

This is in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with Carolina Taitz, conducted by Gail Schwartz on January 24, 2010 in McLean, Virginia. Tell me your full name.

My full name is Carolina Taitz.

And what name were you born with?

And I was born with the name Lena Knoch.

And where were you born.

I was born, basically, in Russia. But I cannot say this in Russia. Because I lived all my life in Latvia, in the Baltic States. So basically I always say, I'm born in Latvia-- Riga.

Where in Russia where you born, though?

I don't remember that name. This is a long, long name-- the Russian name.

Was it near any big city? Was it a small--

Nobody even asked me about that. That's not important.

OK. And when were you born?

Yeah, I was born February 24, '29.

And let's talk about your family. Tell me about your parents.

My parents was my father, my mother. My sister was nine years older than I. And I had a brother-- a little boy, who was almost as old as I was-- one-year difference. And the Germans killed all of them.

Yes. What was your father's name?

My father's name was Mordechai.

And what kind of work did he do?

He was a specialist in-- he was a tree doctor. You know, like, when an appletree gets sick, they called my father. And he gave an injection, and the tree come back to life.

Wonderful. I think we call that an arborist.

I don't know. I call him a tree doctor-- very primitive.

And where was he from?

My father was from Latvia, also. He lived in Livani. The name where he was born is Livani, in Latvia.

And your mother, what was her name?

My mother's name was Frida, and she is also from Latvia. And where she was born is-- the name, I don't know. But where she comes from is Subate. The name of the town is Subate.

Was that in--

Also Latvia.

And your brother and sisters' names were?

My sister's name was Berta. In Yiddish we would say Beila. But in passports, she was Berta. And my brother's name was Gedalia.

And how long did you live in Russia before you came to Latvia?

I did live in Russia not one day.

Oh, I thought you were born in Russia.

I was born in the train.

Oh, on a train?

You know, I didn't live. I was just born. My mom had burst.

On a train?

A train or ship. I don't remember.

Oh, I see. And so then you came to--

Came to Latvia. Are all my life, I live in Latvia. And everything-- what happened to me happened in Latvia.

Yeah. Was your family a religious family?

Yeah. They were very religious.

Very religious. And so you observed the holidays?

Yes. Yes, we did observe.

Uh-huh. Do you have any favorite holidays that you remember?

Pesach. I was born in Purim, because February comes out in Purim. But my favorite is Pesach. I love Pesach.

And did you have aunts and uncles and grandparents?

Yes, I did have a lot of them, and they was all killed. I have pictures. I showed you. I have the pictures.

OK. And did they live nearby?

That's my grandmother. Now let's speak about my mother's--

Side. OK.

Yeah. They are also all from Latvia-- all from Latvia. And the town where my grandmother live, from my mother's side, then from their father's side later-- from my mother's side, the whole family lived in Subate. That's the name of the town when my mother and grandfather lived. But later the Germans killed them.

And from my father's side, I don't know much from my father's side. Yes, he did have a father, that was my zayde. And he did come sometimes to visit us. And he was from Livani-- also Latvia. We had all the families and my relatives-- everybody from Latvia.

What language did you speak at home?

At home I spoke Latvian, German, and mameloshen-- Yiddish. I am fluent in this. And I'm fluent in Russia-- in Russian language. That I learned when they occupied the country.

Right. And what kind of neighborhood did you live in? Was it Jewish and non-Jew?

I lived there not far from Riga-- out of Riga-- the little town where my childhood was in Viesite. It was 100 kilometers from Riga. My father has a little house. And we had the beautiful fruit the garden. And I went there to school, in that Viesite. And I finished six years-- six classes.

Then the Germans came. And then I was--

Yeah, we'll talk about that.

Yeah that's later.

What kind of school? Was it a Jewish school?

No, it was not.

Public school?

It was a public, very Latvian school-- very Latvian. But we had once a week to come a rabbi and taught us Yiddish, if we do like it. And I liked it. I like languages. I learned that. That's why I know very well mameloshen.

Right. And did you have non-Jewish friends?

Yes, a lot. We mingled. In that little town-- in Viesite where I lived, there was a lot of Jews and also a lot of Latvians. And in such a little town, people get friendly. We mingled [INAUDIBLE]. Later, these Latvians shoot us and killed us. That's the irony, but that's the way it was.

Right. At that time, you did not experience any antise--

I can't hear you. At that time, when you were a child, before the war, there was no antisemitism?

It was, but we really didn't feel it. Only when the Germans came, the Latvians went and started killing the Jews.

No, but before the Germans came.

Antisemitism is all over-- was. But we didn't really feel it so much. We was very friendly with Latvians. And the Latvians was friendly. Like, when we had Pesach. My mom sent matzahs and wine. And when they have their Latvian Christmas, they send us presents and everything.

We was very close to the Latvians. That's why I spoke Latvian with my parents.

Did you like sports?

No, I hated it. At school I had only the worst marks.

Did you like to read-- read books?

I love to read, till today. I read a lot. And I like classics. And all the Russian classics, I read. I like to read very much, from my childhood.

And I like to dance. Because by my profession, I am an actress.

Oh, OK. And so as a child, you went to school. You did all--

I went to school. I was very Latvian. Because there was maybe one Jewish-- I was Jewish, my little brother, and one more Jewish. But we attended that particular rabbi who came. But then I learned about Jesus Christ-- because it was also a person coming and teach us Christian religion-- in my school. That's why I know the Old Testament and the New Testament.

So were there many other Jews in your town?

A lot of Jews. And they mostly went to Jewish schools.

And why did your parents send you to public school?

I don't know. Because we was very friendly with Latvians.

Did you live in a house or an apartment?

No, we lived in a house. My father had a little house. I will show you. I have the photo. And the house had five little apartments divided. And he rented out. And we had on the left side our apartment-- big apartment-- I mean, three rooms, kitchen.

Mm-hmm. So your childhood was a happy childhood.

A very happy childhood.

OK. And then when did things begin to change?

At first the Russians occupied the country, and they were communists. They were communists. And it was horrible, bad time. They took away our-- we had a horse. We had two cows. We had a lot of animals, because we had like a range, you know? And my father lost his job. They didn't let him-- they arrested him.

Because he was a capitalist.

Yeah, because he has a house, and a house is a capitalist.

Were your parents Zionists?

What is that.

A Zionist-- committed to Israel.

Maybe they had. Everyone Jew loves Israel.

No. But in those days, were your parents-- did they talk about that at all?

Yeah, they loved Israel, always. That word was [INAUDIBLE] in our [? house. ?]

OK. So the Russians came, took away your father's business.

We was in a [INAUDIBLE] situation. Papa couldn't get the job. They arrested him. He was imprisoned. Nobody knows why. He didn't do a thing-- because he is a capitalist. Thank God they didn't send them out to Siberia, because a lot of Jews they sent out to Siberia. But my father somehow, no. He was home.

Then, they released him from prison.

Yeah, released him. Because after a very short time, the Germans came.

Right. Now what did your mother and father say to you? You were a young girl at that time. You were, what, 10 years old?

You see, I will tell you-- no, I was less than-- I think nine or eight.

So how did they explain this to a young girl?

My father loved the Germans. Why? Because he was [? sanitär ?] in the First War. He was riding a train. And he was like a med assistant-- like a nurse.

He was a medical assistant. He was [INAUDIBLE], coming from Russia to Riga. It was the train. He was working, helping people. He became a nurse-- a man nurse. So then we settled in Latvia. We came to Latvia-- back from Russia. Because my father loved very much Germany. He left Germany, because he was in the first war. And the Germans treated him wonderful.

My father never, never, never believed that such a culture as Germans could do such a horrible thing. That's why he didn't run away. Because all that was under the communism. We was under the communism. Everybody run away not to be with the communist. Everybody loved the Germans, because the Germans say, we will save you from the communists. We will be good to you. But that's only words. What they did we know.

Right. So when the Germans came in, your life went on.

It was horrible, right away. There was Latvians. My school friends came and-- I'm going to kill you. He sit right of me. In school desk, he was sitting right of me. You're a Jew, Jew, Jew. Just to hear those words, it was horrible-- antisemitism. This was the Latvians-- good Latvians, who loved my father and loved my mom and the children. They was murderers. The Latvians shoot the Jews right on the street.

And we just hold together. The family was holding together, and father and mother. We didn't know that the German will be so terrible. Because my father-- I am not going around from Russia. Because I was in the First World War, and the German treated me wonderful. And he came from the First War, and he bring for the children-- tchotchkes and everything. The Germans was wonderful the first time. He could never believe that what was going to happen.

OK. And then what? And then?

So we stay in Latvia. The Germans occupy the country.

Yeah. And then what happened? And then Himmler came and say, all the Jews has to be killed. Germany has to be Judenfrei. That was [INAUDIBLE]. All Jews has to be put in the ghetto. There was not a ghetto yet, but they made out in a place-- [? Moskovskiy ?] [? ForÅ¡tate ?] was the name. And they made a ghetto out of that.

That was a town? You mean that was the name of a town?

In Latvia, not far from-- how was the name? I have it written down. I will tell you. I cannot remember right now.

So they made the ghetto.

Yeah, all the Jews. So now we lived in the ghetto.

OK. What year was that. Do you know when they--

They came, I think, '41.

'41, right, OK. And so they made the ghetto right away?

We was all together.

Did you have to wear a yellow star?

Yes. And we did have to wear a star. Himmler came and told it all that way. And so all the Jews-- every Jew in the ghetto. We was miserable-- no food, no nothing. Some people put bread over the--

Fence? The wall? Was there a wall around the ghetto?

I don't know how you call that.

An iron fence?

An iron fence. So the people-- good people-- but when the Germans, they just shoot these people. They shouldn't be doing that.

Good Latvians threw bread over.

Latvians-- good Latvians. There was bad and good, you know. You cannot say that.

How did it feel to you as a young girl to have to wear the yellow star?

Everybody did. I didn't understand that. I remember that I was not even thinking about, I said, this is only a short time-- everything-- the shooting. Like a child, I was dreadful scared-- all the time scared. Because suddenly the Latvians-- I have to tell you, I have a lot of episodes. I call it the louse. This is a story. The doll-- that's a story. You know, that's what I have seen-- what goes through my head-- what I still remember.

Can you tell me?

There's a lot of stories I have to tell you. Then, you can only understand what happened.

Well, tell me a story.

They was shooting, killing, raping, you name it-- everything.

And this is what you saw as a young girl?

I have seen everything, because I am alive. I was even in Rumbula. That's where the killing was. But that comes later.

Later, OK. Let's talk more about the ghetto. So what did you do?

We had our all-Jewish police. They pick up young man and say, you are going to be in the ghetto. You will make ordnung here. You will be the police.

So all the young boys, I knew them, because my fiancée-- my husband-- my first husband-- I was married twice-- they was in school together. So I know all his friends. So they were all in ghetto-- all Jewish-- beautiful families.

So there was a Jewish police force in the ghetto?

Only for Jews.

Right.

And what did they do? What did the Jewish police force do?

We lived in one room-- my father, mother, my brother, my sister, and me. Can you believe, five people in one room? And I outside was a bathroom, to go make pee-pee. And the other families also lived there. It was horrible.

What did you bring with you from your house? Did you bring anything with you?

Yes, I did. Himmler let us take some clothes-- only clothes. Because they confiscated everything. They came in the apartment, took the pictures. We had the piano. They took the piano-- everything. We came in the ghetto, just a little clothes-- a blanket. They controlled what you take with you. They was controlling everything.

Did you bring anything yourself? Any books or any games or anything, as a child?

They burned all the books. If you did have a book, they burned. They took it in, and then they put the light [INAUDIBLE] They burned books. And when I saw that, it breaks my heart.

So how did you get food in the ghetto?

No food. We were starving. I was absolutely starving. I have it till today. I feel very bad. Because no food. Sometimes it depend. If you was working with a good German, he gave you sometimes, when they finished food, soup. And I remember this soup. It was water and a [? list ?] of a [RUSSIAN]. How you call that? You don't speak Russian.

So you didn't have much food.

No food, no.

Did your father work in the ghetto? You know, the men was working.

What did your father do?

I don't remember. What did some of the other men do?

They took him in the morning. There was a group-- a group of men who worked for the Germans in all kinds of organizations. I also worked.

What did you do?

I do funny things, what I did. A group of girls like me, we was always very scared not to be raped. But the Germans was drinking vodka. And they was coming night and taking girls-- rape them. Sometimes they killed them, but sometimes they let them get home-- a other German rapier.

And that was a lot. And my mom was-- because two girls-- me and my sister. And I was very ugly. I was not a pretty kid. I get better. You know, I looked like this. That's my real face. Ah, what can I tell you?

So you were never attacked?

No. My mom-- I watched myself. And I saw a German, I go way back home. I was just running away from them.

So were there any schools in the ghetto?

No.

No classes.

But it was a clinic. Our own, a Jewish-- because it was full with Jewish doctors. The doctors who lived in the ghetto took care of them. Not a long time ago, one of them was still alive and wrote me a letter. And he died, the doctor, but I personally knew him.

So you stayed inside the ghetto?

Inside in the ghetto. The working was good. Because when you can go out, always somebody get your piece of bread. Then, you put it in the pocket. When you get through the door, there is a German officer.

So he looks at you. And I remember, somebody gave me a potato-- a cooked potato. I put it in my pocket, in my coat. And when I was going through the entrance with a German officer, he found that potato. And he gave me a club in my eye. Still today my eyes bothers me.

So what did you do all day long in the ghetto?

They picked us up at 5 o'clock in the morning. And then 5 o'clock in the evening, they bring us back.

What kind of work did you do? I don't know. My English is so bad. But I will remember. I was working in a shoe-shining [? fabric. ?]

Shoe polish.

You have shoes and you polish. So there was from the airplane broken shoes-- shine, the boxes. I did have to take the boxes out of the bed and put it in a new box.

And then was a little candle. And I put it on top. And then it makes even. And I close it.

And the Germans have that girls-- 10 girls was working. And then they sell it and give them back to the German. I can only [? tell ?] shoe [INAUDIBLE] [? fabric. ?] I don't know how to say it.

It's OK. It was a factory. And so did you talk to the other girls? Were you allowed to talk?

Yeah, they was all live in ghetto, hungry. Our biggest talk was, oh, I'm so hungry. I am so hungry. We was dying. We wanted a little place. The potato was cooked, you know.

So did you observe any of the holidays? I mean, did your family stay religious?

No, no, nothing-- the Germans wouldn't even have known that. We avoided that.

And then how long did you stay in the ghetto?

Ah, God.

From 1941 to?



One beautiful day, on the entrance where the [? Jews ?] was going to work-- because mainly man was only going to work. Woman, very little. Woman was staying in the ghetto, in their apartments. I don't know why they didn't use women. Because men are stronger, they use them.

One day was a big sign on the door that all Jews-- women, men, and children-- has to stand outside the ghetto in line-- because we are going to be taken to our other concentration camp. So that particular day, we all came out. We schlepped with us what we could, because we don't know what are we going-- where are we going. Everybody say, no, we are going to be killed. We are going to be killed. Because everybody was killed and killed and killed. So what are they going to put in a different place?

Now were your grandparents and your other relatives with you in the ghetto?

No, no, that was a different killing. Riga was separate. My grandmother lived in Subate. There was the same thing in Subate. My father lived in Livani. It was the same thing.

OK. So they were all in their own ghettos? They were in different--

I speak only about the Riga ghetto. That's the place where--

But I'm saying, your relatives were in different ghettos.

No, no, no, no. They was [? married ?] [? to the ?] [INAUDIBLE]. My family was holding together-- papa, mama, my sister, my brother, and me.

Your grandparents and your aunts and uncles were in different

No, no, no, my grandparents lived in [INAUDIBLE]. They was killed separate. In every town where was living Jews, they put it together and killed them. But it's nothing to do with Riga. Because I am from Riga. I'm telling you only about Riga. The place where they killed Jews, the name was Rumbula.

Well, let's go back. You all went outside. There was that big sign.

Yeah, we were standing in line.

And you're standing in line. Then what happened? So we hoped that we are going to go to a other concentration camp. Maybe it will be better. We don't know. So we don't know where we are going. In that particular line was 30,000 people-- 30,000 people. And we stayed in line. It was freezing. It was cold. And [INAUDIBLE].

So the German general didn't give a damn-- big deal, so you'll freeze. And then they start walking. On every side of the group, the people was going like that. Here are the people. On every side was a German soldier-- on every side.

And one of these German soldiers, I knew him. He was a Latvian, and I knew him. I say, can you tell me? And he was not [? far ?] [? from ?] me. Can you tell me where we are going? He say, I only know that you are going to be in a different concentration camp.

Do you know what year this was. I don't know-- '42. Must be '42. No, we grow already also bigger. And always hungry-- always hungry-- want to eat something. When I came out-- when the war was over, I eat so much, I wind up in the hospital.

So you're marching, and where--

It was marching. That's the word.

OK. And then where did you go?

[NON-ENGLISH]. [NON-ENGLISH] is where the machines go.

A train station?

No, no. [NON-ENGLISH] is a street.

Oh, OK.

We was going where the street goes. And we go and go and go and go. We don't know where we go. We just go.

And then where did you end up?

I don't know. In the middle of all that march, somebody stop screaming and say, you better run, because everybody will be dead. Everybody will be killed. Nobody knew that.

So the line start] people running. The moment you run, they shoot you, you shoot you right away. Stay back in line. Stay back in line.

So I came and stayed back in line, with papa, mama, and my sister-- because we didn't want to lose each other. We hold all the time together. Also there was my uncle-- my father's brother-- who was also with us, his wife, and two little children-- four-year and six-year. And they was all with us, and they was killed. So I don't know, but I wind in a wild place. Is this a grave?

A ditch.

A ditch. And there was people with-- ta, ta, ta, ta, ta. They shoot us with [? there. ?] And the Germans say, stay in line. We was back there. We was very back. So the first people-- because I just saw that. I was not there, but I saw that. They stand on the ditch. On that side was the shooters.

There was Latvians and Germans. And the Jewish people, there is a mother, there is a child and two little-- the Jewish people have children-- a lot of children. They stay. And the machine gun was ta, ta, ta, ta, ta. I remember the sound. The sound was ta, ta, ta, ta, ta.

And they was falling in that grave-- half dead, half alive. The little children screaming. People was [? benching ?] to God. Woman was screaming and yelling and crying. It is a mess, you know? This is just like, what can I feel? I feel nothing. It's like a joke or something. I don't know.

But I did see that. But I was not at the grave. I was in the line-- what was the line. I was very far, till I came back. You know what happened?

I remember one moment. I did have to take off my coat. Before I remember my father, in the good times, he bought me a wonderful-- purple is my color. You know, I'm a Pisces, and purple is my color. And my coat was purple and was new and wonderful. It was one place-- all the coats must be in one place. The jewelry-- what you have-- jewelry like this-- everything in the box. So when you have a hat, it's in a different place.

The shoes-- there were so many. How you call that in English? Mountain of shoes-- a mountain of [INAUDIBLE]. And I already wanted to take-- because the Germans say, take off your coat and stay in line. And it was cold. And I kind of tried to take out the coat, and I couldn't take it off, so I put it on back. And I stand till our line was come. We are going to be dead in a minute.

So the line was going slowly, slowly, slowly. And so my father, mother, we stay all together, and my uncle and the two little babies. And suddenly-- you know, this is the worst moment in my life. I [? know why ?] I was always used that.

That a particular moment, I will never forget that. I don't know from where. I don't know why. Suddenly arrived four Germans on horses-- white, beautiful horses.

And on every horse was a general-- a German general-- not a Hakenkreuz, because some of them was Hakenkreuz. They were the worst. No Hakenkreuz, just German uniform.

Till today I don't know who they were. That was a miracle. And he said, [NON-ENGLISH]. And she said, I stopped. And that general of the four horses say, woman, if you are Schneiderin, come to me. Come to me. Come to me. I have a factory, and you can work as Schneiderin in my factory. My mom grabbed me and my sister and screamed, I am a Schneiderin and my children Schneiderin. It was [INAUDIBLE] my life. We were Schneiderin.

And there was my father, my sister, and my brother stayed on the graves. They was killed in that particular time, in Rumbula. That was what happened in the Rumbula. That is the name-- Rumbula-- where the killing was. And that I am the only witness alive of today-- the only. I will show you in the corridor. I have a little memorial there.

So [? halt chasen ?] my mom [INAUDIBLE] stay with the officer. Every little thing maybe will be different. At least my mom has both those girls. And she was very happy. We are Schneiderin and [? we should ?] [? stay. ?] So there was running other woman. And it was a group of about 200, or 150. I really don't remember. The people know each other from [NON-ENGLISH] shtetl. You know, you know each other.

So we stay there behind the four horses-- beautiful horses. I will never forget these horses. And the uniform the Germans had was like Wehrmacht. This is a different German kind-- no Hakenkreuz. I really looked at that. It was no Hakenkreuz. They was Wehrmacht officers. But they was officers-- definitely big shots.

So when the group was about 150 already, they moved. He took us out of that. They basically saved us, kind of, in a way. So he said, you follow me. This group goes on. This is the other group. You come after me. We will go ahead. So the four horses went in front. And we went under.

We was tired and hungry. But we went because we thought, maybe this is a good thing-- we will work as Schneiderin, and that's very good.

So we walk and walk through the woods. It was all the same. They went this way. We went this way. So we walk and walk and walk. And where we walk-- I am from Riga. I know every corner. It is the prison.

It is Termin prison. The name was Termin-- Termin prison-- the name of the prison. How you call that? The prison door-- get up. It is from wood, such with eyes that went up. And the horses and the people were standing here, with all these 150, or 20-- I don't remember how many-- went in.

And this is Termin prison. I was never in prison. I didn't know. But you know how a prison looks. Yes. But the Germans and the four horses stayed outside. We never saw him. We never worked as Schneiderin. Till today I do not know. But they saved our lives. Because they took us away from the [NON-ENGLISH]. Otherwise, we stayed in the line. Because it-- only lucky we stayed in the back. Otherwise, we would be killed like other people.

So now we're in the prison. What are we going to do? 150 people, about, or 20-- I don't know. So usually in a prison, you get your own [NON-ENGLISH], with a little whatever. No, the Jews didn't get that. They took us on top on the prison, with the open sky.

And it was November. I remember that it was November. It was cold. It was very cold. And the weather was wonderful-- not snowing, not raining. And that time in Latvia is always terrible snow and terrible rain. Nothing.

So we sit all together, kvetched to each other, because it was cold. So just the little group-- what was that, we were, how you call that?

On the roof.

On a roof. On the prison roof, on top. There was no cover. And so the lune, the stars. But here it was an open place. How you call that? I don't know how you call. So we sit all together.

And there is another story. The story is louse. The first time I saw a louse, on me. And I have episodes to tell you. When you would heard my episode, you don't need me to do an interview, because my episodes tells everything about me.

I [? hackle-- ?]-- how you call that in English?

You knit?

How you say that?

Knit? Crochet?

Crocheted. I crocheted. I had a back crocheted dress, along like that. And I was tired, so we lied down. It was just a floor, you know? It's open. I see the sky. And I say, why I am here? I lie down. And I see something white is coming just over to me.

And I see that she comes to me. And she got big. I have never-- that was a big louse. I didn't know this was a louse. When the louse was already about here, I start screaming, a louse, a louse, help me, help me. So the girls get up, and everybody come to kill the louse. They found the louse. They killed the louse. But I saw a louse. So I can imagine that we all had a lot of louses.

And that was not everything. In the middle of the night-- so we are, no food, no nothing. A fat Latvian was sitting outside the door, to watch that we don't do something. So it was because now God loved us. Because I believe in God. I really start very religious after that. And that Latvian was standing-- watching that we are-- so we lie down on the floor to sleep.

And my mom was very happy, because two girls. She has two girls. Nobody had. There was a woman crying, [NON-ENGLISH]. And mama was very quiet and very happy because she has two children with her. So we hold together. And we lay on the floor-- in a naked floor. We sleep. We have to sleep.

And 12 o'clock at night is a scream-- a [? scream. ?] Help me, help me. A baby is born in prison, between us. It was a girl.

And so we have to give it a name. But she had milk. The mother had milk. And the kid was quiet. Because we are so afraid that she-- so we didn't have a [NON-ENGLISH], so the mother gave her a finger. And she went [SUCKING SOUND]. And she was doing the finger. So everybody was around her baby-- a baby born.

And there was blood. And so everybody could gave their shirt. Because we put the baby in the shirt and washed it with some kind of water. We had water.

It's that moment I will never forget. This was such a horrible time. And everybody know how the Germans will never let them live-- never. [INAUDIBLE] how [INAUDIBLE], what to do-- and which sits in a prison-- on the top of the prison. And here is the baby. A baby was born by a woman. We didn't know that she's pregnant or anything.

And that happened. And I see the baby. I gave her a name-- Termina. I gave her [? Termia, ?] because the name of the prison [? Termia. ?] So I say, let's give that name. And you know, it's [NON-ENGLISH]. Usually, there's kind of a little ceremony.

In the prison, we just try to help her. But she was a good woman, and she was holding on nice. She had milk, so the baby [? had ?] [? was ?] to eat. And we was looking [? in ?] [? that. ?]

So I was a [NON-ENGLISH], you know? I went to the door to the lavatory and I say, what we need is some food. Can you? He was a good Latvian. And I speak fluent Latvian. I ask him-- we need food. I didn't tell about the child.

He went home, and you know what he bring us? Not rice-- [? bees. ?] It was dried out-- bees?

Beans. Cereal?

You call it bees in English?

Oats. That's all right. He brought you some food?

Yeah. So I took it. He gave me a whole sack. The baby cannot eat that. But [INAUDIBLE], I gave it to everybody. What kind of food is that? It's no food.

But then that man bring us bread later. That Latvian man, he say, I know what you are going through. And we just sit in the prison. And we was two weeks in this prison.

Just up on the roof?

On the roof.

The whole time?

Yeah, the whole time. We didn't know what they have in their mind to do. Now in that time, what was going on in the ghetto-- in the ghetto was two killings. I was in the first killing. And these soldiers saved my life. And I sit in the prison.

Now in the ghetto-- they bring us back in the ghetto. Yeah. But what happened? Listen, the ghetto was already empty. Because these people-- 35,000 is what I think it was-- I don't know-- was killed. But there was a lot of clothes-- a lot of things. So the German officer take us-- these 150-- back in the ghetto. That will be the second action-- the second action.

The first action-- I was in the first action, but I didn't make the killing. But I saw all that. Now they told. Everybody told. How many? Yeah, they was bringing German Jews from Germany, also, and from Denmark. And they came in also. The ghetto was empty. And we lived all together. I remember, my mom was happy.

She didn't say a word. She has two children with her. She was happy. And then two other Jewish women lived in a room. We lived in a room.

And we was back in the ghetto. And we know there will be an other killing, just the same-- an other killing. And I didn't tell my mother. And I think, I am going to run away. I am going to run away. I am not [? going. ?]

I have saw what is going to happen to me. I don't want that. I am going to run away. Where I'm going to run? What am I going to do? But I'm going to run away.

I was a girl-- not very big. I later grow up. But I have to be dressed like a boy-- like a man. Why? Because only a group of men can go out to work. Only men they took. A woman did not work.

And I remember clothes. There was million of clothes. I put a terrible coat and a man's Russian hat, with fur. And I looked like a boy-- with pants, supposed to look. And I was going out where people to wait-- till a group-- to get in that group, to get in the [? group. ?] And I see. And one group is gone. The other group is gone.

And then the last group, I don't know, they helped me. And because they was all tall, I was-- they know what I'm doing. They [? want ?] say, take off the Mogen Dovid. Take off the Mogen Dovid.

And I have to take it off, because I am free now. I have to take it off [? at ?] [? night. ?] And [? I ?] still don't go, because I try to-- because it was, take off the [INAUDIBLE]. And don't go that trottoir. Go in the middle. Go in the middle of the street.

Yeah, but when [? I ?] [? was ?] free, I can go on the trottoir. You know what is a trottoir?

This is a French word. It's where people go. And their horses go in the middle. We can go only in the middle when you have a Mogen Dovid. But without the Mogen Dovid, you can go like a normal person.

So here I am-- 4 o'clock in the morning, out of the ghetto. Good luck, Lena. Good luck, Carolina.

Did you say goodbye to your mother?

No, she had no idea. She had no idea. She thought that I went-- they killed me. I didn't tell not my sister, not my brother. I did it absolutely on my own-- all my didn't want to. Because I don't know what's-- because anybody could shoot me. But it was very dark-- 4 o'clock in the morning, very dark.

And here I am out of the ghetto, with the group. The working group went away. The Latvian soldier who was taking the group didn't see me. And then when they went with him to where they were, I stand in the middle of a street. What? When? Where I'm going to go?

You're like 14 years old, or?

Something like that, yeah. 13. And I think, I am going to go to a friend. I remember a family. I didn't know, because I didn't remem-- I was so confused. I was all wet, sweat from scare.