

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] Good morning.

Can you please tell me your name?

My name is Richard Vanger, and I was born in Poland, Warsaw in 1932. And my name in Polish was Wanger, but as the English could not pronounce it, we'll change it to V.

Richard, as you know, we visited Jelizaveta and you can say her family name in the right Polish pronunciation.

Dolenga-Vzhzosek.

We visited her a few weeks ago, and we recorded her memories on the war time, which you are a dominant part of, as you know. And I gave you this recording. Did you have a chance to watch it.

Yes. I watched it.

And what was your reaction watching it?

Well of course, she only can retell the story from her side, which is not quite the same thing. And pretty well exact. But as she is even older than I am, certain things are not in the correct order. But it makes no difference really.

And I met them actually in 1939, '40. Her mother was a teacher at the school locally. And funnily enough, I was about eight years old at the time. And I fell in love with her. But she had a boyfriend. And she didn't even want to look at me. And fate has it so that by the time I was nine, 9, 10, I lived with her in her house.

So there's good and there's bad always together. When the Germans came--

But I'd like to get there the right chronological order. I only wanted to know your reaction.

My reaction.

Watching her the story as told by her?

The story told by her is accurate from her point of view. She missed a lot of things which happened as well. But this we forget. She has had a very--

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

You don't want to see my hairy chest?

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

OK. We are running?

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

That I knew her from about '39, late '39. And her mother was the teacher at the school. And I was always running after her, wanting to take her books home for her, and do all sorts of things for her. But she didn't want anything to do with me. She had a boyfriend.

Now, the funny part in '91, when I first visited her after the Russians, I asked her what happened to the boyfriend, Teddy? And she started laughing. So I said, why? What's so funny? She said, well he's turned out to be a feygele. You know what a feygele is? He's turned out to be a feygele. She said, he was never my boyfriend. So I said, I should have

waited.

But anyway, her story is-- it was much more frightening than she said, much more frightening. And she went through very hard times. Because had they found me there, they could have shot that whole family. In fact, they found the rabbi's daughter.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

OK. She--

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

I am very much in touch with her. Every week I phone her up. She has been here about four or five times, I'm not sure, in Israel for a month holiday each time. The last time she came with her son and with her daughter, because she's getting on. She's over 80 now. So I didn't want her to travel on their own.

And I usually help her as much as I can. And--

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Yeah, I was there, three times, three or four times. The last time that I went there, I went with my son and two grandsons. And we put up a monument just outside Stolowicz for the Jews of the ghetto Stolowicz, where my parents are buried there as well. And she looks after that for me. They go around there. And the side thing, there is a village called [NON-ENGLISH] or something like that.

And the teacher took the children for a visit to the forest. And they found our monument. So the teacher inquired what it was, and who made it, and what it's all about. And they were so impressed, now these are Christian children, not Jewish. There's no Jewish there. They took it upon themselves to go once a month and look after this monument, and clean it, change the flowers.

And of course, every time Elizabeth goes back, I send lots of chocolates and sweets and things like that for the children.

Richard, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[NON-ENGLISH] from the war? Well when the war started, I was in Warsaw. And there we lived on Twarda Street, which is right across the road from the synagogue. And about two or three days before the Germans came in, my father and two and three of the men from the family, they run away and they managed to get to the Russian side, which was over the River Bug.

Now, the Germans came in. And there were only women and children in our house left. And then they started straight away with taking people to labor for day's work parties. Because Warsaw was in ruins, the whole of Warsaw was gone. And they used to come and take all the able-bodied people to go and clear up. And this went on. There was beatings. Germans used to come up and take anything they wanted in the house. But apart from the Germans, the Poles also did their best.

And then about after a week of this, one evening, we suddenly had this big Polish peasant appear in our doorway. And this Polish peasant was my father. I didn't recognize him, because he was dressed like a peasant. And he came to take us out on the Russian side.

What did you mean when you said the Poles also did their best--

To make our life uncomfortable.

Did you witness anything that you can recall?

Beatings, at that stage, there was only beatings. And they used to catch Jews. I mean in Warsaw, before the war, the probably was between 250,000 and 500,000 Jews, if not more. So Warsaw was a very, very Jewish community there. And you had all the Hasidim with the beards and everything. And they used to catch them. And they used to cut their beards off in the street. This I saw.

You saw this?

Yes.

The Poles did it?

Poles and Germans, but the Poles, they enjoyed it. That was unfortunately Poland was very anti-Semitic country. I was never allowed to go to school on my own. I had to be taken by somebody and fetched back, because if I went out on my own I'd be caught by the Polish hooligans and beaten up, or have my books taken away, or something like that.

So it was well known. And of course, when the Germans came, they had a free hand. They could do what they wanted with the Jews.

What you just told us about going to the school and back, escorted by somebody, this was before the Germans?

Before the Germans, before the war. And this was, if I went for a walk, we had a big public garden not far from us. I could never go alone. I always had to have a grown-up with me because the hooligans were there just waiting to catch a Jewish child. And they beat them up. They take everything they could.

Now I'm saying this as-- I'm saying this as a general, I mean there were obviously good Poles as well. But the general atmosphere was anti-Semitic.

And you as a child, a small child, could feel it?

Yeah, and I could see it. I mean not only could I see it, I felt it. I knew that it was no great joy to be Jewish, because Jews were everywhere mistreated.

Now when you said did I see anything? I saw them taking Jews and stripping them in the streets, stripping all the clothes, taking their tzitzits off, because they're all-- a very big percentage of them were religious.

They, is the Poles?

Yeah, but this is already when the Germans came. Before the Germans came, it was only beatings of children, and taking away of books and things like that. But that even happened after the war. I'm now jumping. But we'll come to that.

We'll get there.

The Polish youth, the young people, from a very, very, very early age, they are told that the Jews killed their God. And you tell a child of five or six that these are the people that killed your God, and it sticks there. You remember it. And this is on every possible occasion magnified. And this is why you have this bad feeling towards Jews.

But as I said before, having said that, I was saved by a Polish Catholic family who were the good ones, even amongst the bad ones.

So your father came from his trip.

He came back. There was about five or six of the men went over. They stayed in Bialystok, which was on the Russian

side. And he made a deal with a Polish farmer whose farm was between the Germans and the Russians. It was right on no man's land. It was in a place, the nearest train station was Malkinia. And the next stop, I didn't know it then, was Treblinka. Treblinka, you'll know what was the Treblinka.

So anyway, my father-- my father came back to take all those who wanted to go with him back to the Russian side. And believe it or not, not everybody wanted to go. Because nobody could believe what was coming. And the Russians weren't very popular in Poland either.

So my bubbe, so my mother's parents, his sister, and two brothers remained in Warsaw. The rest of us packed our things. My father had a horse and cart he put all that on. And he went on.

Your father I think had also a car?

Yes, but that the Germans took the second day they came to-- they took it away.

We went to Malkinia from Warsaw by train. Now, when we got to Malkinia, it was at night. And we managed to get into the public room. And there the Germans, a German could not tell who's Jewish and who's not. I mean they're not that clever. But the Poles always went with the German. And the Poles would say, that's a Jew. That's a Jew. And I saw people being thrown out from the first floor through the window.

Fortunately, in our group there were only about six women and two children, myself and my cousin. And they left us alone, whether they weren't sure or left us alone. In the morning, my father came with a horse and cart. And he took all the luggage away. And if nobody asked them, he said it's Jewish. It doesn't matter. Right? So he took this away.

I didn't understand what you said now. If anybody asks--

Anybody that says anything, he was taking the luggage, right? Suitcases and bags. And somebody that comes and said, what are you doing? He said, I'm taking this away from the Jews. And he went--

Oh, it was OK.

Yes. He went off. And we followed. And there were six checkpoints before we got to the no man's land. And of course, six interviews by the Germans. We were very fortunate that my mother's sister, she married a Belgian before the war. And she spoke fluent Flemish. So we came to the thing and she started speaking Flemish to them, which they couldn't understand a word. And after about listening for 10 minutes to Flemish, I don't know if you know it already, it's a horrible language.

These said, ah, raus! Get out. And we went. And this happened six times. We got eventually to the house. And there was no Germans, no Russians. It was nobody's land. And we went to sleep there that day. When we woke up, the Russians and the Germans had a meeting of some sort and they decided to move the frontier by 1 kilometer. So when we woke up, we were back in Germany.

So we had to go through all these six checkpoints again to get to the other side. We got eventually to Bialystok, which was already Russian. And there was a very large Jewish community in Bialystok. And they gave us food. And they were really fantastic. But we weren't allowed to stay in Bialystok because we were foreigners. We are from Poland, from Germany escaping. So the Russians said, you've got to go further. You cannot stay on the border because there may be German spies.

And we went from that Lvov, which is in Ukraine, a little bit further in. And my father started straight away doing business, which you're not allowed to in Russia.

What kind of business?

He used to take soap--

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Lvov.

[NON-ENGLISH]

OK, [NON-ENGLISH]. I'm sorry, Hebrew. My father started straight away by buying up manufactured goods like soap and cosmetics. He used to go to the villages, and he used should change that for food-- eggs, meat, flour, and bacon which we're not allowed to eat, of course. But when there is nothing to eat, you eat anything.

And I remember he used to bring half a pig, and he used to put it in the bed with me and cover us up, so that when the Russian came to look for anything, they never looked in the bed. And I was sleeping next to the pig. But anyway we got through that all right. And then the Russians came out with an announcement that we had to get Russian passports. And we had to get Russian citizenship. And we had to live in a smaller place we weren't allowed to live in a big town like Lvov and Bialystok.

So my father took the passports.

There was an alternative I think?

The alternative was didn't take it.

And then?

All the other members of our group didn't take it, except my father my mother and myself. And the next day, they were all sent to Siberia. And we were told we have to move to a smaller town, they said somewhere near Baranowicze. And my father was offered a job there. So that is when we went to Baranowicze. And then they said, no, you can't stay in Baranowicze, too big a town. You have to go to a village.

So we went to a village about five kilometers from Baranowicze called Stowicz. And there my father was the manager, accountant, general accountant, of a thing called torfzavod. Torfzavod is a place where they produce torf, which in English is peat. And this stuff, you dry it out, and you burn it during the winter like coal or wood, and it keeps the place warm.

And of course, he made a very good job of it. He got everybody working, and I went to school. And we had a nice place to live in, oh, a nice place. In Russian standards, it was a nice place. And everything was all right until 1941. And I think it was June '41 the Germans came. And we tried to run away. We took a horse and cart and tried to run away. But they caught up with us in Minsk.

Do you remember the way to Minsk?

Yeah. We went all the way to Minsk. There was my father, mother, and myself, and my father's brother who managed to survive the Russians sending them away. They didn't send him away. And he didn't take Russian citizenship. So he was with us.

And many things happened on the way. Of course, there was the usual bombing and people getting killed all around us. And then we were going through Minsk. And we came, and first of all, we came to this place. It was a shop, a butcher shop.

What is this place?

This place. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Yes, but what is this place?

A butcher shop.

A butcher, in Minsk?

Butcher.

In Minsk?

In Minsk, meat. But of course it was empty there was nothing there, because the people robbed, took everything out. Suddenly, my father stopped the horse and cart. He run out. He run into the shop. He took something out of the window. I couldn't see what it was. He put it in his, behind his coat. And he run backs. And he says, come on. Let's get out of here quickly. Let's get out of here.

We wondered what the heck he's got there. When we got outside the town, we found a little place. There was a few trees we stopped. He said, now we can have a picnic. He said, we haven't eaten for two days. And he brings out this big salami, beautiful. Oh, it made your mouth water. So we stopped and everybody got ready to eat. He took out the salami, took out a knife and he started cutting it. And of course it was made of plastic. It was publicity. It was just an advertising thing in the window. It wasn't meat at all.

So our picnic was spoiled. But we found a factory that made toffees, toffees, sweets. And we found the stuff that they make it from, the blocks of toffee, big blocks of toffee. So we took two of them. They must have weighed about 10 kilos each. And for the next two weeks we had water and toffee. Of course, I was delighted because I was only nine years old then, less. I was 7 and 1/2 years old.

And the other thing we had to eat on the way we found a dog biscuit factory where they make dog biscuits. And we had two sacks of dog biscuits. So we had dog biscuits, toffee, and water. Beautiful.

And you were heading east?

East.

Trying to--

But there was no point to it anymore because the Germans passed us. So we turned around. The Germans took our horse away. So the wagon was not worth anything. So my father managed to swap the wagon for a hand trolley, two wheel. And we took what we could on that. We couldn't take everything. And we turned back to go home.

Now, you are describing a very long journey. How was it for you as a child?

OK. For me, it was-- I looked at it as a sort of exciting, as an outing. But on the way back, we came across this field one evening. And there was a big building which was a bank. And the Russians when they went out, which was a few days ago, took all the money that was in the bank. They cut it in half with a guillotine, and they threw it away in the field. So there was the field with the money is growing. And of course I believed it, that it was growing there. I was a little boy.

But my father, my father went and filled up about four sacks, big sacks, with this money which was all cut in half. And we took it back with us. Now when we got back to Stolowicz, it was already the Germans have been there already nearly two weeks. All the Jews were put into one corner of the town. That was the eventual ghetto.

And we had to share a two-room house with about four or five families. It was terrible crowded. And of course, there was no food. But what my father did, he organized. We got all this money that was cut in half. And we put two halves

together. It didn't match the numbers. That didn't matter, because the Russian, the Belarus police couldn't read anyway. So we put all these things together, and we had a 50 ruble note, with two different halves.

We put all that together, and we used this money right up to the end to pay the Germans fine. They used to put a fine on the ghetto. You have to produce 25,000 rubles. Where do you get 25,000? Well, we have it already made. So all we have to do is count it out and give it to them. And this lasted almost to the end.

So that's we were good things for the Germans, but they didn't realize what they were buying was false money.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

No, the ghetto wasn't there, not surrounded with wire. But we were not-- we were told not to go anywhere in town except this corner. The town was with a crossroads, four quarters. And one quarter was for the Jews. And it was not wired. There was no police at the gate yet. But we knew we had to stay in that place.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

She was a teacher. There were a few families in Stolowicz who in '39 and some in '38 came from Warsaw. Why did they come from Warsaw? Because their husbands, were in the Polish army and they were stationed there. And since the war was dot, dot, dot, coming, they followed their husbands.

And Mrs. Tereza's husband was an officer in the Polish army, that's Elizabeth's father. And he was killed by the Russians in Katyn

The famous murderer of Polish-- some 40,000 Polish--

Officers--

Officers were killed, officers and men. By the way, there were a lot of Jews amongst them as well. And now, there were about five or six families of these ex-Warsaw families who came out. And they were all teachers, because 90% of the local population were illiterate. The Belarus and Jewish, well Jewish were learned in Hebrew, OK? For them, when we came into a Jewish house in Stolowicz, the language was Yiddish. The Polish hardly they knew.

Some of the Poles who lived there spoke Yiddish, better than I did. Well, I didn't know any Yiddish at all then. Because in our house we spoke Polish. I learned my Yiddish in Stolowicz. So all these Polish families that came from Warsaw, usually the mother was a teacher. She finished up teaching in the school.

And since my father was also from Warsaw, they became friends with those families, because we weren't the same Jews as the locals, because the local Jews were all peasants. They were farmers. And they were very religious, all of them. There was no such thing as religious and non-religious Jews.

Your family was not that religious?

Our family was what you call modern. My grandfather and grandmother were religious. So the house was kosher, everything was right. But the children, their children, they were already modern Jews.

So the only Yiddish spoken in our house was between grandfather and grandmother, and the older children, right? So we became-- my father became very friendly with the Polish group. Now, for all the antisemitism, my father was accepted as an equal amongst all the Polish people there. Because we spoke perfect Polish, no Jewish accent. We didn't dress with these funny kapotes and shtreimels, so we were accepted.

The manager, the director of the torfzavod where my father got a job was very friendly with my father. And I know for a fact that my father gave him something. I don't know what it was, something of value. That if anything happens to him, to my father and mother, he should look after me.

What was his name?

[NON-ENGLISH], now this man, my father that was his biggest mistake. Because this man was looking for me right to the end of the war to have me killed. Right?

How do you know this?

I know because every time I looked back I could see his footsteps behind me. He's looking. He knew I was alive, because there was the police knew who survived. And this is how they eventually got the rabbi's daughter who was hiding with me.

Are you talking now about the period that you were already hiding, in hiding?

Yes.

So it's later.

But anyway, my father was friendly with this Polish group. He used to play cards with them. He could drink just like they could drink. And that's where I first met Elizabeth and her mother. And I don't know for what reason, but for some reason Elizabeth's mother. Mrs. Tereza, lost the job of being a teacher. And she was working with my father in the torfzavod. And this is where the families got to know each other.

But Mrs. Tereza herself was fantastic person. I mean, a person was a person to her. She helped everybody she could. I'm still in the Russian part, before the Germans came. And we used to go sometimes to her house for to have a tea, not parties, but just sit there and having tea and talking about times in Warsaw, before the Russians came and the Germans came.

And of course--

What do you mean before the Russians came and--

Because when the Germans came to Warsaw, the Russians came from the east.

OK.

They took the--

Before splitting of Poland.

Yeah.

This is what I'm talking about the period between '39 and '41. Stolowicz, Baranowicze was under Russian control.

And this is, so it's before the Germans came to Stolowicz.

The Germans came to Stolowicz in '41.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Polish group.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

A Polish group, a [NON-ENGLISH].

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[NON-ENGLISH] sorry. The Jewish community looked upon us as goyim, because we're not-- we're not wearing hats all the time. We're not going to shul three times a day. So we had more in common actually with the Polish than the Jewish. But all that changed when the Germans came.

But we had a reasonable life. If you're not interested in politics and you don't start meddling with the Russian politics, you had a good life. You weren't allowed to do selling and buying, but that didn't stop us.

Your father still--

In Russia, there was two rules, who doesn't work, doesn't eat. And who doesn't steal doesn't eat either. So you see, you look at it and everything belongs to the people. And we are the people.

So it was common knowledge that if you were working in a factory or anything, it is government property. There is no private. And if you're stealing, you're stealing from yourself, and providing you're not caught, you're all right. So you always saw people. You walk into their house and they look poor. But they can have plenty of money. You just can't show it. They can't buy a car. They can't buy a radio. They can't buy anything.

And I told you earlier my father's brother was with us as well. So my father was issuing all the paperwork for taking torf from the company. And his brother was the one that was checking which is going to the left and which is going to the right. So we had as good a business as the Russians.

So the left is to the street.

The left is--

And to the right is to the black market?

That's right. That's right. But I mean if you're caught, you go straight to Siberia. The whole thing was make sure you pay the right people the right amount, and you'll never get caught.

And this is what your father did?

Of course, everybody did. If you didn't do it, what did you have? You had nothing with nothing. Nothing to eat. You had no-- your manager, your director, my father's boss he expected it. Because he also lives from that.

And you, as a 7 and 1/2 years old child--

In '41, I was nearly nine.

You were aware of that?

Of course. I was very-- as my zaide, my grandfather used to say, do you understand a bit of Yiddish or not?

A little. He said, [YIDDISH]. We have here a [YIDDISH]. And this, by the way, is what saved me. But that you'll come to later. So anyway, we had a good life. A good life as you can have in Russia, a good life. And my father wasn't interested in politics. He drank with all the commissars, with all the things. Again, there was always a bottle of vodka on the table so whoever came, first thing they used to drink. And they all knew that they had with Wanger. They had a good time when they came in.

Wanger?

Wanger. And we met a lot of people who later, when the Germans came, joined the SS. And one of them I'll tell you about later that's the Ukrainian who became quite the big officer in the SS. And he used to be in our house more than in his own. He used to drink with my father, play cards with my father.

You see, we have-- I may be crossing over a bit. We had a Judenrat. You know what a Judenrat?

Yes, but that was--

That was when the Germans came.

So we can switch to this, because in your story of the running away from Stolowicz to Minsk, you just described that you came back.

Yeah, we came back. And these people, say they became officers, commandants of police stations. And my father suggested to the Judenrat-- he wasn't on the Judenrat. He was working at the same place. He was given permission to go out in the morning. But he had to come back at night.

Go where? To the same--

To the same-- torfzavod. And he got permission from my mother to be like the helper, [NON-ENGLISH].

Your mother was helping him.

She used to go with him in the morning. She would clean the office, make the coffee, make sure there's vodka and glasses on the table at my father's desk. So they used to go out. And I used to stay in the ghetto. Now--

You were going to-- there was school then at that period?

Sorry?

Was there school when you were in the ghetto?

Nothing. No school. No nothing. And in about six months, the Germans put wire around the ghetto. And they put one gate. There was only one gate. And there would be two policemen on there checking everybody in and out.

Who were those policemen?

Locals, not Germans. They were locals.

Belorussians?

Belorussians, Polish, Ukrainians, Latvians, they were the biggest bastards of the lot. And the wire of the ghetto used to go in the middle of a river. There was little river, not a big stream. And the way I would go in the middle. So one side of the wire was in a ghetto and the other side was outside. This gave us plenty of water. There was no running water or anything, no electricity.

But little boys like me could get in the water, go underneath the wire, and get out on the other side very easy. And on that side there were fields with cabbages and potatoes. And I used to drag a sack with me. I used to fill it up with cabbages and potatoes and bring it back to the ghetto. And we lived for over a year like that, on cabbages and potatoes.

But of course, in my case, in our case, we had a little bit more because my father used to go out every day. And since he had very good relations with the Poles, he used to come back sometimes even with a piece of meat, cheese, bread.

He kept during this period, the contacts with Tereza?

Well, she was working in his office. She was under the Germans there was no school of any sort. So she carried on working in the torfzavod office with my father. And this is where he started the plan to save me. Because they knew what was going on.

They were very well informed. He even had contacts with Warsaw through his Polish connections. And one of the things that my father organized was that the Jewish community should feed the local police station, because what he said is happening, all they do is they drink, drink, drink, drink. And then they come out and beat up Jews. So now, if each family takes one or two policemen, and every day makes lunch for him, number one, he brings the food for them to cook.

So we don't give it all to him. You give some for the kids, the Jewish kids. And number two, he gets a different attitude. Because he's sitting in your house, and he's drinking and he's eating. It doesn't make him so bitter against the Jews, right?

Now, the Germans spotted this after about six months.

But this was effective? This effective--

Very effective, very. I mean we had in our house the commandant of the station, his assistant.

Remember names? Do you remember names?

I know the assistant name was Szpak. And that's a funny thing because later on, I came across that family again. But his name was Szpak. Szpak is a bird, the name of a bird in Polish.

So the commandant and the assistant?

I can't remember the name of the commandant, but his assistant was definitely Szpak. And he had one finger shot off his hand. I remember that.

Now, there's also a guy called Fedorenko. I think I mentioned him.

Did you know him then at that period?

We knew him from the Russian time. My father was-- he used to eat and drink in our house more than in his own house. He was a great friend of my father's. But as soon as the Germans came, he joined the SS, not just SD. SD was the local police. SS was the German. And he joined the German one, which is a they're even worse than the others.

And what was he doing as a German police member, as an SS?

Well, I know that they sent him to Germany for training. And when he came back of, course, he didn't know or didn't want to know us. And anyway, the Germans spotted what the Jews were doing. And they used to change the police every three months. They will change half of the policemen from Stolorowicz with those from Koldychevo. So you got new people who don't know the Jews yet.

We didn't get to know. So we had to start working all over again. The ghetto was very well organized. We had cheder, children's classes to teach them religion, et cetera. We had musical evenings. Now this is in a ghetto, where people are dying, and we had musical evenings where people used to play the piano, or sing, or violin.

Were people dying in the ghetto because of the conditions?

No, we were lucky. As I said, we had cabbages and potatoes. And we were lucky. We had-- I can't say that I ever

starved. I was hungry. But I've never starved. And my father managed to bribe the two policemen at the gate, a bottle of vodka. That's all he needed. And they used to not see me in the morning. And I used to go out with my father and mother and come back every evening.

My father did that in advance, so that they'd get used to it, and they know that Richard goes out and Richard comes back. It's OK.

You mentioned something about the Judenrat. You said something.

Well, there was a Judenrat of the sort of elders of the people. They were the ones who would receive all the orders from the Germans. We put a fine, the Germans will say on the ghetto, 25,000, 10,000, whatever they happen to need for the time. And this is where my father's money from the sack came in handy. We used that.

Can you remember if they only demanded money or they also demanded other things?

Gold. But there wasn't any left by then. If there was, it was hidden somewhere. They would say, tomorrow, we want 25 men to come and build the road somewhere. Or we want 10 men to come and chop some wood for us.

And of course, every time the German army used to go through, and they would stop outside Stolowicz. They want people for the kitchen, wash up, clean up, make food. So I always remember my mother used to go when she could. And they used to bring the potato clips, you know you peel potatoes. You throw those peels away. But we didn't throw them away. We put them in the bag and they took them home. Because that was food.

Now that was a different type of German. A German soldier, we didn't have much trouble with them. It's only when the SS or SD, or the ones with the skull and crossbones on their--

This is the SS?

No, no, not the SS. This is the-- [NON-ENGLISH] it's the death brigade. It's the ones who do the shooting. They have a skull and crossbones on their head. And they weren't SS. They were more than SS. Because I once had a evening when I was left with my father alone at home. And this German officer broke down outside the house. And he came in, and they beat my father up.

And my father sent me out to run away. And of course, I came back, because I couldn't find anybody. Everybody else was already dispersed.

Who is everybody?

The Jewish people around us. There was nobody there. So my father nearly killed me. He said, why did you come back for? I said, well I didn't want to leave you alone. So I came back.

What did this German want him for?

He didn't want anything he was annoyed that his car broke down. So we had to get this car fixed as quickly as possible to get rid of him. But while he was in the house, he beat my father. I know that. And he took out all the Jewish prayer books and threw them out of the window. And in one room, there was my mother, there was another person, and was one teacher, a Russian teacher. His name was Sasha. But he was Jewish. Although he didn't admit it, he was Jewish. And he used to always come and visit us.

And I remember after a little while, this German officer opened the door. And I thought he was going to find my mother there. But my mother wasn't there. There was a little window. And she managed to crawl out through the window. But he got this fellow, Sasha. And he took him away with him. Because he said, you sound Jewish to me. And we never saw him again.

So that was my sort of-- I think that was the hardest thing that I've ever had in the ghetto, to see my father beaten up. But I learned that I had to be quiet. I had to not to say anything.

So by the time the ghetto was destroyed and I was left on my own, I was already trained in what to expect. And they prepared me very well I think for what was to come.

We'll get there. But still during the ghetto period, did you have to wear any signs on your clothes, the stars on your clothes?

Yeah.

You did?

Yeah, we had to have a yellow star back and front. So my father was wearing two jackets. The top one had the stars, the bottom one didn't. He felt that if he takes it off and he walks away, nobody will spot him.

In case of a danger.

Yeah, but the problem was it was such a small village, everybody knew him. I mean he couldn't. He was a big man of my size, not my size then, my size now. And there was no hiding. There was no hiding. It's the same like I had to be very careful because if I went anywhere in the street in Stolowicz, the people recognize me and I was finished.

Later.

Yeah. So I avoided Stolowicz.

Can you remember any other episodes you have experienced or witnessed during the ghetto period?

I didn't see anybody shot in the ghetto, although there were. There were people shot. But my father made sure that I wasn't--

Hold on.

Sorry.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

My father made sure.

I didn't see anybody shot.

I didn't see anybody shot in the ghetto. But they did shoot people there because more or less as soon as it was made, they came with a lorry. And they picked out anybody who was working for the Russian political system before, and they took them away. And they took them down to the bottom of the ghetto where there are woods, there were trees, and they were never seen again.

Who is they? They took.

The Germans.

The Germans?

That was German's army they came. But they used locals to get the people that they wanted to get rid of. Because they didn't know them.

Did you see this act of arrest? Did you witness this?

I saw that. I sat and watched them through the window, as they were picking them up. I didn't see them being shot. But I saw them being taken away. And [NON-ENGLISH], that was my father's boss. He was one of the people who was going around and picking out the people who have been taken away.

So therefore, that was another reason he didn't want me to survive because I saw him.

Did he make any practical attempt to kill you?

No, no. He didn't. As far as we knew they weren't going to be killed. They were just going to be taken away for interrogation. But they were taken to the woods. And it was finished.

I was asking about this guy.

[NON-ENGLISH]? No.

[NON-ENGLISH].

He was in the police as well. But then the Germans changed the police, because in towns or villages that were Polish, that the majority of the people living were Polish, they had policemen of Belarus or Ukraine or Lithuanian. And in Belarus police, they had the Polish, Ukrainian, or Lithuanian. In other words, they hated each other. And the Germans used that to make sure that the police is made up of people who hate the citizens who live in that town.

This episode of collecting the people who cooperated with the former regime, the truck that is so--

Yeah.

This I believe did not take place only in the Jewish area.

It took place in the whole, but the others they took them away. The Jewish ones they took just to the other side of the street, more or less. There were some woods there. In the woods they killed them.

They didn't kill the non-Jews.

No, the non Jews they took away.

How do you know this? Because they went on the lorry and they drove out of the village.

They were on the lorry, and drove out, or weren't on the lorry.

They were on the lorry, and were driven out. The Jews were just collected and marched down to the other end of the ghetto.

You see them being marched. I saw them being marched, but I didn't see them being shot.

I see. Could you hear the shots?

I must have done. I must have done.

How far was the shooting place from your house? 100 meters.

100.

The only shooting I have witnessed is I've never actually I've never told this to anybody, even when I give my lectures at Yad Vashem. There was a family-- a father, mother, two boys of about 16 and 12. And then she had two twins, two little boys. And they were beautiful boys. They were about three or four years old. But they were really gorgeous, curly hair.

And this happened at the end of '42, when the ghetto was destroyed, '42, '43. The mother was a very-- she was known by the locals as a Cossack. You know what a Cossack is? She was the dominant person in the house. And when they came to take all the Jews away, they lived about three houses away from us.

Now, when I was at Mrs. Tereza's while they were shooting at the ghetto, getting rid of it, I was in a stable, in Mrs. Tereza's stable being hidden. Now Mrs. Tereza and her daughter and her aunt actually ran away. They didn't want to be in the same town. They run away to a village, [NON-ENGLISH], something very close to Stolowicz. And I was left alone with the rabbi's daughter.

And I could see what was going on in the center of the town, because you know what a stable is, where the horses, and the-- it's made of wooden planks. And between the two, you can see what's going on.

And I remember looking and I saw this woman. As the Germans were collecting everybody, she just took the two little boys one by each hand, and she started walking away from the ghetto. And there was a policeman there. I think he was Polish. His name was Tolkachevich. I think he was killed at the later part of the war.

And they told them to stop. And she would not stop. She kept on walking with these two kids. And he took off his rifle. He had an automatic rifle. And he shot them at about 50 meters away. And I remember seeing that part. It was-- this is the first time I'm telling this to anybody. I don't think even my children know about this. He hit the kids. I don't know what bullets he had. But you know when you shoot at a watermelon and it explodes into pieces. This is what I saw. The two little boys, their heads suddenly exploding. And I can never forget that.

They were lovely boys, very lovely. They were like little dolls. And she was so proud of them. And she used to dress them up nicely. And they just blew up like two watermelons. And then-- I'm sorry. I think that's the only execution I can remember from those days.

And you saw it from your house, from the stable?

From the stable.

How far were you from this?

At the end of the road, 150 meters maybe.

And you knew this woman and two boys? You remember their names?

No, I can't remember the names. But they lived three houses away from us. The two boys were, the biggest one was, he wasn't all right. And these two little ones were gorgeous, gorgeous.

Did you know this Ukrainian guard? He used to work for my father when he was in charge of the Russian torfzavod, Tolkachevich. But I wouldn't know them. They wouldn't know me. But I think that in about 1944, he was killed by the partisans, the Russians partisans.

Did he shoot also the mother?

Yeah. But her, she just fell down. But these two little kids, he shot them in the head, and I said the only thing I could compare it to is a watermelon splitting into pieces. But you get used to living with that sort of thing all the time that.

And this took place when the ghetto was liquidated?

Yes, that was-- I haven't got the exact dates for it. But it was I think either at the end of '42 or the beginning of '43. So it must have happened immediately after you arrived at Tereza's house, right?

I went to Tereza's house that same evening. And I never went back to the ghetto.

And--

And they didn't notice that I didn't come back. That didn't matter. But what happened was there were a few survivors, maybe about 20 people. And the Germans made an amnesty. They said you can all the Jews come back. You can have the synagogue and the two houses near it. And you can live there.

But there's something missing here.

Because you describe an episode from the liquidation of the ghettos.

That's right.

And then you say but there were some 20 survivors. Right.

That's following. That's following this.

But what happened in between?

In between, there must have been a week, maybe one week. I was at Mrs. Tereza's.

What happened to the Jews who were taken away from the ghetto?

On the day when they liquidated it?

They were all shot. They were taken about 4 or 5 kilometers in the direction of Kovachevo. You've been to Kovachevo? It's on the way to Kovachevo. On the right-hand side there's forest. And they were shot. There were trenches there from the First World War. So they didn't have to dig even a hole for it. They shot them, put them in the trenches, and covered it up.

When did you learn about this? About the murder of the Jews?

The same day. And we knew, in fact, we tried running away from Mrs. Tereza's house. And we got as far as the end of the village. And then I said to Gittel, I said, where are we going? What are we going to do? So we decided to come back. We came back to a stable. And we stayed in the stable. I didn't know this then. But Mrs. Tereza wasn't there. They went to the village a few kilometers away.

And they came back that evening. And then the Germans, following this, the Germans gave an amnesty. They said, you can all go back, because they knew that some got away. And we had about a week during this amnesty where we lived in the shul. I came out as well, and so did the rabbi's daughter.

And then we got a message from Mrs. Tereza, be at my house as soon as it gets dark.

OK. But you didn't tell us how you arrived at Tereza's house in the first place. Well, in the first place, I went home with her. You went home--

The ghetto was still [NON-ENGLISH], so there was no reason why I wasn't there.

I know two pieces of information describing your arrival at Tereza's house. One is from your writing.

Yeah.

You described that you smuggled out of the ghetto, you, two children. And I think you two children is you and the daughter of the rabbi. And smuggled out, and arrived at Tereza's house. This is one description.

Well, I came. Don't forget I went out in the morning with my father and mother to work.

OK.

At the evening, when we're going home I didn't go with my father and mother. I went with Mrs. Tereza to her house. And what's her name, Gittel, the rabbi's daughter somehow or other got out. And she went to her house. At that stage--

Her house is Tereza's house.

To Tereza's house, yes. At that stage, the police used to look like that. They wouldn't see you. There was not too much of a problem to get out of the ghetto. The problem was where are you going? I mean if you got out of the ghetto and you ran away you'd be caught by some Polish peasant or something who will kill you or take you to the Germans. So to get out of the ghetto was not a big problem.

OK, we could go even if you're small enough you could get out under the fence. You could definitely get out under the water no problem. So I was already in Tereza's house. And then Gittel came and joined us.

Gittel or the younger daughter of the--

It was the younger daughter first. But she was crying all the time. She wanted to be with her father. So she went back. And the following day, the sister came. And you were already in Tereza's house. So you were there with the younger daughter of the rabbi, and you saw how she was taken, went back. And the other one, Gittel, came.

That's right.

And you met Gittel when she came there?

Did I what?

Did you meet Gittel when she came to Tereza's house?

Yes. Now there is a description by Jelizaveta who remembers your father. And here is not clear either taking you to Tereza's house or talking to Tereza, but Jelizaveta heard it. And he was asking Tereza to take you, because tomorrow, he said, all of us are going to be shot.

Yeah.

This is something you heard. You heard your father saying this?

My father used to get information sometimes even from the police because he was reasonably friendly with some of them. It didn't happen the following day. It happened about a day or so afterwards. Now this is the first action. This happened before the first action in the ghetto.

But did you hear your father saying this to Tereza?

Yes.

That we are all going to be shot.

I heard that we are going to be-- the ghetto is going to be liquidated.

Where did he tell this to Tereza? In the office?

In the office.

And you were in the office then?

I was under his table.

Why were you under the table?

So I wouldn't be noticeable. It was a desk closed in the front and I was sitting there.

So you were often there in your father's office under the table. Almost every day, almost.

So you spent-- you were spending the day under the table at your father's, drawing, writing. This was so that we should be together.

The family.

And I'll tell you something else. I remembered this only about two months ago that I didn't see my mother except in the morning when we came together.

[NON-ENGLISH] that I remembered two months ago about [NON-ENGLISH] America.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Richard, [NON-ENGLISH]

OK. About approximately two months ago, I was sitting here. And I suddenly realized that I said goodbye to my father when I went with Mrs. Tereza. But I didn't see my mother the whole day. And I couldn't understand why.

And as I told my daughter, and she said, well your mother probably couldn't bring herself to come into the room to speak to you, because she was very upset. She knew she wasn't going to see you anymore. And this I think is what happened.

My mother was in the kitchen. And I was in my father's office. And she never came in and I never said goodbye to her. And that's why I couldn't-- I couldn't have-- I didn't have a picture of what my mother looked like at the end.

And anyway, I went with Mrs. Tereza. We were-- I can't remember the name of the girl. I think it was Batsheva or something. I can't remember. But she was very upset. She was crying. And she would eat. A rabbi's daughter, she wouldn't eat. And Mrs. Tereza said, this is no good because she can't have somebody crying. I mean so the following morning, I think somebody came and took the girl away.

And they brought Gittel. So I was with Gittel. Now--

Did you know her beforehand?

Oh, yes. I mean everybody knew everybody else. It was a small community. And I think it was a day or two after that, maybe it was even short. It was very quickly after that the Germans posted an amnesty that you could all go back.

And of course, Gittel and I went back to the shul. And we lived there for a few days, not very long, five, six days, maybe. And I remember I was going, begging. You know what begging is, for food. Because we have no food. We had nothing.

And while the Polish people wouldn't give anything to the others, I was the only one who was-- I used to come in. They used to cry and they used to give me bread and things to take back to the shul. So I really fed the whole 20 people for a few days.

How many, 20?

About 20, 22. There was two wounded. I remember Elie, his name was. He had a bullet in his back. And we were there. And then I got the message from Mrs. Tereza to be at her house as soon as it got dark. Though this Elie who was wounded, how was he wounded?

How?

Did you know?

No, but he was shot in the back.

So he was taken together with the other Jews from the ghetto to the murder place and shot, but not--

No, no. It's possible that-- it was in the back. This I remember. He must have been running away and they shot after him and just wounded him.

Did he tell you how this happened or you only knew he was--

No, he did tell us. But I can't remember the details. So we went back to Mrs. Tereza's that evening.

Just a moment. So 20 or 22 Jews in the synagogue and the rabbi's house.

The rabbi's house, yeah.

And what have they been doing through this period?

Nothing, nothing. They was just sitting and crying. There was a few children, not many.

And was the synagogue and the rabbi's house, was it guarded?

No.

No.

No, they wanted to give the impression that it's absolutely OK to come back. No police, no Germans, nothing. So we got back to her as soon as it got dark. She put Gittel in the stable. And this is now where Elizabeth's story is a little bit wrong. But maybe she didn't know.

Mrs. Tereza took me, and she had somebody, a woman, come Mrs. Babachynska. She took me to another village, the same evening, must have been about 12 o'clock at night or something we went out.

Babachynska?

Babachynska.

She took you at Tereza's--

From Tereza's house, and she took me to a little village called Zaosie. Now, Zaosie was the village where Adam Mickiewicz was born.

OK. So please wait a minute. What is Jelizaveta's story? How did Jelizaveta--

No, we wouldn't come to it yet.

OK.

Now, the next day, the very next day, they surrounded the shul and the rabbi's house, and they took everybody out. Took them up to where the others were shot, and killed them.

This you heard later probably, because you were in Zaosie.

Yeah, I didn't hear it there. I read it. But I knew that this is what happened.

Later, when you came.

Yeah, no, no. No, because I never came back, not for a while anyway. So I'm in Zaosie. And [NON-ENGLISH] the fellow whom my father gave something to, was watching Mrs. Tereza's house. He lived across the street. And he saw Elizabeth going with the buckets into the stable. And there was steam coming out of the bucket. So he thought he found me. He thought he found me. You see?

He went and told the police who was still there. And this is when the three policemen, one Polish And two Belarussian, came to Mrs. Tereza's house. And Elizabeth told you the story. They found Gittel, and they shot her there and then. And they wanted to kill Mrs. Tereza. And this I learned after the war already. I didn't know this part.

And Elizabeth took her mother and cuddled her. And said, if you kill her you have to kill me as well. That's no problem to them. But anyway Mrs. Tereza was a very attractive woman, very attractive.

All what you were telling us now, you heard later.

This I heard later.

Now, the Polish SS man said because she was pretty. He said, I'm going to take you to bed. Now Mrs. Tereza had an elderly auntie, an old auntie. And also Mrs. Tereza was a piano player. She had a piano and she played the piano. The old lady, the old auntie said, why don't I make you something to eat first? Then you can go to bed. Then we'll see what happens.

So he agreed. And she made them something to eat. And she put a bottle of vodka in front of him and a bottle of plain water in front of Tereza. And you can't eat without drinking. He finished a complete liter of vodka. And she finished as much as she could water. And he passed out.

He passed out. They put him on the bed, and about two or three hours later, they were looking for him, the police. They came and took him away, put him on the lorry, and they went away. And this part, Litka told you--

How do you her?

Litka

Litka

Jelizaveta.

Jelizaveta it's Litka.

Litka. Now, how she continued it, she said, of course I was terrified that Richard was under the bed. But Richard wasn't under the bed. Because when I came the previous night, I was taken by Mrs. Babachynska to Zaosie.

So she was mixing two episodes, because you were under the bed--

Most of the time, yes.

In another episode.

In other episodes. I was under the bed with the episode with Fedorenko.

Yes.

Right?

Yes, when you came back to Tereza's.

Yes, when I came back to Tereza's, I came back and went several times. But she got the two mixed up. She thought I was there when Gittel was shot. I wasn't there. I was in Zaosie, about 20 kilometers away.

I'm going to ask you about Zaosie, but one detail I would like to clarify. Jelizaveta told us that she heard your father say to her mother, we are going to be shot tomorrow. And I would like to ask you to take Rysek. To take you. And she said she heard it. Where could she hear it? She wasn't at the office.

She could be. I mean she was free to go anywhere she wanted.

She was going to the office sometimes?

Sometimes, sure. I mean she went to the office. They could have coffee and a piece of cake or something to eat, which maybe they didn't have at home.

Can you remember if when Tereza took you to her house from the office on that specific day before the murder of the Jews, was Jelizaveta with her?

No.

She wasn't?

No. I came back from the office to Tereza's house just the two of us. Now, as far as whether it was the next day or the day after that the ghetto was, I can't remember exactly. It could be one day. It could have been two days. My father heard from Szpak. Szpak was the assistant commandant, and he was a very good friend of my father's. He used to tell him lots of things, what's going on.

You see, we also had in the Stolowicz ghetto, survivors from other ghettos. When the ghetto, let's say, in Slonim was--
Liquidated

--liquidated, a couple of young fellows got away and they came to us in Stolowicz. And I don't think it mattered to the Germans or they weren't so fussy. Because they knew that sooner or later we will be going as well. So whoever escaped there, will get caught there. We had a couple of people from Baranowicze, from the ghetto in Baranowicze. Now that

had several actions. That had about three actions I think. I'm not sure exactly, but I know more than one, definitely. We had a couple of boys from there escape.

So the actual population of the Jewish population of Stolowicz was higher than the official figure. But nobody ever checked that. Because sooner or later, we knew they'll kill everybody.

OK, so you arrived in Zaosie.

In Zaosie. Now Zaosie, I was with a family called Szpakowski, which is obviously a root of the fellow Shpak. Right? I didn't ask them. Because I didn't want to know if they are related. But I put one and one together and it made two to me. The Szpaks came from Szpakowski.

And they, it was arranged with them by Tereza that--

But Tereza--

--that they will host--

They will look after me for a while. You see, none of these people that was with, apart from Tereza, would commit themselves for a long time. They say, all right. We'll keep him for a week or two. And we'll see. But these Szpakowskis were very religious Catholics, very religious.

And to a Catholic, to convert a Jew is a mitzvah. If they get a Jew, and they can convert to Christianity, especially Catholicism. So I had to learn from the Catholic catechism, or I don't know how they call it. And I learned. I learned very well. I was with them for nearly a month.

And I was a good pupil. I learned the whole book by heart.

What else did you do there?

Nothing. I was in the stables. I was in the stables there. And I just had to keep out of the way because this was a bigish farm, and they had workers, outside workers. And I had to be careful not to be seen by them.

So you were hiding.

I was hiding there, yes.

At night, I used to come in sometimes to the house. But during the day I was in the stables. And this was the village where Adam Mickiewicz was born, a Polish poet, a very famous one. And there was a big statue of him in the end of the village. And I remember that they invited the priest to come from Stolowicz, the Catholic priest, to baptize me. And I still to this day don't know whether he was afraid to do it or whether he was a good man. And he didn't want to do it because he knew very well that I'm only doing it in order to survive.

And he sort of checked over that I knew everything. And he was satisfied. But he says, you know what? When you're 18 years old, come and see me and I will baptize you. So I still don't know if he was afraid and he didn't want to say that he was afraid, but anyway he did not baptize me. But it came in very useful for me that I knew the Catholic prayers, have everything that you had to know. I was there for about maybe a month.

And then from there, she took me to her relatives in Baranowicze.

She is Tereza?

No, no. Tereza wasn't involved in this. Mrs. Szpakowska. Mrs. Szpakowska. She had a cousin who lived in Baranowicze with her little daughter. And next door was billeted an SS officer. So it wasn't a good place. Because

again, she was an attractive woman, and this officer used to fancy her. So he used to come over.

So they decided, Mrs. Szpakowska decided that I should go back to Mrs. Tereza. Now, this is my first solo journey out of Baranowicze occupied by Germans, to get back to Stolowicz which is 10 kilometers, and to get to Mrs. Tereza's house, which was very difficult for me. Because I was still only a young, little boy. But I walked. I made my way out of Baranowicze. Nobody took any notice of me.

And I managed to get as far as Stolowicz without any problems. Oh yeah, I was feeling hungry halfway through. There's a little village there. And I ask somebody for a piece of bread. And they gave it to me. And this is when I started making up my own stories. Because they said, who are you? Where are you from?

And I said I was from such and such a village. I gave them a name of a village. And I said I was in this boarding school, and I want to be back with my parents, because I'm afraid of being here. There's shooting. There's this. And of course, I made sure all the time that every time I said something bad, I crossed myself. If that's what you want, that's what I'll do.

So she gave me something to eat. And I carried on from there to Stolowicz. I couldn't get a lift from anybody. There's no public transport, by the way. There's no buses, no nothing. So I must have been about 2 kilometers away from Stolowicz, there's a German lorry with the puncture in the wheel. And they're sitting there smoking and changing the wheel.

So I said, what do I do? So I walked straight up to them. And I said, I need a lift. So the German says to me, help us change the wheel, we'll give you a lift.

In what language did you talk to them? He spoke perfect Polish. Because there was a lot of Germans there, a Volksdeutsche, who knew Polish and Russian very well. So I thought to myself, if I go with these people, they'll take me right across Stolowicz. And if anybody sees me and recognizes me, they'll think, ah, the Germans have got him. So I helped them with the tire, sat on the car with them, got me some chocolate as well. And they took me right across Stolowicz.

And I got right past everything, and they dropped me off there. Now it was, I think it was autumn. There wasn't snow, but there was ice. There was behind the village there was a big swamp. You know what the swamp is? It's wet, water in it.

And I thought, now if I go in the middle of the day to Mrs. Tereza's house, somebody will see me and they'll reported to the Germans. So I'm better off going into the swamp, wait until it gets dark, and then get to the house.

It was foggy, very foggy. Anyway, I made my way around to the back of the village in the swamp. This is the first time. I did that many times afterwards, the first time. And I was behind a bush laying down waiting for it to get dark. Now the police station in Stolowicz was in the town center right next to the ghetto. But there was no ghetto anymore.

So they took, let's say, they were here. They took a big house there, which was much bigger, and they moved the police station there. Now also, this new police station overlooked the swamp where I was lying under the bush.

What did the policeman do in this? They got no work to do. There's no Jews, no nothing. So they practiced shooting. Where do you practice? On the swamp. There's nothing there, maybe a few rabbits and ducks. And suddenly as I'm lying under the bush, machine guns and rifles, bang, bang, bang, bang, all around me bullets. I thought they'd seen me, but they hadn't seen me. Because after half an hour, it stopped.

And I made my way as soon as it got dark to Mrs. Tereza's. Now I was there at Mrs. Tereza's on and off for the next sometimes in '43. When I say on and off, she used to take me to friends. I spent a week there, two weeks there. Always I managed to come back to her house. And I already knew the way.

Because the next time I was coming to the same swamp, I wasn't worried about any shooting because I already knew what it was coming from. But that was winter. Winter is more difficult because there's snow all over. And if you're

coming walking in, schmattas, which is what I wore, my clothing was all-- it's very noticeable. So again, I decided to wait until it gets dark.

Now here, I come to a part which I can never explain. Again, I sat down--