tell about my father.

1009
00:45:50,200 --> 00:45:53,020
It shows you what
kind of a man he was.

1010
00:45:53,020 --> 00:45:56,440
First of all, he boarded
the ship with the pilot.

1011
00:45:56,440 --> 00:46:00,010
Somehow, he wrangle that,
greeted us right on deck.

1012
00:46:00,010 --> 00:46:00,670
It was heaven.

1013
00:46:00,670 --> 00:46:01,930
It was so wonderful.

1014
00:46:01,930 --> 00:46:03,910
I had always adored my papi.

1015
00:46:03,910 --> 00:46:07,080
And it was just sheer
heaven to be with him again.

1016
00:46:07,080 --> 00:46:09,970
And I'm pretty sure my
mother felt the same.

1017
00:46:09,970 --> 00:46:13,960
And then, of course, he
couldn't take us right off,

1018
00:46:13,960 --> 00:46:19,000
because there was a Cuban
version of Ellis Island called

1019

00:46:19,000 --> 00:46:20,860

Tricornia.

1020

00:46:20,860 --> 00:46:24,940

I think it means "three horns"
in Spanish, but I'm not sure.

1021

00:46:24,940 --> 00:46:29,200

And again, with a child's
different look at things,

1022

00:46:29,200 --> 00:46:31,110

I thought it was fantastic.

1023

00:46:31,110 --> 00:46:35,020

It was this ancient
garden with palm trees.

1024

00:46:35,020 --> 00:46:37,840

I'd never seen
palm trees before.

1025

00:46:37,840 --> 00:46:40,120

And they were so
wonderful, I thought.

1026

00:46:40,120 --> 00:46:46,840

And we had really
unpleasant conditions.

1027

00:46:46,840 --> 00:46:48,640

There were no mattresses.

1028

00:46:48,640 --> 00:46:52,870

We slept right on the
metallic springboards

1029

00:46:52,870 --> 00:46:54,700

with a sheet over it.

1030

00:46:54,700 --> 00:46:55,850

But it was the tropics.

1031
00:46:55,850 --> 00:46:57,010
It was very hot.

1032
00:46:57,010 --> 00:46:59,980
And it wasn't too
uncomfortable to me.

1033
00:46:59,980 --> 00:47:03,160
The only thing I
remember eating there

1034
00:47:03,160 --> 00:47:06,460
was sweet black
coffee and red beans.

1035
00:47:06,460 --> 00:47:07,990
I don't remember anything else.

1036
00:47:07,990 --> 00:47:09,220
I thought it was great.

1037
00:47:09,220 --> 00:47:11,580
I enjoyed it.

1038
00:47:11,580 --> 00:47:16,233
And my father got us out of
there within two or three days.

1039
00:47:16,233 --> 00:47:17,650
You and your mother
stayed there--

1040
00:47:17,650 --> 00:47:17,940
Yes.

1041
00:47:17,940 --> 00:47:18,170
--not your father.

1042
00:47:18,170 --> 00:47:18,440
Yes.

1043

00:47:18,440 --> 00:47:19,030

Yes.

1044

00:47:19,030 --> 00:47:21,070

He had already made
living arrangements.

1045

00:47:21,070 --> 00:47:23,470

So he came to get us
much quicker than we

1046

00:47:23,470 --> 00:47:24,520

had anticipated.

1047

00:47:24,520 --> 00:47:26,140

Other people were still there.

1048

00:47:26,140 --> 00:47:29,950

I remember saying goodbye to
them, and out of sight, out

1049

00:47:29,950 --> 00:47:30,490

of mind.

1050

00:47:30,490 --> 00:47:33,400

I don't even remember
anyone particularly.

1051

00:47:33,400 --> 00:47:37,030

So my father
confronted my mother.

1052

00:47:37,030 --> 00:47:40,240

And he said, Edith, you
have to be very brave.

1053

00:47:40,240 --> 00:47:42,490

Now, you can imagine
that I couldn't

1054

00:47:42,490 --> 00:47:44,830

get something very good.

1055
00:47:44,830 --> 00:47:46,360
We don't have any money.

1056
00:47:46,360 --> 00:47:48,050
And you have to be brave.

1057
00:47:48,050 --> 00:47:50,860
It's a bit of a slum, but
at least we're together.

1058
00:47:50,860 --> 00:47:53,095
And she said, oh, Fridl,
it doesn't matter.

1059
00:47:53,095 --> 00:47:53,720
We're together.

1060
00:47:53,720 --> 00:47:54,860
It's so wonderful.

1061
00:47:54,860 --> 00:47:59,110
We all happily drove to whatever
horrible place awaited us.

1062
00:47:59,110 --> 00:48:01,450
Well, he had had
his little joke,

1063
00:48:01,450 --> 00:48:05,920
because he had rented half
of a two-family house,

1064
00:48:05,920 --> 00:48:10,600
typical Cuban, with gorgeous
tile floor, lovely veranda,

1065
00:48:10,600 --> 00:48:11,495
rented furniture.

1066
00:48:11,495 --> 00:48:13,360
We had rocking chairs.

1067

00:48:13,360 --> 00:48:19,870
The one thing I remember inside
was a tray with tall glasses

1068

00:48:19,870 --> 00:48:24,610
from Woolworth's with big, red
dots on them and a decanter.

1069

00:48:24,610 --> 00:48:27,370
And these were the tropics.

1070

00:48:27,370 --> 00:48:29,740
It looked so good, so inviting.

1071

00:48:29,740 --> 00:48:34,000
And the house inside was cool
with these wonderful old tile

1072

00:48:34,000 --> 00:48:35,260
floors.

1073

00:48:35,260 --> 00:48:37,150
Well, we couldn't believe it.

1074

00:48:37,150 --> 00:48:38,742
He totally tricked us.

1075

00:48:38,742 --> 00:48:39,450
We were so happy.

1076

00:48:39,450 --> 00:48:40,840
We didn't know what to think.

1077

00:48:40,840 --> 00:48:41,950
He had his little joke.

1078

00:48:41,950 --> 00:48:45,160
He was so happy, too, to
have his family again.

1079

00:48:45,160 --> 00:48:47,200
And I must tell you--
and this is where

1080
00:48:47,200 --> 00:48:49,600
my guilt complex comes in.

1081
00:48:49,600 --> 00:48:52,810
While others were
having this great sorrow

1082
00:48:52,810 --> 00:48:54,820
and this great pain
in Europe, and they

1083
00:48:54,820 --> 00:48:58,090
were going to ghettos
and concentration camps,

1084
00:48:58,090 --> 00:49:03,760
we were having this little
ideal lasting over a year or so

1085
00:49:03,760 --> 00:49:05,140
of pure happiness.

1086
00:49:05,140 --> 00:49:07,060
Of course, my father
had money worries.

1087
00:49:07,060 --> 00:49:09,175
But the important thing
is we were together,

1088
00:49:09,175 --> 00:49:10,360
and we were safe.

1089
00:49:10,360 --> 00:49:14,020
In Cuba at that time,
long before Castro,

1090
00:49:14,020 --> 00:49:16,600
it was a wonderful place to be.

1091
00:49:16,600 --> 00:49:19,780
Now, were there particular
people back in Germany

1092
00:49:19,780 --> 00:49:21,400
that you were concerned about?

1093
00:49:21,400 --> 00:49:25,690
My grandparents, who were
our only close relatives,

1094
00:49:25,690 --> 00:49:28,900
they had gone to South
Africa through the help

1095
00:49:28,900 --> 00:49:31,540
of my mother's younger brother.

1096
00:49:31,540 --> 00:49:33,940
He was five years
younger than she.

1097
00:49:33,940 --> 00:49:38,530
He, in his youth, had been
a Communist idealistic.

1098
00:49:38,530 --> 00:49:42,910
And he saw the writing on
the wall in the early '30s.

1099
00:49:42,910 --> 00:49:45,560
And he lit out from Germany.

1100
00:49:45,560 --> 00:49:48,640
And he went to South
Africa, established himself

1101
00:49:48,640 --> 00:49:51,610
as a businessman, and
became quite well-off.

1102

00:49:51,610 --> 00:49:53,080
He's dead now.

1103
00:49:53,080 --> 00:49:56,530
And he got his parents out.

1104
00:49:56,530 --> 00:49:59,020
They lived there peacefully.

1105
00:49:59,020 --> 00:50:02,320
Did they leave Germany
before you and your mother?

1106
00:50:02,320 --> 00:50:06,280

1107
00:50:06,280 --> 00:50:09,400
I wish I could tell
you for certain.

1108
00:50:09,400 --> 00:50:10,714
Probably.

1109
00:50:10,714 --> 00:50:12,460
Probably.

1110
00:50:12,460 --> 00:50:14,470
I was not close to them.

1111
00:50:14,470 --> 00:50:15,670
They were good people.

1112
00:50:15,670 --> 00:50:18,230
But they didn't have
a knack with children.

1113
00:50:18,230 --> 00:50:20,110
And it was the same
with my mother.

1114
00:50:20,110 --> 00:50:23,080
They were her parents, but

they were not really close.

1115
00:50:23,080 --> 00:50:26,650
She appreciated them, but
there was no closeness.

1116
00:50:26,650 --> 00:50:28,520
So I'm not quite certain.

1117
00:50:28,520 --> 00:50:30,190
They must have
lived before we did.

1118
00:50:30,190 --> 00:50:30,890
Were there-

1119
00:50:30,890 --> 00:50:32,440
Yes, they must
have, because there

1120
00:50:32,440 --> 00:50:35,690
wasn't much later after 1939.

1121
00:50:35,690 --> 00:50:36,310
Yes.

1122
00:50:36,310 --> 00:50:40,180
Were there any people back
in Germany that you or--

1123
00:50:40,180 --> 00:50:44,380
There was the Christian side of
the family whom we, ourselves,

1124
00:50:44,380 --> 00:50:45,340
didn't know too well.

1125
00:50:45,340 --> 00:50:47,470
My father was the contact there.

1126
00:50:47,470 --> 00:50:49,340
They were doing all right.

1127
00:50:49,340 --> 00:50:52,210
I don't know what they
suffered under the Nazis.

1128
00:50:52,210 --> 00:50:55,900
But they were not in
any imminent danger.

1129
00:50:55,900 --> 00:51:02,320
My mother-- my father's mother's
maiden name was Vogt, V-O-G-T.

1130
00:51:02,320 --> 00:51:05,680
Or maybe it was
V-O-I-G-T. I'm not sure.

1131
00:51:05,680 --> 00:51:11,470
But it was pronounced Vogt,
which in German means abbot.

1132
00:51:11,470 --> 00:51:13,810
So they were the Christian side.

1133
00:51:13,810 --> 00:51:16,330
And Aunt Matilda,
the great-aunt,

1134
00:51:16,330 --> 00:51:19,630
she had married an Abel,
so she was Christian.

1135
00:51:19,630 --> 00:51:25,240
But the man she married
came from a Jewish family.

1136
00:51:25,240 --> 00:51:29,240
So anyway, there was
one aunt much later.

1137
00:51:29,240 --> 00:51:30,970
In fact, just about
two years ago,

1138
00:51:30,970 --> 00:51:36,130
I learned that my very
glamorous older great-aunt-- she

1139
00:51:36,130 --> 00:51:37,640
was my grandmother's sister.

1140
00:51:37,640 --> 00:51:40,150
Her name was Ida, Eda.

1141
00:51:40,150 --> 00:51:42,100
And she had married a wealthy--

1142
00:51:42,100 --> 00:51:45,670
she was Jewish, and she had
married a Jewish gentleman.

1143
00:51:45,670 --> 00:51:52,210
And I learned recently that she
had ended up in Theresienstadt.

1144
00:51:52,210 --> 00:51:56,380
I had not know this before,
and I was very, very sad.

1145
00:51:56,380 --> 00:51:58,000
I wasn't close to her either.

1146
00:51:58,000 --> 00:52:02,380
But she was an elegant lady,
very unhappily married.

1147
00:52:02,380 --> 00:52:05,530
And I remember the stained
glass window in her dining room

1148
00:52:05,530 --> 00:52:06,940
when we visited.

1149
00:52:06,940 --> 00:52:11,980
They had one of those

phenomenal Berlin apartments.

1150

00:52:11,980 --> 00:52:18,070
But being an only child, we did
have some relatives in Dresden

1151

00:52:18,070 --> 00:52:19,690
who were non-Jewish.

1152

00:52:19,690 --> 00:52:21,490
The boys went into the army.

1153

00:52:21,490 --> 00:52:24,310
I think they both died.

1154

00:52:24,310 --> 00:52:25,750
They were an odd family.

1155

00:52:25,750 --> 00:52:27,710
Do you want to hear
another childhood memory--

1156

00:52:27,710 --> 00:52:28,210
Sure.

1157

00:52:28,210 --> 00:52:30,460
--when I was in Dresden?

1158

00:52:30,460 --> 00:52:32,590
Two come to mind, neither
one of them pleasant.

1159

00:52:32,590 --> 00:52:35,230
Now, I don't think
you have mentioned

1160

00:52:35,230 --> 00:52:37,990
why you were in Dresden or
when you were in Dresden.

1161

00:52:37,990 --> 00:52:39,940
This was obvious.

1162
00:52:39,940 --> 00:52:44,020
This was when my father
was between jobs.

1163
00:52:44,020 --> 00:52:46,030
He was struggling.

1164
00:52:46,030 --> 00:52:50,050
And he wanted to put his
wife and child someplace.

1165
00:52:50,050 --> 00:52:55,240
So he decided to leave us
with his relatives in Dresden.

1166
00:52:55,240 --> 00:52:57,370
So we went there.

1167
00:52:57,370 --> 00:52:59,620
The lady was an eccentric.

1168
00:52:59,620 --> 00:53:04,990
She had about 13 cats or more
and this a big, old rambling

1169
00:53:04,990 --> 00:53:07,120
country house in Dresden.

1170
00:53:07,120 --> 00:53:08,560
She had two sons.

1171
00:53:08,560 --> 00:53:10,762
I remember one of
was called Rainer.

1172
00:53:10,762 --> 00:53:12,220
And I can't remember
the other one.

1173
00:53:12,220 --> 00:53:13,450
They were much bigger boys.

1174
00:53:13,450 --> 00:53:15,280
I was just a little kid.

1175
00:53:15,280 --> 00:53:18,130
And they played to tricks on me.

1176
00:53:18,130 --> 00:53:21,820
They gave me something that
looked just like honey.

1177
00:53:21,820 --> 00:53:24,100
And they said,
this is good, Ruth.

1178
00:53:24,100 --> 00:53:27,370
Why don't you eat it?

1179
00:53:27,370 --> 00:53:29,350
I was such an ignoramus.

1180
00:53:29,350 --> 00:53:30,140
I ate it.

1181
00:53:30,140 --> 00:53:31,900
And it was laundry soap.

1182
00:53:31,900 --> 00:53:35,450
To this day, I can
remember the taste.

1183
00:53:35,450 --> 00:53:37,540
It was so awful.

1184
00:53:37,540 --> 00:53:40,750
The other thing they did, which
did not endear them to me--

1185
00:53:40,750 --> 00:53:43,870
they would put me
in a potato sack

1186

00:53:43,870 --> 00:53:50,450

and move me around the
garden, just drag me.

1187

00:53:50,450 --> 00:53:52,270

That wasn't too good.

1188

00:53:52,270 --> 00:53:55,240

I was scared to death of
them, not having any siblings,

1189

00:53:55,240 --> 00:53:57,280

particularly brothers.

1190

00:53:57,280 --> 00:54:01,150

And the other thing is I
developed a typical childhood

1191

00:54:01,150 --> 00:54:02,380

cold.

1192

00:54:02,380 --> 00:54:06,490

And some German families
had some peculiar ideas

1193

00:54:06,490 --> 00:54:09,250

of how to raise children.

1194

00:54:09,250 --> 00:54:16,360

This woman's idea of curing me
was to tie me, hand and foot,

1195

00:54:16,360 --> 00:54:20,020

in bed and put a lot
of blankets on me

1196

00:54:20,020 --> 00:54:22,450

to sweat it out of my system.

1197

00:54:22,450 --> 00:54:25,160

Well, my mother was horrified.

1198

00:54:25,160 --> 00:54:27,490

She felt like she
was very vulnerable.

1199

00:54:27,490 --> 00:54:30,830

She was there because she
didn't have a penny to her name.

1200

00:54:30,830 --> 00:54:32,530

Her husband was
struggling in Berlin

1201

00:54:32,530 --> 00:54:34,990

to find a job and
a place to live.

1202

00:54:34,990 --> 00:54:36,670

All she had were these people.

1203

00:54:36,670 --> 00:54:38,860

She didn't want to
offend the lady.

1204

00:54:38,860 --> 00:54:41,480

But she didn't want
to desert me either.

1205

00:54:41,480 --> 00:54:44,140

So I was lying there,
sweating and pleading for her

1206

00:54:44,140 --> 00:54:48,730

to release me, and she
was sitting there crying.

1207

00:54:48,730 --> 00:54:51,220

But she didn't have
the nerve to untie me.

1208

00:54:51,220 --> 00:54:54,040

This was a very
unpleasant memory.

1209

00:54:54,040 --> 00:54:57,160

And remember, this was
not done by a Nazi.

1210

00:54:57,160 --> 00:55:00,580

This was done by what was
considered a good German parent

1211

00:55:00,580 --> 00:55:01,700

figure--

1212

00:55:01,700 --> 00:55:06,090

not my mother, but this lady
who was related to my father

1213

00:55:06,090 --> 00:55:07,480

by marriage.

1214

00:55:07,480 --> 00:55:10,260

It was her husband who
was a cousin of his.

1215

00:55:10,260 --> 00:55:13,380

And so my memories of Dresden--

1216

00:55:13,380 --> 00:55:17,430

and it was also ghastly winter
weather, and depressing.

1217

00:55:17,430 --> 00:55:18,930

And I was cold, most of--

1218

00:55:18,930 --> 00:55:21,720

it was just simply
a horrible memory.

1219

00:55:21,720 --> 00:55:24,150

So that was a
difficult time for you.

1220

00:55:24,150 --> 00:55:27,060

But let me throw in

how Germans think

1221

00:55:27,060 --> 00:55:28,530
children should be raised.

1222

00:55:28,530 --> 00:55:33,120
I told you how close my
father was to his father.

1223

00:55:33,120 --> 00:55:35,610
And his father was a
darling man who had

1224

00:55:35,610 --> 00:55:37,980
been widowed much too young.

1225

00:55:37,980 --> 00:55:39,120
He was well-off.

1226

00:55:39,120 --> 00:55:40,830
They had a lovely house.

1227

00:55:40,830 --> 00:55:46,140
And he had my father
woken every morning

1228

00:55:46,140 --> 00:55:49,350
by a housekeeper
coming in and putting

1229

00:55:49,350 --> 00:55:53,590
ice cold sheets around him to
wake him up and toughen him up.

1230

00:55:53,590 --> 00:55:55,830
Can you imagine a
little boy, half orphan,

1231

00:55:55,830 --> 00:55:58,800
from waking up in the
morning and being wrapped up

1232

00:55:58,800 --> 00:56:00,820
in these icy sheets?

1233
00:56:00,820 --> 00:56:04,200
Well, this was the German
way of bringing children up.

1234
00:56:04,200 --> 00:56:07,770
I'm so glad that my own parents
didn't have those ideas.

1235
00:56:07,770 --> 00:56:09,330
I just wanted to throw that in.

1236
00:56:09,330 --> 00:56:10,560
OK.

1237
00:56:10,560 --> 00:56:12,750
Well, let's move ahead to Cuba.

1238
00:56:12,750 --> 00:56:14,265
You said that you
were very happy--

1239
00:56:14,265 --> 00:56:15,265
Oh, it was unbelievable.

1240
00:56:15,265 --> 00:56:17,230
--with your family
there for about a year.

1241
00:56:17,230 --> 00:56:18,930
Did you go to school in Cuba?

1242
00:56:18,930 --> 00:56:20,250
Yes, I did.

1243
00:56:20,250 --> 00:56:22,080
And this is a very
interesting thing.

1244
00:56:22,080 --> 00:56:25,620

I went to a place called
Miss Phillip's School.

1245
00:56:25,620 --> 00:56:29,290
And it was a private school.

1246
00:56:29,290 --> 00:56:31,800
My father had done
some fundraising

1247
00:56:31,800 --> 00:56:34,350
for the American
Joint committee, who

1248
00:56:34,350 --> 00:56:36,210
helped many Jewish refugees.

1249
00:56:36,210 --> 00:56:38,010
And they were giving
him an allowance.

1250
00:56:38,010 --> 00:56:40,050
That's how we managed to live.

1251
00:56:40,050 --> 00:56:42,870
And I don't know what the
financial arrangements

1252
00:56:42,870 --> 00:56:44,220
were for me to attend school.

1253
00:56:44,220 --> 00:56:48,060
But I went to this lovely
American Miss Phillip's School

1254
00:56:48,060 --> 00:56:48,930
in Havana.

1255
00:56:48,930 --> 00:56:53,130
It's a lovely tropical building
in a nice part of town.

1256

00:56:53,130 --> 00:56:57,040
And I was learning both
Spanish and English.

1257
00:56:57,040 --> 00:56:57,540
And I--

1258
00:56:57,540 --> 00:57:01,890
So the school was
conducted in English?

1259
00:57:01,890 --> 00:57:04,200
There was a Miss
[? Sema. ?] I think

1260
00:57:04,200 --> 00:57:05,730
it was English and Spanish.

1261
00:57:05,730 --> 00:57:06,510
Yes, it was.

1262
00:57:06,510 --> 00:57:10,380
I had an American teacher,
Miss Martha Jane Pruitt--

1263
00:57:10,380 --> 00:57:12,900
no, Martha Jane Jones.

1264
00:57:12,900 --> 00:57:14,720
She married a Mr. Pruitt later.

1265
00:57:14,720 --> 00:57:17,070
She was a darling young girl.

1266
00:57:17,070 --> 00:57:19,190
And I remember
there was an older

1267
00:57:19,190 --> 00:57:22,470
teacher with white hair,
Mrs. Flora [? Sema. ?]

1268

00:57:22,470 --> 00:57:24,720

And she must have
been Spanish speaking.

1269

00:57:24,720 --> 00:57:29,910

But I managed, with all these
limitations in language,

1270

00:57:29,910 --> 00:57:32,430

to be the second
best in my class.

1271

00:57:32,430 --> 00:57:33,750

And I got a silver medal.

1272

00:57:33,750 --> 00:57:34,980

I still have it.

1273

00:57:34,980 --> 00:57:41,010

And the gold medal was
earned by another refugee boy

1274

00:57:41,010 --> 00:57:45,240

I remember a nice, plump
Jewish boy with a marvelous

1275

00:57:45,240 --> 00:57:46,590

sense of humor.

1276

00:57:46,590 --> 00:57:49,620

And he got the first
one, which was gold.

1277

00:57:49,620 --> 00:57:53,490

So these refugee children
weren't really outdistancing

1278

00:57:53,490 --> 00:57:54,720

the local kids.

1279

00:57:54,720 --> 00:57:58,090

Were there many refugee
children in the school?

1280
00:57:58,090 --> 00:58:02,520
No, but there were many
refugees in Havana.

1281
00:58:02,520 --> 00:58:04,230
Yes.

1282
00:58:04,230 --> 00:58:08,770
And at home, did your
family still speak German?

1283
00:58:08,770 --> 00:58:09,270
Yes.

1284
00:58:09,270 --> 00:58:12,000
That's probably why
I am now working

1285
00:58:12,000 --> 00:58:15,720
in the historical division
doing translations,

1286
00:58:15,720 --> 00:58:19,830
because my fundamental
German is very deep-seated.

1287
00:58:19,830 --> 00:58:21,990
And I have not
really forgotten it,

1288
00:58:21,990 --> 00:58:27,300
because even in this country,
until my parents' deaths--

1289
00:58:27,300 --> 00:58:31,240
my mother died in 1984,
my father much earlier--

1290
00:58:31,240 --> 00:58:37,200
we would intermingle
English and German.

1291

00:58:37,200 --> 00:58:40,680

So German has, for
you, the memories

1292

00:58:40,680 --> 00:58:44,000

of being with your mother and
with your father and being--

1293

00:58:44,000 --> 00:58:44,700

Yes.

1294

00:58:44,700 --> 00:58:47,640

I know some very
embittered people

1295

00:58:47,640 --> 00:58:50,130

who had suffered
greatly in camps

1296

00:58:50,130 --> 00:58:53,430

who, when they came to America,
refused to speak German.

1297

00:58:53,430 --> 00:58:54,740

And I respect that.

1298

00:58:54,740 --> 00:58:56,130

And I understand it.

1299

00:58:56,130 --> 00:58:58,410

But that's a
different situation.

1300

00:58:58,410 --> 00:59:00,650

Well, maybe we can talk
more about that later.

1301

00:59:00,650 --> 00:59:01,650

Yes.

1302

00:59:01,650 --> 00:59:03,330

What else about Cuba?

1303
00:59:03,330 --> 00:59:05,940

1304
00:59:05,940 --> 00:59:09,960
I thought the Cuban people
were so different from anything

1305
00:59:09,960 --> 00:59:11,430
I had seen before.

1306
00:59:11,430 --> 00:59:14,730
I remember pale faced,
northern Germans,

1307
00:59:14,730 --> 00:59:17,400
or very Jewish Germans.

1308
00:59:17,400 --> 00:59:21,060
And I was always cold in
Germany, it seems to me.

1309
00:59:21,060 --> 00:59:22,770
And everything
seemed to be gray.

1310
00:59:22,770 --> 00:59:24,900
Berlin seemed to be gray.

1311
00:59:24,900 --> 00:59:27,970
And all of a sudden, I
was on this golden island.

1312
00:59:27,970 --> 00:59:29,550
There were royal palm trees.

1313
00:59:29,550 --> 00:59:32,280
I thought I'd never seen
anything so beautiful.

1314
00:59:32,280 --> 00:59:34,770
The sunsets, these

tropical skies

1315
00:59:34,770 --> 00:59:37,410
were something I'd never
experienced before.

1316
00:59:37,410 --> 00:59:39,240
The music, the people--

1317
00:59:39,240 --> 00:59:44,700
they were very warm and charming
and, at that time, happy.

1318
00:59:44,700 --> 00:59:48,960
And did you feel any
special treatment as a Jew?

1319
00:59:48,960 --> 00:59:51,100
They couldn't have
been nicer to us.

1320
00:59:51,100 --> 00:59:55,950
They were so good, and
hospitable, and welcoming.

1321
00:59:55,950 --> 00:59:59,490
So how did you
happen to leave Cuba?

1322
00:59:59,490 --> 01:00:02,970
Oh, that was because our
quota number came up.

1323
01:00:02,970 --> 01:00:03,480
I see.

1324
01:00:03,480 --> 01:00:05,220
We had done our wait.

1325
01:00:05,220 --> 01:00:06,640
I was heartbroken.

1326

01:00:06,640 --> 01:00:10,650

I remember the day
we sailed away.

1327

01:00:10,650 --> 01:00:12,862

My parents had locked
me into the cabin,

1328

01:00:12,862 --> 01:00:14,570

because I had been
asleep when they left,

1329

01:00:14,570 --> 01:00:17,130

and they didn't want
me to be in any danger.

1330

01:00:17,130 --> 01:00:20,490

And I remember waking up as
the ship was sailing away.

1331

01:00:20,490 --> 01:00:24,390

And I was looking at the Malecon
it's that great stretch of road

1332

01:00:24,390 --> 01:00:27,395

that's the first thing you see
when you go to Havana Harbor--

1333

01:00:27,395 --> 01:00:30,360

and the lights twinkling
like a pearl necklace.

1334

01:00:30,360 --> 01:00:32,220

And I wanted to go on deck.

1335

01:00:32,220 --> 01:00:33,060

And I couldn't.

1336

01:00:33,060 --> 01:00:34,020

The door was locked.

1337

01:00:34,020 --> 01:00:36,360

And I remember standing

in that porthole

1338
01:00:36,360 --> 01:00:38,490
and sobbing, because
I didn't want

1339
01:00:38,490 --> 01:00:42,960
to leave Cuba, the people
I knew, my girlfriends.

1340
01:00:42,960 --> 01:00:44,430
I was distraught.

1341
01:00:44,430 --> 01:00:47,160
So you did make friends in Cube.

1342
01:00:47,160 --> 01:00:50,850
In fact, just a
few months ago, I

1343
01:00:50,850 --> 01:00:55,770
visited one of them, who is
now lady my age in her late 60s

1344
01:00:55,770 --> 01:00:57,330
living in Florida.

1345
01:00:57,330 --> 01:01:00,330
That was my dear friend
Hilda, whom I met then.

1346
01:01:00,330 --> 01:01:02,760
She was then a very
beautiful little girl

1347
01:01:02,760 --> 01:01:04,170
with her own problems.

1348
01:01:04,170 --> 01:01:05,700
Her parents had divorced.

1349
01:01:05,700 --> 01:01:09,960

But she was a well,
upper-crust Cuban.

1350
01:01:09,960 --> 01:01:13,650
I mean a very well--

1351
01:01:13,650 --> 01:01:15,540
they were wealthy.

1352
01:01:15,540 --> 01:01:16,730
So she was not a refugee.

1353
01:01:16,730 --> 01:01:18,810
She was an only
child, like myself.

1354
01:01:18,810 --> 01:01:23,340
And I fascinated her,
because I was a refugee.

1355
01:01:23,340 --> 01:01:24,720
So we became friends.

1356
01:01:24,720 --> 01:01:26,520
And it's a lifelong friendship.

1357
01:01:26,520 --> 01:01:28,710
So it was hard for you
to say goodbye to Hilda

1358
01:01:28,710 --> 01:01:29,418
and your friends.

1359
01:01:29,418 --> 01:01:31,120
It was agonizing.

1360
01:01:31,120 --> 01:01:32,220
Yes.

1361
01:01:32,220 --> 01:01:36,150
And why did your parents
want to come to the US

1362
01:01:36,150 --> 01:01:37,680
instead of staying in Cuba?

1363
01:01:37,680 --> 01:01:40,680
Oh, because there was no
future for us in Cuba.

1364
01:01:40,680 --> 01:01:42,780
It was a marvelous resting--

1365
01:01:42,780 --> 01:01:47,610
stopping off place, better than
we ever hoped for or expected.

1366
01:01:47,610 --> 01:01:49,650
But it was not a
place to remain.

1367
01:01:49,650 --> 01:01:52,740
There was no way he could
make a living or anything.

1368
01:01:52,740 --> 01:01:56,070
We were set to become Americans.

1369
01:01:56,070 --> 01:02:01,890
And did your family have
contacts in the United States?

1370
01:02:01,890 --> 01:02:06,150
Well, he had connections
with this Joint Committee.

1371
01:02:06,150 --> 01:02:09,150
And he quickly found work.

1372
01:02:09,150 --> 01:02:10,980
But it was a terrible struggle.

1373
01:02:10,980 --> 01:02:13,300
I once wrote an essay

about my father,

1374

01:02:13,300 --> 01:02:15,720

and I gave it to my
children, in which I

1375

01:02:15,720 --> 01:02:18,630

explained how it was for him.

1376

01:02:18,630 --> 01:02:24,420

Here he was, at this
point in his 50s.

1377

01:02:24,420 --> 01:02:28,680

And he looked for any
kind of job-- salesman.

1378

01:02:28,680 --> 01:02:31,710

He worked at the
Savoy Plaza Hotel

1379

01:02:31,710 --> 01:02:35,040

in the basement as
janitorial work.

1380

01:02:35,040 --> 01:02:40,230

And here he was, once
a well-set-up gentlemen

1381

01:02:40,230 --> 01:02:41,820

with his little fortune.

1382

01:02:41,820 --> 01:02:44,310

And here he was, now
practically a janitor.

1383

01:02:44,310 --> 01:02:48,720

And guys half his age would
refer to him as, hey, Al.

1384

01:02:48,720 --> 01:02:56,560

And it was a great come
down, or I don't know.

1385
01:02:56,560 --> 01:02:58,560
But he was very gallant
about the whole thing.

1386
01:02:58,560 --> 01:02:59,580
He got used to it.

1387
01:02:59,580 --> 01:03:00,810
He struggled with it.

1388
01:03:00,810 --> 01:03:01,830
He put up with it.

1389
01:03:01,830 --> 01:03:02,880
He fought.

1390
01:03:02,880 --> 01:03:07,470
And he finally ended up
creating his own position

1391
01:03:07,470 --> 01:03:11,370
with a German-language
newspaper, Stats Sanctunk und

1392
01:03:11,370 --> 01:03:14,370
Herald, and Knight Ridder paper.

1393
01:03:14,370 --> 01:03:18,930
And he found a job in their
advertising department.

1394
01:03:18,930 --> 01:03:21,360
And with his contacts
back in Germany

1395
01:03:21,360 --> 01:03:25,530
and his knowledge of German, he
became the advertising director

1396
01:03:25,530 --> 01:03:28,800
for the ads from Germany,

big industry ads.

1397
01:03:28,800 --> 01:03:31,830
And I wanted to explain
how it was possible

1398
01:03:31,830 --> 01:03:36,390
for him to go back to
Germany on business trips

1399
01:03:36,390 --> 01:03:38,670
after all that had happened.

1400
01:03:38,670 --> 01:03:41,220
And this was, of course,
after the war when Germany

1401
01:03:41,220 --> 01:03:43,170
was being built up again.

1402
01:03:43,170 --> 01:03:45,420
He knew the high commissioner.

1403
01:03:45,420 --> 01:03:49,230
And he had contacts
from business before.

1404
01:03:49,230 --> 01:03:53,400
And he managed to get some
fabulous ads for the paper.

1405
01:03:53,400 --> 01:03:55,890
And he did this twice
a year for seven years

1406
01:03:55,890 --> 01:03:58,320
until he died of lung cancer.

1407
01:03:58,320 --> 01:04:01,950
And the way that he could do
this, as I explained before,

1408

01:04:01,950 --> 01:04:06,780
is that he had had
40, almost up to--

1409
01:04:06,780 --> 01:04:09,600
no, more than 40, mid 40s.

1410
01:04:09,600 --> 01:04:12,220
He had had a good
life in Germany.

1411
01:04:12,220 --> 01:04:15,900
This was a nightmare that
came upon him in middle age.

1412
01:04:15,900 --> 01:04:18,540
And he had to adjust to it.

1413
01:04:18,540 --> 01:04:20,310
He had to understand
that it wasn't

1414
01:04:20,310 --> 01:04:24,090
going to go away, that he
had to get away from there.

1415
01:04:24,090 --> 01:04:26,520
He had not been in the camps.

1416
01:04:26,520 --> 01:04:29,560
He had not had the experience.

1417
01:04:29,560 --> 01:04:33,210
And so he was able
to come back and deal

1418
01:04:33,210 --> 01:04:35,520
with the post-war Germans.

1419
01:04:35,520 --> 01:04:38,670
He was not eaten up
by hatred or revulsion

1420

01:04:38,670 --> 01:04:41,680
like so many rightfully were.

1421

01:04:41,680 --> 01:04:43,260
And so he could do this.

1422

01:04:43,260 --> 01:04:47,710

1423

01:04:47,710 --> 01:04:51,950
Can we back up a bit to
your arrival in New York?

1424

01:04:51,950 --> 01:04:53,100
Do you remember that?

1425

01:04:53,100 --> 01:04:54,190
Oh, yes.

1426

01:04:54,190 --> 01:04:57,590
He had a good
friend in New York.

1427

01:04:57,590 --> 01:04:58,960
His name was Eric Goodall.

1428

01:04:58,960 --> 01:05:02,020
For a while, he was a
political cartoonist.

1429

01:05:02,020 --> 01:05:07,180
And the very first night, he
took us around in his car,

1430

01:05:07,180 --> 01:05:10,510
I remember, drove us
through Little Italy

1431

01:05:10,510 --> 01:05:13,070
where all the lights were lit--

1432

01:05:13,070 --> 01:05:16,420
oh, first the skyscrapers
down Fifth Avenue.

1433
01:05:16,420 --> 01:05:17,900
And I was a little child.

1434
01:05:17,900 --> 01:05:19,720
It was an open convertible.

1435
01:05:19,720 --> 01:05:21,790
And I laid back,
and just looked up

1436
01:05:21,790 --> 01:05:25,570
at the skyscrapers, and the
bright lights, and Little

1437
01:05:25,570 --> 01:05:26,950
Italy, and all over.

1438
01:05:26,950 --> 01:05:29,710
And I remember falling
asleep, leaning back

1439
01:05:29,710 --> 01:05:30,860
with my mouth open.

1440
01:05:30,860 --> 01:05:33,380
That's my first
night in New York.

1441
01:05:33,380 --> 01:05:38,560
My father, as we were going
down Broadway on that first day,

1442
01:05:38,560 --> 01:05:42,340
stopped at 77th
Street in Broadway.

1443
01:05:42,340 --> 01:05:45,910
At the corner, there was a hotel
called the Benjamin Franklin.

1444
01:05:45,910 --> 01:05:48,490
I looked recently, and the
building is still there.

1445
01:05:48,490 --> 01:05:50,780
But it's no longer
the Benjamin Franklin.

1446
01:05:50,780 --> 01:05:52,720
It's been rebuilt
something else.

1447
01:05:52,720 --> 01:05:55,180
It was a residential hotel.

1448
01:05:55,180 --> 01:05:59,440
And he rented us a nice, large
room with kitchen privileges

1449
01:05:59,440 --> 01:06:00,940
for that first night.

1450
01:06:00,940 --> 01:06:04,430
And we lived there
for some months.

1451
01:06:04,430 --> 01:06:07,850
And so our arrival in New
York was very pleasant.

1452
01:06:07,850 --> 01:06:09,220
I had my parents with me.

1453
01:06:09,220 --> 01:06:11,680
And my father had his
good friend there,

1454
01:06:11,680 --> 01:06:14,060
and getting acquainted
with New York.

1455

01:06:14,060 --> 01:06:16,090
And then I went
to public school.

1456
01:06:16,090 --> 01:06:18,460
And that, of course, was
a little frightening.

1457
01:06:18,460 --> 01:06:19,720
But I got used to it.

1458
01:06:19,720 --> 01:06:21,610
So you were about 12.

1459
01:06:21,610 --> 01:06:22,750
11, I think.

1460
01:06:22,750 --> 01:06:23,320
11.

1461
01:06:23,320 --> 01:06:25,210
OK.

1462
01:06:25,210 --> 01:06:26,110
Wait.

1463
01:06:26,110 --> 01:06:28,000
We arrived in 1940.

1464
01:06:28,000 --> 01:06:29,110
I was born in '28.

1465
01:06:29,110 --> 01:06:31,762

1466
01:06:31,762 --> 01:06:33,170
12.

1467
01:06:33,170 --> 01:06:35,750
And how was your
English by this time?

1468

01:06:35,750 --> 01:06:37,430

Oh, it's so funny.

1469

01:06:37,430 --> 01:06:40,290

I remember being
in public school.

1470

01:06:40,290 --> 01:06:43,070

And I asked, what is a bra?

1471

01:06:43,070 --> 01:06:47,300

And this girl laughed and said,
imagine Ruthie Abel not knowing

1472

01:06:47,300 --> 01:06:48,710

what bra means.

1473

01:06:48,710 --> 01:06:50,780

I didn't know that
it was a brassiere.

1474

01:06:50,780 --> 01:06:52,430

I was still too young for that.

1475

01:06:52,430 --> 01:06:53,930

But the girls were
talking about it.

1476

01:06:53,930 --> 01:06:56,300

And there were words I
just didn't know yet.

1477

01:06:56,300 --> 01:06:58,010

And I had to learn them.

1478

01:06:58,010 --> 01:07:02,420

And eventually,
I realized that I

1479

01:07:02,420 --> 01:07:04,580

was beginning to
think in English,

1480
01:07:04,580 --> 01:07:06,560
and that I had really
gotten good at it.

1481
01:07:06,560 --> 01:07:10,110
But it took a few years-- not
too long, because I was young.

1482
01:07:10,110 --> 01:07:13,520
My mother, although she
had a very good knowledge

1483
01:07:13,520 --> 01:07:15,680
of the structure
of the language,

1484
01:07:15,680 --> 01:07:19,580
had an accent that is so thick
you could cut it with a knife.

1485
01:07:19,580 --> 01:07:21,115
She never mastered the TH's.

1486
01:07:21,115 --> 01:07:23,780

1487
01:07:23,780 --> 01:07:26,210
Was she home during the day?

1488
01:07:26,210 --> 01:07:27,560
She worked.

1489
01:07:27,560 --> 01:07:28,190
She did.

1490
01:07:28,190 --> 01:07:31,080
I was a latchkey child
for quite awhile.

1491
01:07:31,080 --> 01:07:32,690
And what did she do?

1492
01:07:32,690 --> 01:07:34,040
Secretarial, mostly.

1493
01:07:34,040 --> 01:07:35,750
She was a very good secretary.

1494
01:07:35,750 --> 01:07:39,360
In those days, secretary
was not a dirty word.

1495
01:07:39,360 --> 01:07:39,860
Now it is.

1496
01:07:39,860 --> 01:07:43,650
So she was out with the public
and had to use her English--

1497
01:07:43,650 --> 01:07:44,150
Yes.

1498
01:07:44,150 --> 01:07:44,540
Oh, yes.

1499
01:07:44,540 --> 01:07:45,120
--every day.

1500
01:07:45,120 --> 01:07:48,530
But she also managed to
work for many refugees firms

1501
01:07:48,530 --> 01:07:50,060
where they all spoke German.

1502
01:07:50,060 --> 01:07:51,860
Once she said to
me, it's a shame

1503
01:07:51,860 --> 01:07:54,140
I never get a chance
to practice my English.

1504

01:07:54,140 --> 01:07:56,150

How am I ever going to improve?

1505

01:07:56,150 --> 01:07:58,640

So she used German at
work a lot of the time.

1506

01:07:58,640 --> 01:07:59,690

Different jobs, yes.

1507

01:07:59,690 --> 01:08:01,040

Yeah.

1508

01:08:01,040 --> 01:08:03,500

So you went through
school in New York.

1509

01:08:03,500 --> 01:08:04,190

Yes.

1510

01:08:04,190 --> 01:08:06,080

What schools did you
go to in New York?

1511

01:08:06,080 --> 01:08:09,110

It was a public school
in a neighborhood there.

1512

01:08:09,110 --> 01:08:14,720

And I was just getting adjusted
to the American way of life.

1513

01:08:14,720 --> 01:08:17,569

How was it making friends?

1514

01:08:17,569 --> 01:08:22,819

I made a few good ones, not
too many, kindred spirits.

1515

01:08:22,819 --> 01:08:27,140

And in fact, one of them,
Vera, was a refugee.

1516
01:08:27,140 --> 01:08:28,729
In fact, she's in Chicago now.

1517
01:08:28,729 --> 01:08:34,460
For many years, she taught art
at the University of Chicago.

1518
01:08:34,460 --> 01:08:41,120
And her father came from
Danzig, a Russian background--

1519
01:08:41,120 --> 01:08:43,680
lovely girl, became
very good friends.

1520
01:08:43,680 --> 01:08:47,029
And then there was a darling
Irish American, Jill McConnell.

1521
01:08:47,029 --> 01:08:48,830
She became my best friend.

1522
01:08:48,830 --> 01:08:50,870
She was from the neighborhood.

1523
01:08:50,870 --> 01:08:54,120
In fact, she's the one who
gave me my middle name.

1524
01:08:54,120 --> 01:08:55,189
Which was?

1525
01:08:55,189 --> 01:08:56,840
Andrea.

1526
01:08:56,840 --> 01:08:59,210
What happened was,
after five years,

1527
01:08:59,210 --> 01:09:02,960
my parents had the opportunity

to get their citizenship.

1528

01:09:02,960 --> 01:09:05,220

In fact, we went
and swore the oath.

1529

01:09:05,220 --> 01:09:08,149

And then we had a big dinner
afterwards and celebrated.

1530

01:09:08,149 --> 01:09:12,439

I, as their child,
automatically became a citizen.

1531

01:09:12,439 --> 01:09:17,240

And I was told that, when
you become a citizen,

1532

01:09:17,240 --> 01:09:20,359

you can have a choice
at what name you want.

1533

01:09:20,359 --> 01:09:23,000

Well, I had always
been upset at the fact

1534

01:09:23,000 --> 01:09:26,689

that I had one name only, and
that was only one syllable,

1535

01:09:26,689 --> 01:09:27,205

Ruth.

1536

01:09:27,205 --> 01:09:29,330

It just wasn't-- yeah,
that's how it was pronounced

1537

01:09:29,330 --> 01:09:31,040

in German, "Groot."

1538

01:09:31,040 --> 01:09:32,609

I didn't like it.

1539

01:09:32,609 --> 01:09:34,620

It wasn't enough for me.

1540

01:09:34,620 --> 01:09:38,240

I didn't feel like

just "Groot," or Ruth.

1541

01:09:38,240 --> 01:09:41,720

And so she and I took a

walk on Riverside Drive,

1542

01:09:41,720 --> 01:09:44,250

because I told her I wanted

to get a middle name.

1543

01:09:44,250 --> 01:09:46,250

I had realized that

every American I

1544

01:09:46,250 --> 01:09:47,875

knew had a middle name.

1545

01:09:47,875 --> 01:09:51,029

But I only had one, and

that was only one syllable.

1546

01:09:51,029 --> 01:09:54,500

So I said, Jill,

help me find a name.

1547

01:09:54,500 --> 01:09:55,280

So we walked.

1548

01:09:55,280 --> 01:09:57,230

And we started with

the A's, naturally.

1549

01:09:57,230 --> 01:10:00,680

And we didn't get very far,

because when she said Andrea,

1550

01:10:00,680 --> 01:10:02,600

I said, say that again.

1551

01:10:02,600 --> 01:10:03,710

And she said, Andrea.

1552

01:10:03,710 --> 01:10:05,640

And I said, I like it.

1553

01:10:05,640 --> 01:10:07,310

What did you like about Andrea?

1554

01:10:07,310 --> 01:10:13,170

The sound, the soft
three-syllable sound.

1555

01:10:13,170 --> 01:10:16,370

And so I became
Ruth Andrea Abel.

1556

01:10:16,370 --> 01:10:21,245

Did it have any national
connotations for you?

1557

01:10:21,245 --> 01:10:22,370

I mean, was it definitely--

1558

01:10:22,370 --> 01:10:27,500

No, I always went by
sound rather than rule.

1559

01:10:27,500 --> 01:10:33,400

Later, I learned that it meant
something like, gift to God,

1560

01:10:33,400 --> 01:10:34,000

or something.

1561

01:10:34,000 --> 01:10:34,660

I'm not sure.

1562

01:10:34,660 --> 01:10:36,040

I have to look that up again.

1563
01:10:36,040 --> 01:10:38,770
And of course, Ruth
Andrea became Randy.

1564
01:10:38,770 --> 01:10:41,320
That was my nickname
for many years.

1565
01:10:41,320 --> 01:10:43,330
Now that I work at
the Holocaust Museum,

1566
01:10:43,330 --> 01:10:44,755
I feel Randy isn't right.

1567
01:10:44,755 --> 01:10:47,080
So I go with Ruth.

1568
01:10:47,080 --> 01:10:49,710
Were you named after
anyone in particular?

1569
01:10:49,710 --> 01:10:52,090
Well, that's the strange thing.

1570
01:10:52,090 --> 01:10:54,940
My parents, when they
were waiting for me,

1571
01:10:54,940 --> 01:10:58,150
apparently never had
discussions about names the way

1572
01:10:58,150 --> 01:11:00,160
my husband and I did.

1573
01:11:00,160 --> 01:11:03,370
And here's my dear
mother, recuperating

1574
01:11:03,370 --> 01:11:05,320

from having had me in bed.

1575

01:11:05,320 --> 01:11:08,050

And my dad hotfoots
it to city hall

1576

01:11:08,050 --> 01:11:10,210

and says he wants me named Ruth.

1577

01:11:10,210 --> 01:11:12,880

He had never even consulted her.

1578

01:11:12,880 --> 01:11:15,340

She wanted to call me Ellen.

1579

01:11:15,340 --> 01:11:18,010

But then she thought Ellen
Abel doesn't sound good,

1580

01:11:18,010 --> 01:11:19,570

so she hesitated.

1581

01:11:19,570 --> 01:11:21,630

So he comes back
with a fait accompli.

1582

01:11:21,630 --> 01:11:23,650

Here I was, Ruth.

1583

01:11:23,650 --> 01:11:24,730

I didn't like it.

1584

01:11:24,730 --> 01:11:25,905

She didn't like it.

1585

01:11:25,905 --> 01:11:27,130

But there it was.

1586

01:11:27,130 --> 01:11:28,960

Do you know why
he selected Ruth?

1587

01:11:28,960 --> 01:11:30,298

I wish I knew.

1588

01:11:30,298 --> 01:11:31,840

It would be interesting,
wouldn't it?

1589

01:11:31,840 --> 01:11:33,943

I haven't a clue.

1590

01:11:33,943 --> 01:11:35,860

I don't think he ever
had a girlfriend named--

1591

01:11:35,860 --> 01:11:38,290

he used to have many girlfriends
before he got married.

1592

01:11:38,290 --> 01:11:40,810

In fact, he was married before.

1593

01:11:40,810 --> 01:11:43,270

And he never mentioned Ruth.

1594

01:11:43,270 --> 01:11:46,250

1595

01:11:46,250 --> 01:11:48,438

Well, we're almost at
the end of this tape.

1596

01:11:48,438 --> 01:11:49,730

So let's stop and turn it over.

1597

01:11:49,730 --> 01:11:51,280

OK.

1598

01:11:51,280 --> 01:11:52,000