

Because I didn't-- I was so confused. I was all wet, sweat from scared. I--

[PHONE RINGS]

This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Volunteer Collection interview with Carolina Taitz. And you were talking about how you were standing in the street all by yourself.

I am standing in the middle of the street. It's 4 o'clock in the morning, black dark, black dark. Where I'm going to go? I believe in God, because I believe that God guided me through everything. So I walk, and walk, and walk, and walk. And I'm afraid something.

I look like a mess, like a fright, what you put in for birds, because I had a big hat, and a big coat, and the pants, and the shoes. That's what I took from the ghetto. I looked like a mess.

And somebody could recognize me. And I was scared. So I wanted to hide somewhere. So I went in-- [GERMAN], how is this in English? In a hove.

In a--

There was wood. And there was--

A factory, or a--

No, no, an open--

A train--

--place. No. OK, so a big square, a big open--

Not a square. There was houses. There was houses. But there--

Like a station?

There are children playing, usually.

Oh, a playground?

It was like a playground, I would say. And there was wood, balconies, wood. So I hide behind the balconies. And I look through which door I should knock the door, which door. There is a lot of people living there.

I cannot, because when I will hear a German word, I run away, because maybe they'd [INAUDIBLE] me. And so maybe somebody who has a good heart, I will tell you right away, because when a person will look at me, you will see that something is wrong with. So I decided the first door.

So I knock on the first door, and a woman comes out and speaks Russian. [RUSSIAN]? Who is there? Who knock? And I knocked on door and, behind the wood, hide again, because I didn't know. But she speak Russian. And I said, oh, my god, that's good.

And I know my-- I speak Russian. Then I knew. I speak a lot of language as a child, about six. I'm very good at languages. The only language I cannot learn is Spanish. And I don't know why.

Anyway, the woman says, [RUSSIAN], who is there, who is there? But I sit behind the wall. A very good looking elderly lady, maybe 75 or so, and she will see nobody. And I sit behind the--

Then I come out and knock a second time. A man comes out, a tall man. Who is it? [RUSSIAN]? Who is it? And I run to him.

And I, [RUSSIAN]. That's, uncle, uncle, I am out of the ghetto. Please, can you help me? I am hungry. I want to eat something. Please, please hide me.

He took me inside. They give me milk. My favorite food is milk, warm milk and bread. My god, I will never forget how happy I was. I eat it.

And he wanted to know, what is the problem? And I told him that I ran away from the ghetto. He say he often goes to the ghetto. He knows where the ghetto is.

He say, I know they're all killing and all. And I told him that there is my mother, my sister, and my little brother live there. And meanwhile, my sister and brother was killed. They was already killed.

But my-- no. I have to tell you, I don't remember that. Anyway, he took me in. And that man saved my life.

What was his name?

He put me in a cellar.

Do you remember his name?

I lived in a-- his name is-- I have everything. Israel gave him a big title, because he saved me. I will show you. I have that outside. We will go. I will show. I want you to see all the pictures.

And he hid me two and a half years. I lived in a cellar. His mother gave me a mink coat. So I was sleeping in their mink coat. And there was the whole-- I mean, he was the real who saved my life.

But there was his father alive, and mother alive, and a sister. You see these plates? Take a look at these plates. She did these plates. She was a painter of porcelain. And she lived there, and everybody with open hands.

You can imagine, to hide a Jewish girl, you would be dead on the war. But he was not afraid. He was a religious person. He was a-- how?

He was not an [INAUDIBLE]. He was basically a Russian. He was not even Latvian. But he lived in Riga. He speak fluently Latvian, too. But he spoke Russian to me. And he say--

[PHONE RINGS]

--don't worry.

Each time the phone rings. Yeah. This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum--

The next time, I will not take the telephone. Simple.

This is a continuation of the United States--

That will be OK?

Yes.

I will not take it then.

This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Volunteer Collection interview with Carolina Taitz. OK, so you were talking about how--

So I lived in this house. I lived in that cellar. But many times, I went out, because that was very cold. So I went out. I lived with the family, eat with them together.

And the portion the Germans gave them was very small. And I was eating. I was hungry. So they was worried that I have everything. They were so good to me.

Then their father died. Then the mother died. And then something happened. And I was there. I have seen all that, the family.

So Valodya, that priest, he was an evangelist. What I remember that. He was an evangelist, a Christian.

What was his name?

His name was Vladimir, Valodya.

And his last name?

What?

His last name?

Michko. I will show you. I have the picture there. So I lived with these people. I lived mostly in the cellar. I had plenty of time.

And I am a good crocheter. He bring me old stuff from somewhere. I opened up that pullover and made handkerchiefs, shawls, and something. And he went at the market and sold it. So we have \$3.00, \$4.00.

I made money for him. At least I did something. I was working, because I'm a very good crocheter. I crochet wonderful. With pictures, that I can do.

So he took all these things, the merchandise. He sold it at the flea market. And they have a little money.

And the father died. And the mother died. I was there. Broke my heart. I have pictures. I will show you.

And how did you wash yourself?

Huh?

How did you keep clean? How did you wash yourself?

Normal. They did have a bathroom. They had a two-bedroom apartment. I washed myself there. I was clean. They was very clean also.

And then she had a problem, the sister. She belongs to a organization. But the Germans knew about that. And they didn't come to look.

I am sitting [INAUDIBLE]. He has a friend, a wood maker. He cut out in the parquet a little so I could go in. And from inside, I could close that.

And inside was-- I don't know how to say that in English. So I could close that hole in which I was sitting. When I want

to get out, I opened that. And I was going out, because I could sometime.

So one beautiful day, aufmachen! Germans, aufmachen! They rounded the whole house. And momentarily, I was out.

Momentarily, I went down in that grave, in that cellar. This was a real cellar. And I closed that. And he put a table on that with a tablecloth, a long tablecloth. And here they come.

The only thing was, if they would come with a dog, I would be dead, because the dog would feel me. They have two dogs by themselves. And the dogs was barking, and the Germans. And they couldn't stand.

They was looking all over. They was looking not me, Valodya's sister, the woman who the painter. Because she belongs to some kind of organization, the Germans have to get her. But somebody was calling her, and she went. She was not even home.

But if they would come with a dog, the dog would find me. But they didn't have. But we did have two dogs, Biggie and Chibby. They is also-- they are in my history, Biggie and Chibby. They barked at that German. The Germans couldn't stand it anymore, so they left. They left.

Bad-- they took Valodya with him. 12 soldiers took him. I say, what I am going to do with Valodya? I am alone. The mother is dead. The father is dead. And the older, the sister, is not there. I am alone in the big apartment.

And I sit in-- I was out. When the Germans left, I came out, because I need air. I wanted to get through the window out, out. Where? Where am I going? Back to the ghetto, back to the only thing.

But lucky me, Valodya came back. By god, my happiness, I jump on him and kiss him. He was an elderly man. He was about 60. He was like a father to me. He didn't know what to do.

He pampered me always. And he was good to me. And I want you to come and to see the pictures. I want to show you.

So I was there. The war was finished. And I did have to get out. But I still lived with him. I didn't have a place to go.

You stayed there till the end of the war?

Till the end the war.

And tell me about that. How did you know it was the end?

I don't want to talk anymore. I want to show you the pictures.

Well, we'll do that. I just want to finish up with you. Just tell me--

This is the end of me. I don't want to say nothing anymore.

Well, you stayed in Latvia for how long?

I lived in Latvia all the time.

After the war?

After the war, all the time. I came to America in March '66.

And what did you do between after the war--

I'm a actress. I finished a school, meanwhile, a theater school.

In Latvia?

In Latvia, yes. I finished in Latvia. When I came out of the ghetto, I did have to go to school to finish. I have only six classes. So I did have to have a [INAUDIBLE].

And I was lucky. In Latvia, it was a theater school. I have there a very good education, especially from theater working. When I came to America, I worked 19 years for the New York City Opera.

Wonderful.

Everything.

OK, so you stayed there. Did you get--

Yeah.

Did you have a family?

Even somebody come from Israel and give him a [NON-ENGLISH], a medal gave him. And he has-- I cannot talk. You have to see that. I want you to come. You have to stop, and I want just to show you. The pictures is very important.

Yeah. This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Volunteer Collection interview with Carolina Taitz. And we were talking about your experience after the war was over. How did you know the war was over?

What did you say?

How did you know that the war was over? Did Vladimir know?

Everybody knows that. I was not--

Vladimir told you?

Everybody was talking of, oh, my god, [INAUDIBLE]. It was scream, and yell, and happiness, and dancing.

And did you feel happy? What did you feel like?

Sure, I was happy. My god. I was out. I got out. But I lived with Valodya's house. I lived with-- I didn't have anywhere to go. Then somebody came from Israel.

Did you stay with Vladimir? Or did you--

I stayed with Valodya all the time. They find us an apartment. They're from Israel. I don't know.

Also connected to the Holocaust, they find us apartment and put three girls there. And we lived together. And we went to school. I'm telling you. Why? Because I did have to finish my education.

Did you go back to the house you grew up in? Did you go back?

They break up the house that I was in before. And I showed who was living there-- when you will take that, there was already covered up. I say, I lived in that cellar. I show that woman who lives there. Oh, yeah.

OK. So now you're living with three other girls. And you're going to school.

We all went to school. [INAUDIBLE] made a speciality. I wanted to go to-- I always wanted to be an actress, always, all my life, because when I was young, I looked exactly like Elizabeth Taylor. Just look at the picture.

Right, beautiful.

I have so many pictures I look. I worked with her. I came back. When I get the job, she came to the theater. She say, Carolina, you look like me. She's a nice woman. But she's very sick right now.

So you went to school.

So then I saw my-- I will tell you, in that time, I met my husband. How do I met my husband? My husband's name is Charles Taitz, because Taitz is his name, not mine, Charles Taitz.

He was very handsome and very intelligent. He had two faculties. And he was a painter. He was a wonderful painter. Now, it's OK?

Yeah. So how did you meet him?

He came. I know him a long time. During the Russian, he run away with the Russians. And he lived in Alma-Ata in Russia.

Now, when the war was over, he found out that I am alive. He ran back the Latvia. And then we get married.

What year did you get married?

I don't remember.

OK.

Right after the war. That was when.

So you were young. You were very young.

I was 18. I was--

18.

--a beautiful girl. Then I start blooming. That was the time. As a teenager, I was ugly. I was always happy that they didn't rape me, because always they wanted the young girls. They raped everybody. At night, they come-- at night, looking for [NON-ENGLISH].

Prostitutes?

To smoke. They was looking for smoke. They was looking. They confiscated everything at night. And they took the girls. They rape her, or they shoot her, or they let her go.

When you were in the ghetto, and when you were in hiding, your body matured. Did you ever start to menstruate when you were--

Yes, I did have that.

You did have that.

Menstruation?

Yeah.

Yes, I do. I have the bladder problems still today.

And how did you take care of that when you were in the--

Valodya bring me something.

Stuff. Yeah.

He was buying for me something, very primitive, very primitive. But that's what happened. That was normal. Now--

So you get married.

Then I get married. But I get married in my-- then the Russians came back. If you know history, the Russians came back. So they called Charles, my beloved husband, in the army. So we just registered just very much being in Alma-Ata.

He was working a movie director, doing movie, with [? Einstein, ?] if you know that name. He was assistant to [? Einstein. ?] And he is basically a movie person. He was doing movies, [NON-ENGLISH] movies.

Was he much older than you?

No, almost-- maybe five years. No, he wasn't older than that. He was older.

But he was still young. He was--

But we was in love. It was love. So when he came back to Latvia, for sure we were going to get married. So she come to-- I get apartment with the three girls. The girls moved out. He come in. And--

Did you have a religious marriage, or a civil marriage?

Yes, we had a religious marriage.

You did.

And then we have a Christian marriage to go to the--

Oh, a civil marriage you mean.

You have to register.

Yeah, a civil marriage.

How you call it?

Civil. Civil.

Civil, yeah. We have both of them. But there was only a couple of people. We couldn't make a big party. That was the Russian time.

OK, they call him back in the army. And I was just going to school. So I asked, where are your parents? He told me-- he say, my mom disappeared, I have no idea where she is.

So we lived with him very-- we loved each other. It was a love marriage. And he being there, they sent him to the army, because he was in Russia, in Alma-Ata. And somebody shoot him through his lungs. And he had tuberculosis, open tuberculosis.

So he came back. We get married. And he was sick, very sick. And I was the only one who-- my daughter was born later. So he was sick, mostly.

But in the Russian time, they took a tremendously care of their soldiers, not like they're here. They gave him [NON-ENGLISH]. They gave him a room, apartment. We get a big, special-- we moved out of that apartment where I was with the girls. We have, in New York, in Riga, a three-room apartment, beautiful with everything else.

I was very happy. And he couldn't work, because he was coughing and coughing, and all the time sick. So they gave us a beautiful apartment. And we could go to any sanatorium, because he was a war-- and they gave us money. The Russians takes very good care of the soldiers.

But where is your money, mom? Where is your parents? He say, I have no idea. He had a brother, and he had a sister. They was both killed in the ghetto, because I saw her. I saw her in line. And when you are in line, you not come out the line.

One beautiful day, we get a letter from Red Cross. Are you Charles Taitz? Yes, I am Charles Taitz. Do you had a mother? Yes, but I don't know where she is. It is a letter from your mother. From my mother?

To make the story short, that was the letter that Mrs. Amalia Taitz is looking for her children. Where are her children? And the only child is left is Charles, the only one.

God, it was such a holiday. She start sending us packages. And we had money. And we were very comfortable.

Where was she living?

We lived in Latvia.

No, where was she? Where was the mother living?

In America.

Oh, she went to America?

We didn't know that. Later, we find out that she had a lover. The lover was the husband of her best friend, just like today. So she took that husband away and come with him to America.

He was a rich man, and she lived with him. And now she start crying, where are my children? In Latvia, she know the ghetto. She knows everything. She knew that I am alive.

But her two other children-- my husband's brother was a lawyer. And she was just finished French, let's say, very educated, everybody. They was dead. So Charles was the only child. She start bombing. You have to come to America. You have to come to America.

You see, I lived very well. I didn't want even to move, because I had a good job. I worked in a Kino studio. I made movies. This is one of my best movies.

Were you an-- you were acting?

What?

What were you doing, acting?

I was doing-- you know what very much pays very well? Commercials.

Oh.

Drink the wine, the wine is good for you. I will show some pictures.

But you were acting.

I was acting. I was a acting actress. And I was doing in studios mostly. And they paid very good.

But you're under communist rule.

What?

You were under communist rule?

Yes. Yes.

Was that hard?

It was, but I was working. Only we got-- I don't know how to say that in English. He was a soldier, the second group. And we lived very well, because he was a-- he gets so much.

We get the apartment. We get money. Every summer, we was going this Kurort this sanatorium, this sanatorium, all the doctor he can have, everybody, because the Russians was there.

I was not hungry at all. I lived very well. For sure, we hated the Russians. We didn't want them. But they was there.

Was that--

In that meantime, I get a letter from Red Cross.

Now, was there anti--

So my husband said, we go to America. I say, I am not going, you can go. And I had already my daughter.

Oh, when was your daughter born?

In '47, I think.

Oh.

Yeah. And he wants to go. He hated the Russians like pests, because they're communists. What they was doing with other people, we was very privileged, because he was a soldier.

Was there any antisemitism in--

Always. Always.

--under the communists?

Always under the-- a lot. Under communists was always antisemitism always.

What--

The first time and the second time, still today.

And what did people say to you? Did you have any--

I didn't suffer--

Experiences?

--from that.

You did not.

No, I did not suffer from it. I had my own life. I had my husband. I had my kid. I had my work.

So how did you know there was anti-Semitism?

How do I know? I see what happened with other people that was arrested, that was sent to Gulag, that was to Siberia. They did a good thing. We knew that. So it was very difficult.

OK. So he says he wants to come to the United States.

He wanted, and I don't. I had a good job. I had apartment. I had privilege. I don't know. And his mother hated me, because I was a poor girl, and he married a poor girl. And he had here a millionaire old lady. And she wanted him to come here and marry that lady, to divorce me.

And my husband was in love with me like crazy. I don't know why I knew that. He didn't want me to work. He was giving me diamonds, and the rings, and presents. And he was crazy about me, too much.

He loved me too much. But it was nice. And that's why I say, what I am going to go? She don't want me. I was a Yiddish kind. I was pretty. I was pretty.

What do you want? What do you want? She's a poor girl. Why did you marry the poor girl? You have such education. You are everything.

No, she was a bitch. She was a terrible woman. You cannot imagine. When I came, I cried every day. She gave me very, very bad time.

So what year did you get the letter from her? Do you remember?

So then we decided. The Russians didn't let us go. They didn't let us go.

Well, when did you get the letter from her, from the Red Cross? Do you remember?

No, awhile before we left. We left--

In the 1960s.

We left in '66 in March.

And was just right before that that you--

It was before, sure, when we get the letter. Suddenly, we get a letter from Red Cross.

Right, but that--

And we found that she is there. And she wanted all the time that we come to America. I didn't want to go. And meanwhile, my husband speak me. You have to be good, and just I will be on your side.

I say, your mom don't want me, and she is that and that. Let's go. Let's go. And then we sent in our papers to go.

They didn't let us go. They didn't let us go. About 10 years, I think it was 10 or 80 years, they didn't let us go till we get the permission.

And we had a visa from Eleanor Roosevelt. She was a very famous mother. She was connection, she had, Elizabeth-- yeah, this president's wife.

Eleanor Roosevelt.

Eleanor Roosevelt. She have connection. So she get a visa, a special visa. And we sent it to Khrushchev.

That was Khrushchev. I think so. Putin was not, the other one. I don't remember that Russian. I can't stand him.

And refused first time, the second time. 10 times, they refuse, refuse They wanted money. They wanted money, money.

And I will never forget that, how my husband went to Moscow with [INAUDIBLE] person and put on the table something. I don't know, about 100,000 maybe in the old Russian money. Then, after that-- it was, I think, 10 years after-- they let us go.

At night, we had a telephone call. You can go. It's OK. They say, OK. So we get the visa, the OK.

And we packed our stuff and everything. Oh, it is too much to tell about that, the way we packed. How do you know what to take with you?

How old was your daughter then?

A [RUSSIAN]. How do you say? I don't know how to say in English. A teenager.

She was a teenager.

Yeah. So she didn't want to go either, because she has friends and she goes to school. She has to finish school. And my husband said, you will go to American school. You will be different. She different. She changed so much that I couldn't recognize her.

So March '66, we took the ship, and we went to America. So we come to America. And she expected us.

And she was terrible to me. She just drank my blood. She was horrible. Now we get apartment. We settle down.

What city did you go to?

New York.

New York.

We was going through Paris, through Paris. The visa was through-- we was in Paris the whole week. And there was a

Israeli general who took care of us. It was so wonderful.

Anyway, we came to America. And my husband is sick with tuberculosis, open tuberculosis. And here, he didn't have any privilege.

He is a soldier? Forget it. That is Russia. We don't have nothing. He was a private person. We had no money. We had nothing.

We had \$5.00. The Russian let me have \$5.00. They confiscated everything what I had, everything. That's what they did. But we was in America, and we thought mother will help.

She did not help us, nothing. I helped, because I worked a lot. I get a job with the New York City Opera and worked 19 years there.

What did you do there?

Everything. I was a stage manager. I was a makeup artist, because my schooling was exactly-- my diploma was exactly to work in theater. When I showed them my diploma, they took me right away. And besides, I was pretty. The face also [? means the work ?]

Did you speak English?

Bad, half and half, because I studied a little bit. But I don't speak good now. I didn't speak then. But people understand.

So you worked in the New York City Opera.

I was working. I loved my job. I did makeup. I did wigs, hair, because the schooling. I had all the schooling. And the languages, I speak a lot of languages. And there are people coming from Germany.

I was in charge of every production, every production, to take care clothes, costumes, everything. I loved my job. I worked like a dog. It was too much. Today, I could never do that. I loved my job.

So you worked there for 20 years is it?

19.

19 years?

19 years. Then I get the disease, vertigo.

Oh, yes.

Vertigo is a disease that everything-- still today.

Yeah.

And I was doing the show with Beverly Sills. I was doing the show. I will tell you which one. She was crazy. What is the show? Ah, god.

Lucia?

Lucia di Lammermoor. Exactly. You know she gets crazy, right? And I was doing the work. And my director stays right there.

And I do a beautiful job, the wig already done [INAUDIBLE]. And I fall over her. This is the first time when I get it. My director gave me \$10 and said, go to the hospital right away.

And I went to the hospital. The doctor said, you know, you have a terrible disease. And since then, I did have to left my job after 19 years of work.

And so then what did you do?

I am really touched. Nothing, here I am. I lived in New York. My husband died in the meanwhile.

When did he die?

Tuberculosis.

No, when?

In the '70s.

In the 1970s.

No, I think it is-- or before that. He was very, very sick. I couldn't work at all. I was the breadwinner in the house. And my girl was in school. She finished the--

She went to high school?

High school. And she was working here. I hate this place. But she took this place, because she was working, Voice of America. That was close, so she put it here. And this is a residential section, [INAUDIBLE].

So you stayed in New York afterwards.

I stayed in New York.

In New York.

And I met the other man.

And you got married again?

And I met the other man. He was not Jewish. He was a wonderful person. He wanted to become Jewish. He told me, I want to become. What should I do?

And I went to my rabbi. And I said, what should I do? My other husband is not Jewish. My first one was. And he wants to become a Jew. What do I have to do?

Because when he was a baby, he was already in the hospital. They cut him, the [INAUDIBLE], what has to be cut. That was done. Now he have to learn.

The rabbi say, you know what? Leave him alone. Let him be what he is. As long as he good to you, that's all what counts. He was wonderful to me.

Well, good.

And he also died not long ago, 10 years ago, a long time. He had a daughter from his first marriage. He went to visit his daughter, just to visit her. And there, he died. He had a heart attack. Wonderful. Let me show you the pictures.

So you came down here to--

Then I was there. I was very sick. I had two implants in my both hips, two implants in my shoulder. And I lived on the fourth floor where there was no elevator. So for me, it was difficult to get to--

Where did you live in New York?

In Manhattan.

In Manhattan?

Yeah, I had a wonderful apartment on the fourth floor without elevator. So I did have to get up. And after four implants, I couldn't do it. So my daughter said, you know what, come to our house.

But I don't live in her house. She put me up here in that place, because who needs an and a sick mother? Tell me. And here we are.

Can you tell me-- you said, before, that you became more religious because of the war.

I became religious when I was in Valodya's house. Then I become, because--

Because?

--everything what happened to me was God's hand. He guided me till today. I am here just for a reason. I believe that. Everything goes like that. And he is with me all the time. And I don't die.

And I supposed to be dead, long time ago dead, but I don't. And I am really sick. And my brain is not pretty good, I must say. It's not very good, but it is.

How did you find out about your mother? How did you find out?

The letter from the Red Cross.

No, no, no, your mother. Your mother. How did you find out that--

My mother was in Auschwitz. She was [NON-ENGLISH] in Auschwitz.

How did you find that out? How did you know? How did you know that?

Somebody tells us she's dead.

Somebody told you.

Somebody told. I cannot remember that.

OK.

But I know that she was in Auschwitz. Then a friend of us, a Russian soldier, went to Auschwitz, and took her out, and bring her back to Latvia. How he did it, I have no idea. That person is dead.

So she got that to Latvia?

Yes, she came back after Auschwitz and tell all the stories. Mom, I say, how did you? Because you know--

So you saw your mother after the war.

Yeah, I did see her.

Oh.

But she was half alive. She told me-- I say, Mom, how did you survive? There was gas. They was gassing these women. And she told me the story.

She was already-- there whole group of women did undress naked. And they went in. And now they will gas them. And the gas didn't work.

The gas didn't work. So the Germans said, put up your clothes. They said, go back to the barracks. And that's the way that she survived.

And what about your--

I have a picture of her.

Right. What about your sister?

No, she wasn't there, because when I ran away, I don't know what happened. They wouldn't-- they was working by the Germans. I have no-- they said my mom, too.

Ah, my sister, she was in Stutthof. They took my sister in Stutthof. Also, that's what people told me. And she was in Majdanek-- no, in Auschwitz, my mom. But that good person took her out and bring her home.

But she lived a short time. She was all broken morally and physically. What do you want? I mean, that was a terrible time.

Do you think about your experiences a lot now?

What?

Do you think about your experience all the time?

I see my mother in my dreams very often. I think my father-- I was my father's girl. I loved my father more. But I do not see him so much.

I see my little brother. And I see my mother a lot, and Germans. And I run from them in my dream. And then I wake up all sweaty.

Are you more comfortable around other survivors?

No.

Do you prefer--

Not at all.

--to be with.

What I like now is to be alone. And the people here don't like that. They want me to mingle. I don't like that.

I like to read. I like to be alone and read. That relaxes me. I didn't even watch television. I don't like television. I have television. I don't watch it.

I like to be alone. I like it. And I do, because I have so much. I have to clean it up. I have to clean it up. So I monkey around in my apartment.

But I am happy somebody comes in and talks to me. I have people. The Holocaust sent a volunteer to me. And we became tremendously close friends. Maybe you know her. The name is Eva [? Korentier, ?] or something like that-- beautiful, gorgeous woman.

I love her to death. She is so good to me, like she would be my daughter. Eva [? Korentier. ?] Here is her address. I cannot even remember her name.

Well, that's OK.

Can you read that?

Yeah. Yeah, that's the right name, Eva [? Korentier. ?] Yeah.

I won't repeat her name, because I want them to be in the writing.

Yeah. That's very nice.

I'm blind and cannot read.

Do you think the Holocaust could happen again?

[? Korentier, ?] Eva [? Korentier. ?]

Right. Do you think the Holocaust could happen again?

When my priest died, I was hysterical.

Your priest.

I was already here. And I wanted to-- America didn't give me a reason.

When you say your priest--

He died.

--which priest was this?

This is the priest Vladimir Michko who saved my life.

Oh, when Vladimir-- oh, I see. And you wanted to go over to his--

I wanted to. There was no way, because I did have to wait up to five years to get a visa and everything.

Right. You're a citizen of the United States?

I am. Yeah, sure.

How did you feel becoming a citizen?

Nothing. America is not any more the America when I came. In '66, that was America.

What did America--

It was rich. And everything was-- the President was Reagan, my love of my life. Everything was so easy. Right now, is this America? This is Russia. Right now, I live the way I lived in Russia. Everything is not-- you have no service. You have nothing.

But when you came to the United States in 1966--

I came not willingly.

No, I know. But it meant-- the United States meant freedom to you?

Freedom, freedom, absolutely freedom. That's what I like about America, the freedom. It's too much, too much freedom.

But I didn't want to come. I lived there wonderful. I had a good job. I was doing movies. This is not the only one. I did seven movies.

You acted in the movies.

Acting. Yeah, acting I was, because my diploma is acting. I am an actress. But I am very talented. I can do with my hands everything. And they want it in the theater. I was very useful.

Yes. Do you think that the Holocaust could happen again?

It could. I don't know, because the Germans were-- look, also, I was not in Germany. But my friend went to Germany. And when she came back, she told me she would never live there, because the Germans don't pay me any money.

I was going to ask you about that. They don't pay you?

No, not a dime. Why? Because I was in hiding. I get from them a letter-- that, because you was in hiding-- why was you in hiding, he say? Because you was in hiding more than you was in ghetto, that was a-- I get a letter.

I say, why did I was in hiding? What do you think, I was dancing there? Don't you know why I hide? Must be a reason that I run away.

Oh, you run away from the ghetto. You didn't have to be in ghetto, so as long as we tell you. Can you believe that [NON-ENGLISH]?

How would you describe yourself? Would you say you're Latvian, your Jewish?

No, I am Latvian, 100%, a Latvian Jew. I am a Latvian Jew.

But you feel very Latvian.

I feel very, but I am really Jewish. I love everything Jewish. If I would have to choose which nationality I want, I want to be Jewish.

Have you ever been to Israel.

Yes. I was here the last holidays. Eva, she took me there. And I like everything. I like the Jewish-- the young David. I

like that. They have such beautiful things.

And I like the mamloshen. The mamloshen is fantastic, because I like Sholem Aleichem. I read all his books. And when I talk, I use a lot of Jewish words in my conversation.

Now what can I tell you? Now is the end of me. I don't know when I'm going to die, but I am as much to death.

Do you have any grandchild?

I am not pessimistic. I know I'm realistic, because 80 years is a lot. This is the end. And I keep living and living. But you see, God is my friend. He don't want me.

Do you have any grandchildren?

They are bad. They don't have to do with me nothing. They don't come see me.

But you do have grandchildren.

I have. So what? I don't know who they are. I mean, I know when they was babies, they was on my lap. I know them very well. And I dearly love them. But they don't come visit me.

How many do you have?

Two, two boys.

Two boys. Yeah.

Maybe a girl would be different. I don't know. I love them anyway. They have their own life. Young people live their own life. What, are they going to call grandma? Big deal, But that's OK. I love them. I love them in my heart.

Do you have any message for them about life?

Aviva goes to them I am sure, my daughter goes to them. She sees them. So I say, give my love to David. Give my love to [INAUDIBLE]. They have their own life. Who needs their old grandmother?

Do you still keep in touch with people in Latvia?

Yes. They write me. They send me.

These are friends?

Yeah, I will give you cookies.

That's OK.

They send me cookies.

Are they Jews?

They are very devoted, very devoted.

Are they Latvian Jews, or Christians? Are they Latvian Jews?

I don't know if they are Jews. But try that. You'll love it. OK.

Thank you. So you do still keep in touch?

All the time.

Yeah.

And I'm very much in touch with my theater here.

In New York?

In New York. They write me letters. And they call me. They almost-- shoot, shoot, shoot. They closed the whole thing.

Then come out a millionaire, Mr. Koch, gave them \$100 million. And they live again. This show's going on. That what happened when I left.

Terrible. They wanted to close my theater, because when I worked there, I worked so long that it was mine, my personal. It could be Carolina Taitz's theater.

Yeah, wonderful.

But I don't have \$100 million.

Wonderful.

I cannot believe enough people have such amount of money. He didn't give his last dime. You know this story.

Well, is there anything you wanted to add before we close?

What?

Is there anything else you wanted to say?

About what?

Well, about your experience, what you went through.

I have a [INAUDIBLE] big experience. And I have episodes for my-- like the louse, then the Puppe. You have not-- I am telling you, I cannot talk so much. But I have episodes for my life.

And David, my friend, he is mad because I did have to write a book. I have to write a book, because that's what I have seen with my whole eyes. Everybody's dead, and I am still alive. I say, who is going to read my book?

I will not write. I don't want. He lives in New York. He comes and visit me. He's a writer, David [Zilbermon. ?] Try it.

Well, thank you very much for doing this interview.

It isn't even all what I told you.

Is there anything--

This is about what happened.

Is there anything else you want--

I think that my episodes, what I personally was going through, is more important. I cannot tell. I have a story about the doll.

What's that story?

The doll is a Puppe in German. A Puppe is a doll. You know a doll. This is a story. The louse is a story. But it's also a story. I have so many episodes, what happened to me.

What's the doll story?

I need time for that. I'm not going to tell it now.

Oh.

Then the potato, this is a story-- how I came, how he hit me, everything. And this would be in my book.

I see.

I didn't write.

OK.

Eat it.

OK. Well, thank you very much for doing this interview. This concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum--

This is the real story.

--Volunteer Collection interview with Carolina Taitz.