

Agnes Sassoon, reel 5. Agnes, you were just telling me how you'd been taken under the care of Major Chutter. And you'd been allocated this person called Geoffrey to entertain you. Can you explain who Geoffrey was?

Geoffrey was an British officer, who was very kind and very kind hearted. And he's in my book. And I'm very great friends with his wife, his son, and himself. He is like a brother, you know, and older brother to me because he is retired now. And he's a great, great person, and his wife as well. And we are in touch very closely. We like each other very closely with this family.

And when I found Major Chutter through the war office, he came three times to visit me. But he was assigning Geoffrey to a few girls, and especially to me, to take us out swimming, to theater, to concert. But I was not catching up with anything, so he taught me also how to write, what music. Piano he plays.

You know, he taught me a lot of things that I would not know ever. Catching up later, I had some more schools, you know. But at that stage I didn't. And I wrote my story, immediately. What I put in my head in the camp, I put it down on paper in the primitive way, how it is. And I never let it change.

I was a journalist, a well known in Israel. And I never gave this story, just some chapters. But I never, never wanted to change it for a book for plenty of money to pay me because I want to come through like this, that it should not happen ever again, not only to Jews. But also it is a third world and the hungry countries, where primitive people and simple people live, they think they can't feel.

They can feel. They can cry. They feel their child is getting stiff in their hand. They feel their parents lost. And they do get emotional.

When we were working, like bodies in the Holocaust, the Holocaust then was made like the Germans wanted to see us. They were not people without emotion. They learned to overcome the German thoughts. And they started to obey the laws in their way, that she should walk without moving, without batting an eye, because if they put attention on a bat of eye, they put attention on themselves personally. And they would even less survive than they did.

So when lot of people nowadays ask the question, why didn't you rise up? Why didn't you rebel?

Well, everybody has this question. But how can you rise if you are going with-- they put something in your food, first of all. Women didn't have the periods, they told me. Because I was a child, you know, I never-- I had a lot of trouble with it until I got it because I was in that age when, after the liberation, I should get it. And I had a lot of doctor troubles and problems. But then it came right.

But the women who had it, they didn't have it. How they didn't have it? Because they got so-- they told me they put bromide-- I don't know-- that they should be quiet. I don't know whether it is true. You know, I don't know. But that's how they told. They gave orders that they should be quiet, and those are.

But they were not. They were crying before me. They were yearning after their children. I was yearning after my-- when my brother was shot in the Danube, I swear I felt it. I dreamed that a door is turning round and round like in a hotel, a door which is it never comes out from it.

A revolving door.

Yes. And that's what-- and I felt that it happened, something, to my brother. You know? And if people had all the emotions-- and when somebody was very ill, they tried to help. And it was no way when you wanted to get-- anyway, what I want to say, it should never and ever happen.

And now I am with Germans very friendly. And I don't make any difference between human being and human being. And if I explain it, some they don't want to know. I said, I don't want for you to put it under your nose. I would like you to know, as a human to human, not as you saw it, as you wanted to see it. You saw there were no brains. There were no

spirits.

The spirit was there. The brain was there. And that's what made them survive, that they went by the law, and they were the superior race and not the Germans. Because I felt superior that I can do what I did. And I felt superior that we could discuss it as a young child and with other old people. I don't know, old or young, if the dead body should be respected to leave on the things or to take it off to save someone lives. I don't call that dehumanized. Yeah.

After-- how did you find out that you parents were still alive?

Major Chutter did. It was no post, you see. There was a field post, field post. And there was a British delegation in Hungary. Yeah? And I wasn't on the Red Cross list because I lived in that private-- somehow he didn't, he failed to do this. He made me a document later. You see?

And when I was in Hanomag factory, registered again for older because you couldn't work in that age. Right? But I didn't work. They sent me home. Major [? Eve-- ?] I remember his name-- was the leader there. And he was with a little mustache. He was very friendly with this baroness in the next door villa. [LAUGHS] And then when I went to the next door villa and I disturbed, a man used to come every so often.

She used to send me out then. And she used to take a jewelry box out, this lady, [? Isla, ?] and give it to him. And now when I went to the library, I made a research. And I found out that a certain Baron Thiessen was arrested sometimes later in Switzerland. But I don't know whether there's any connection or no. And I don't want to prove anything because this is not a book for history or for spite. This is only plainly to explain that I came across a quite interesting story, and I met quite interesting people and good people after that.

And I would like to point out, it is unforgivable but I can't help it. Many Jewish community leaders are annoyed maybe with me and they don't support maybe my ideas that I don't hate and I don't hate even Germans. I have friends. I just can't hate. What can I do?

I think it's better this way. I think if you put aside politics and color and race, then you can be a better human being.

Eventually you returned to your family in Budapest, your mother and father.

Yes.

What effect do you feel these experiences of the concentration camp has had on your subsequent life?

Well, when my father came, I was-- that chapter, if you read, I was so astonished, so overcome, that I couldn't move from that bed where I was lying and saw him to come in. I was so overcome. I loved him dearly and deeply. And his blue, beautiful eyes-- he was not a big tall man, a small man but a very lovely, smiling man. You know? And I remembered him, despite I wasn't very much with him like that.

And when I saw him, he was in tears. And I just couldn't get out a noise, a word. And I was stuck like I would be-- I would be bandaged down. And after a while, I was bursting out. And I was, Daddy, Daddy, Daddy, Daddy, Daddy. And it was very, very, very touching. And I was feeling deeply. And I always felt deeply. It was this gap, like it would never happen.

The contact between me and my parents were always deep, even if this gap of the time and the suffering. My mother was a bit changed because she was losing her son. And that she never could forget. And of course, she was happy to see me. But they did understand it, that I did not want to stay despite I loved them.

I wanted to go back to Czechoslovakia to study. I was born in Czechoslovakia. And though he was nationalized as Hungarian because he was teaching there after he got back, he got a high job back, my father. But he left everything because I came to Israel. I went out from Czechoslovakia after studying illegal.

I went back once more to Hungary. Then I came out illegal because I didn't want him to make trouble for his job.

You left illegally.

I left illegal. But I was legal in Czechoslovakia because I-- but I helped for a young man who smuggled stateless people, so-called, from Poland and Hungary because they didn't let the young out, only the old ones legally again. You see? So they smuggled to Israel. So Czechoslovakia was always, in my heart, more modest.

Eventually, you yourself--

Eventually, after my studies, I went back. And I went back when the state of Israel was established so that I go to Israel. And I was very heartbreaking for my parents and me. They thought I will have a better and a more free future because they didn't like anything which is restriction in a country.

And I did remember beating my father, kicking my father, these boys who did it. And so I had better memories about Czechoslovakia. And when I went to Israel through Czechoslovakia, I was stuck there till '50 because I helped with my language, knowledge that I knew German, I knew Czech, to smuggle with the so-called people to Israel, but so smuggled that the Czechs were also in the Eastern bloc. Right?

But they were sometimes more easy to deal with. And they knew these things are coming. And they go to Vienna. Sometimes they had a control, and they were redirected back. So I did help with a young man, who was sent from Israel to help for these people.

Eventually--

And eventually--

You, yourself left for--

And eventually, we were also arrested. And my uncle made the whole-- whole works nearly not working because he wanted-- he thought, I live with this boy. And he came. And he was a rebbe, and he wanted me to go with him. And I did go with him. And that made, then, the story that this Jay, which I-- no secret, but I'm still very friendly with him. He was a good boy, but he was not that I wanted to marry him yet.

But I did not know that it was all false papers, that I will have to go through all the ceremonies because in Jewish law, if you have a paper with your Hebrew name, then you had it. And we were very friendly, on the end, even now. But it took me a long time and plenty of difficulties. I made a good career there.

I had to fight for everything. But I did because one thing I had before me, freedom-- freedom, liberty. And if you have freedom, if you start something to do in your life, and you are not going in bad ways, you have integrity, then you know that you can start. If that doesn't succeed, you start something else. I didn't care what I do, if I would do physical work or other work.

So I had the life before me. And whatever bad it could come that it rained in my house, that I had to go in the jungle with jackals, and I had to-- because it was not ready like now for the newcomers in Israel. That is, flats and everything ready when they come now, the newcomers. They didn't have that.

They lived in tents, the newcomers. And in jungle, you know, where the Sabra trees were, these prickly trees. And you know why they call a Sabra, Sabra, I think-- because the inside's sweet and outside's prickly. So they are innocent inside, and good, and outside prickly. But that prickle always were stuck to my pretty one dress, which I made the fashion shows and made myself a good name.

And I wish only that this book should come to Germany and to the States and to be-- and understand, I don't wish bad to anyone. And they should consider the Black countries, who maybe sometimes they don't consider each other, that it

won't help if they give them food and they will steal it halfway there. Because even in the British, among the British Allies, when we got our rations, until it came to us sometimes they were given for the girlfriends of the German race.

And when we realized it, that it didn't come to us because they made themselves dresses, clothes from it. They paid with eggs. And then Major Chutter came to me one day. I didn't have only still clothes. And the other girls had clothes from where they bought it from eggs and from this and from that. And then they took curtains of some people.

And I said, no way. I live in a villa, and I never touched. Even if Major Chutter said, your parents were robbed from everything, I said, never. He told me never let anyone in who lived in that house, a German, because it's dangerous for my life. And I was on my own sometimes at home because the others worked and I couldn't. And once came a man, an old man. I thought he is old man. I don't know whether he was old-- with a beard.

And he said to me, he lived here and he wants to take some sheets from his cupboard and if I would allow him that. It was dangerous of my life. And Major Chutter told me not to let in ever anyone who lived there, or they were German. And I did let him in. I did let him take things from the cupboard. And I never touched anything.

I can swear to you, it's true. I didn't care what other people do. And that's honest true. And I said, whether they done it or not, I was told like that. And I would like everybody to believe it, that, therefore, I believe in God. And I hope he will help me, that everyone will learn from it not to happen. And not even in the hungry countries, no, in the third world should happen because their parents feel.

And if they will feed them just with food and not to make irrigation and water, they will always die. Won't be a solution.

Agnes, Sassoon, thank you very much.

With great pleasure. And I'm really happy to say this to you, that I would like, if this will be spread, if nothing-- I never wanted to gain from this. That book was not written ever for money. And it sincerely goes for charity. But I want to make it worldwide, to teach from it, I, the primitive simple girl.

My second book will come, and you have the only-- in [INAUDIBLE], and you have the only continuity of the Promised Land, which is a great country. And I support that country. Without making politics or propaganda, everybody had an opportunity, that it was up to the people. But now people way that everything should be given to them on plate. You see?

And I want to write now about the lovely people who I met from low and high and upper class. And why I do everything with great pleasure for any kind of people? Because I want to contribute to this kind country. I don't care what they quarrel about politics or color. I don't want to be involved in that.