

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

## **William Helmreich Oral History Collection**

**Interview with Walter Peltz**

**July 24, 1989**

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## PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Walter Peltz, conducted by William Helmreich on July 24, 1989 as research for his book *Against all odds: Holocaust survivors and the successful lives they made in America*. The interview was given to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct. 30, 1992 and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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**WALTER PELTZ**  
**July 24, 1989**

WH: . . . are most of the people in the organization are from Poland?

WP: They are mixed, they are from all over. They are not German. The German Jews don't associate with us.

WH: . . .what is the name of their organization?

WP: New Home Club

WH: . . . what town were you born?

WP: Warsaw

WH: . . . you came to the United States in . . . '49 . . . the boat was . . . General Stewart . . . you met your wife in the D.P. Camps?

WP: I met my wife before the D.P. Camps. She was in the concentration Camp . . .Dachau.

WH: You came together on the boat?

WP: Yes . . .throuhg the HIAS . .

WH: Nobody signed the affidavit for you? . . . You didn't have relatives . . . in Warsaw, did you have brothers and sisters?

WP: (heavy sigh)

WH: You had and you lost them. You're the only one who made it through.

WP: Yeh. I was the oldest of 5 brothers and sisters . . .they were very active in the uprising . . .they lost their lives then..

WH: You left before the uprising?

WP: I was arrested in 1939 . . . in the military you had to register and I went A.W.O.L. . . . the officer gave us orders that was impossible, that was death, that's all. We suppose to stop the Germans when they suppose the cross the bridges . . .

WH: . . .what was it like for you when you came back to visit it now, and how did you get back, and when?

WP: Let me explain something if I may . . . I did not go to Poland back because thinking that this is a home, I care less . . . (inaudible) I been back 4 times. The reason I did go back, and I'm still going to go one time more, is, I think that there's several families (inaudible) they saved my life – not that they were Jew lovers, don't get me wrong. And, you see, I escaped several times from the Nazi's and I didn't have a place where to go . . . and those people took me in . . . and they gave me a roof over my head.

WH: Why did they do it? You said that they weren't Jew lovers.

WP: I don't know . . . I found out that the lady of the house . . . she loved Jews, she liked Jewish people. As a matter of fact, that poor tailor, that poor shoemaker . . . I found out that they did help those people. So, evidently, she must have gotten a sore spot in her heart . . . a lot of people suffered on account of me. A lot of Christians there . . .

WH: When you came here . . . did anything particular happen on the boat?

WP: . . . there was group of Pollacks which one from the Polish guys – came on the ship with a Polish uniform, and he was a big shot, and . . . he had a star on his – so he was in charge of certain things around . . . so he used to take Jews and put them to the worse things, you know, and I confronted him. First of all, I had a wife and a little boy . . . they were separate from us, and they were very sick, they were sea-sick. He did not – because it was him, it wasn't the ship's captain or anybody else, he would not – let any man or Jew to go down to see how his child or his wife is . . . so I says to the guys, 'What in the hell can he do with us? Send us back? He wouldn't send us back. What more can he do?' So I did go down . . . he came out from a cabin, he was married, he had his wife, probably, or whoever, and he insulted me, he called me a 'goddamn Jew.' So I beat the shit out of him. And I organized that none of the Jews on the boat go to work. But, they wanted to go to work, they didn't have anything to do with themselves, they went crazy. They were sea-sick. They wanted to do something there. As a matter of fact, when the ship landed in New York I was looking, I was after him, I was looking for him, I wanted to teach him a lesson that he'll never forget me.

WH: But you didn't find him?

WP: No, I did not.

WH: What was your first impression when you came to New York?

WP: . . . we came at night . . . the next day . . . the impression coming down from the ship, and the tumult and the turmoil, and the colored guys, we should group – the letters here, and mine is 'Peltz' – 'P' and the luggage and the packages, and the schmattes that we had, and all that stuff and you know, the impression was very bad. We went for a ride, somebody took us for a ride from the IRO. Took us for a ride to show us New York . . .

in a car . . . and I had a lady, I did write her a letter that we are coming, so she waited for us there too . . . she lived with me in Germany, in the same town.

WH: And she had already come.

WP: And I used to write to her. She used to write to me. And I told her that we are coming to the United States and this and this date we going to be in N.Y. so she waited for us . . . we went for a ride, it didn't impress me. I turned around and I says, to my late wife, I says, 'I don't think this is America.' Driving though the streets of the Bronx with the filth and all that stuff and I didn't – it was terrible. It was a terrible impression.

HW: . . . you occupation at that time was of a tailor?

WP: Yeh.

WH: Did thoughts go through your mind about your plans about what you'd like to do when you got here?

WP: Well, yes, my plans were to go to work, to start a new life, and you know, certain dreams, and certain things, and yes, I was sure of myself, that I am going to work and I'm going to make a living and this is one thing I didn't think about, and I was sure of it.

WH: How long did you stay in New York?

WP: New York? (laughs) One day.

WH: . . . you didn't even sleep over . . . they put you on a train?

WP: To Milwaukee.

WH: Who decided that you should go to Milwaukee?

WP: . . .this was my own decision . . .a very good friend of mine, a German Jew . . . we were very close, and he left Germany before I did . . . and he settle in Milwaukee that's why I followed him to Milwaukee. So I went to Frankfurt, and I told them (HIAS) that I would like to go to Milwaukee, and that's how it was done.

WH: . . . did he come to the train station to greet you?

WP: No . . . at the station, there were not too many, was only me and my late wife and some Christians . . . and this lady came up to me and with a broken Yiddish, says to me, 'I'm Miss Goldberg and I'm here waiting for you.' And . . . she told me that she would like me to go into the car and she'd like to show us Milwaukee first and she did. Milwaukee

was in comparison what I seen in New York was day and night. Then they took us to a place, and I had a room waiting for us. A very nice room. And a refrigerator full of fruit and food, and what have you not, and on the table was brand new bed sheets and linen, blankets, and everything . . .

WH: . . . what was the name of the agency?

WP: Jewish Family Service . . . I had a problem the same day, the same evening when I came here. When we moved into this one room. I told my late wife I would like to go out and see – I didn't know where I WAS! To see the street, to see where – and I got lost. And I couldn't find the house. Until 2 a.m. in the morning, I was wandering around looking for a house, and I couldn't find it.

WH: And you couldn't ask anyone, you couldn't speak the language.

WP: I didn't even know what to ask for! I didn't know the number, I didn't even know the name of the street, nothing!

WH: I can imagine what was going through your mind.

WP: Yes. What do you think my wife almost jumped out of her skin. She thought this is it, you know, that I'm killed because, you know, in the United States everybody has guns and what not, you know, that's what we under, big pressure. Then I was going from building to building and building, I couldn't even recognize it. To me they looked all alike, until I found it. But the following day the same lady came, and I told her I would like to get a job and go to work. She said to me, "What a nice – well you just came from Europe, we going to pay the rent for you, and you gonna get \$20 a week for groceries, and we gonna give you money for a pass on the bus. You don't have to go to work. They'll find you work after a while. But in the meantime, get acquainted, there's more refugees here that came recently from Europe." Very nice. But I found a job the third day. I found a job myself.

WH: Working for someone else?

WP: Yah. Tailoring. I found a job in a clothing store.

WH: And did you meet some of the survivors?

WP: Oh, yeh, the following day, I did look for them . . . I did find Heinz Miller . . . and we got together with him . . . the same evening and the same evening I meet about 25, 30 families.

WH: He was a nice guy?

WP: Oh, fantastic! He was my friend.

WH: . . . in some communities, sometimes, you mentioned before you said that ‘the Germans don’t associate with us here’ . . . but it’s amazing that Hitler made a common denominator, he told everybody you’re a Jew, no matter what country they come from. It’s amazing that they didn’t learn a lesson.

WP: But they still didn’t learn a lesson, I want you to know.

WH: Why is that?

WP: I don’t know. They look at us – for some reason or another, the Polish Jews haven’t got a good – never had a good reputation, I don’t know why. Because they were too fast, they were swindlers, they were thieves, they were labeled that they are everything in the world. And I think they were everything in the world.

WH: So it’s not for some reason.

WP: it’s not for some reason. I want you to know. It’s not for some reason . . . Heinz Miller does not associate with Polish Jews . . .

WH: He just made an exception in your case.

WP: I mean, I was a good Jew, you know – you know, it’s a funny thing, I’m gonna tell you now because I’m an outspoken guy . . . you got the New Home Club here, the German Jews, they were after me for years to join their club. I said, ‘I don’t want to.’

WH: Why would they want you to join?

WP: I don’t know. You got me.

WH: I mean, you’re Polish, right?

WP: I am Polish, but I don’t know. I get along with them, always got along with them, still get along.

WH: Who’s the President?

WP: I don’t know . . . but . . . the New American Club, I was twice President . . . I’ll tell you one thing and you’ll probably point it out, that the – for some reason or another, the Newcomer’s, the Polish Jews, the same as the German Jews, but the Polish Jews – were

always close. Not only Polish, we've got Hungarians, we've got Lithuanians, we have everybody. You know, I'll walk ten miles to meet a Jew when I travel - . . .

WH: In other communities, they started a club because they felt that people were prejudiced against them, on account of they call them the 'greener' and they didn't want anything to do with them. That the American Jews while they may have helped them in some ways, but they didn't want to socialize with them, or they didn't have that much in common with them.

WP: Well, I think I would like to talk to this person, and I would disagree with him . . .I would disagree on the contrary. You see, I would disagree with him. Now, I'm talking about myself, okay? . . . I feel different, because when I came here and I met the families, the Newcomer's which we start to see each other every day. You know, the children were small, and I was three weeks here and I had a brand new car. Ever heard of it? I didn't have a nickel, but I had a brand new car.

WH: How did that happen?

WP: Through the place that I worked. And so we start to go together to the parks and - we couldn't wait on Sunday to go to the park with the families, and we always had a good time.

WH: What did you do in the park . . . ?

WP: . . . the women cooked, whatever they prepared - they all bring the stuff together, we got a hold of some benches, and tables and blankets whatever it is . . . we used to go up to a park it was 55 miles away from here . . .Mothy Lake. The most beautiful lake you ever seen. And we went to some other lakes too. Lakes that were closer . . .

WH: How many people?

WP: Oh, my gosh, about 15, 20 families . . . we used to rent buses . . . or by cars, we picked up families.

WH: For one day.

WP: Yes . . . later on we used to go up North and rent cottages and be together . . . on the lakes. And as the time went by, the people grew together and we became just like one family. Sure.

WH: You retained a certain closeness now.



WP: I retained a closeness with everybody. We do not come together as we did before . . . the people are not that anymore as young, they don't come, they don't go any more.

WH: What do you think are some of the reasons . . .

WP: They're not well. Old. They moved away . . .

WH: Do you think that there's a loosing of the ties as the years go by?

WP: Well, not only that, I think that they are – that something else developed, there's a – and I think that this is the main reason, is that some were successful, some not. And they wanted – they did get successful, start to mingle with some different people. And there's a jealousy involved. Which I think it's normal.

WH: Not everybody winds up in the same place.

WP: Correct . . . anyway, I am as close to anybody, and everybody like I used to be 20, 30 years ago.

WH: When you got together in the park what did you talk about?

WP: Well, we used to talk about certain things about the past.

WH: Did you talk about the war?

WP: Oh, yes, we did. Even today too . . .

WH: What would there be – to talk about it today, after you know the people so well, and after so many years.

WP: Well, there's always, my friend, there's always something to talk about it, I want you to know. You know, don't forget one thing, you know, that what everyone of us lost. I realize that whatever I lost and they lost, is not forever. Do you follow me? When I think about my family, I think I see them in front of me the way they looked 40, 50 years ago. Not 50 – not today. See, I still remember my little sister was 9 years old. So, we got to talk about a lot. We always talk about that . . . there are a few people here in Milwaukee that they are from my hometown . . . so there's always something to talk about. Always.

WH: . . . did people help each other, who were survivors?

WP: . . . very much so . . . I mean it. Very much so.

WH: Could you describe that a little more?

WP: Yah, I'm going to give you an example, okay? Being a tailor, I found a job . . . I worked for 3 years there and lunch time I used to go out for lunch . . . and at the green light, people were waiting for the green light to walk through the road, I seen this short fellow, that I never met in my life, that I walked up to him and I say, 'Are you a Jew?' he looks at me. I talk to him in Yiddish right away, 'A Yid?' He looks at me and says, 'Yah.' So I says to him, 'How come I don't know you?' So he says to me, 'I just came from Birmingham, Alabama, I've got a wife and two children and it's terrible there I can't find a job,' and so on . . . so I says to him, 'What are you doing for a living?' He says, 'I'm a tailor.' I says, 'Come with me, I'll give you a job.' He follow me. Not only that, I gave him a job, and I'll never forget this, this was a Friday morning. I says to him, 'Where do you stay?' He says, - he told me where and I didn't know the place. I called up my late wife and I told her I got somebody for supper, - took him home, and I was a big shot, I had car, you know, I took him home and I says to him, you go to Birmingham, bring your family. He looks at me and he says, 'I haven't got no place to go.' I says, 'You bring your family.' I found him an apartment, a flat (inaudible) and I want you to know one thing. I gave him my job. I quit and I gave him my job. Now, I didn't quit because of him . . . I was thinking of quitting anyway, you see, I wanted to go into my own business, and which I did. I quit and I went into my own business in downtown Milwaukee and I was 8 years . . . in the tailor business . . . so what I wanted to say, we did help each other very much (inaudible). And another thing, the same Meyer Saks, I got him the job, two and a half years later, I pulled him off and Jack put him in business. And he was in business. And he just gave it up about a couple of years ago. He's an old man already.

WH: . . .you started to say something . . . about forming a club, about what the American Jews thought of this . . .and you sort of disagree.

WP: Let's go back to it. I disagree is right . . .the same people, after 40 years, 39 years, 35 years, 38 years, they still don't mingle with Americans, this is the biggest problem I think, personally, the biggest problem. I don't say that we should stay away from each other. No uhhhh-uh (no). But it's the biggest problem, that they did not trust, and they would not mingle with American people. In the beginning, they called me 'convert.' Because I did get, besides them, I had a ton of American people. So I told them, I says, 'Don't stay away.' I couldn't speak any English. The little that I – but they don't laugh at you. They thought that they gonna laugh at them. On the contrary, they correct you. I used to take couples with me and introduce them to some people, we did go out, and never had a good time. They don't – for some reason or another, they didn't feel good.

WH: Do you think that they had an inferiority complex?

WP: I think so. I think so. Even until today, those people got old. . .

WH: In what way today?

WP: I don't know. They did not associate with the American people. I wouldn't say that they don't talk to them or whatever it is, but . . . of course, during the years that they have met a lot of people, they became friends, through the association, or business or what have you not, if they made a bar mitzvah or hasaner, or whatever it is they still invited them. But I'm talking about their being closer. I am very close with a lot of American people. I'll tell you what, even Christians. I do business with them.

WH: You have them over to your house?

WP: Even to my son's bar mitzvahs and weddings and everything else and we traveled together . . .

WH: Aren't you unusual in that sense? I mean, most survivors don't make that excellent an adjustment.

WP: I agree with you. It's unusual. No, there's a few more here in the City of Milwaukee . . . you got to be a special person to those tings, I agree with you . . .

WH: . . . first of all I think that any survivor who has to come to a strange country, and after what they went through, and to adjust, and to go with the tide, it's not easy . . . were you like that as a kid?

WP: Yes. I was never afraid, or ashamed or to go up and talk or whatever it is, so, and today, it's the same thing.

WH: And your present wife is American, right?

WP: Yes.

WH: I'm sure you have talked about your experiences in the war - .

WP: She knows about me more than I do. And I want you to know another thing. That she adapted herself to the Newcomer's, where she'll talk to some of the Newcomer's, they probably gonna tell you, she adopted herself in the Newcomer's that everybody thinks that she is from Europe.

WH: . . . that's very interesting.

WP: Well, I'm not a religious man, don't get me wrong I'm not - I'm far away from it. Well, the reasons, well, I got certain reasons. I do belong to 3 synagogues. Thank G-d I can afford, and I support them . . . Orthodox, Conservative, and - . I belong, but I don't go.

WH: You don't go on the High Holidays?

WP: Once in a while yes, I do go, and I go because I want to go, I – can take it or leave it. I was on the Board of Directors for years, and they were after me to become President, and I says, this is one thing, I'm not going to take it, because I feel that I don't keep a kosher home, and I'm not gonna be a hypocrite, and, - you know.

WH: Here you brought up Orthodox in Warsaw?

WP: Not strictly. . .modern, yes. A poor, a poor, poor modern family.

WH: . . . when you speak . . .what happens when the question comes up about religion . . .

WP: Always comes, always.

WH: How do you answer it? What do you say to people? And how do you feel about it?

WP: Well, I'm going to tell you, I'm telling you the truth. I'm telling the truth, you know, I want you to know, I want you to know one thing. You know, I am very bitter. Terrible bitter. I even talked to the Rabbi about it. They know that I am bitter against the religion. And even the Lubavitch here, the movement here in the City of Milwaukee . . . and the main mad is Rabbi (??Schmukind?) and he knows me, but he is my best friend, you see.

WP: . . . they beautiful people. . . the old Rabbi Twersky . . .when I found a flat, when I came to Milwaukee was next door to the Twersky's and the Black neighborhood where they had the old – shul . . . and his boys were that time teen-agers, they used to play on the middle of the street with ball and pegas. . . and we were close, we still are . . .

WH: Tell me about the Lubavitch . . .

WP: I'm very close with the Rabbi . . . we became friends, and good friends, and I want to say one thing to you. Though I'm not much of a believer, I do support them. Do you know why? Because they honest in their belief. And I'm not disputing it. I'm not telling that I'm right and they're wrong. I might be wrong. And they might be right, but – that's the way I feel.

WH: What is your own personal feeling?

WP: My personal feeling is because of my background, and I've seen what is going on today, and yesterday. And after that big disaster, and what's going on in Israel. What's going

on against us all over the world. If I wouldn't have been involved that way I am, probably I wouldn't feel that way. If I would bury my head in the sand like a lot of us – other people are doing. Probably I wouldn't be as bitter the way I am. But I am too much aware, I am more aware than anybody else. I do get, I want you to know, literature and newsletters from all over. And I know exactly what's going on, and I was involved in an organization that the City Fathers here, the Jews here, the leaders, were against us, and I mentioned it before, I had a problem you know, and so on and so forth.

WH: Were you involved in an organization that tried to defend Jews in a strong manner?

WP: Very strong.

WH: And they were ashamed of it?

WP: Very strong.

WH: And they were embarrassed by you?

WP: Yes. Not embarrassed, they were against us. They openly made certain statements that I'm ashamed of – I'm ashamed -.

WH: A shanda?

WP: I'm ashamed. I'm ashamed that I am a Jew. I want you to know. I am ashamed. On account of those leaders, and even what's going on today.

WH: Well, what's going on today?

WP: Well, what's going on today is, hat we don't do anything. We don't do a darn thing. And they don't let us do.

WH: I assume you have your share here of skinheads and anti-Semites and neo-Nazi's.

WP: That's what I'm trying to day. That's what I'm trying to tell you. We took them off the streets. I want you to know. We took them off the streets . . .there was a group of us, eleven guys. There were 9 Jews and 2 Christians.

WH: "When did this happen?"

WP: Well, it happened when we had a very strong neo-Nazi organization here . . . the biggest population are Germans. The second biggest is Pollacks is here. And we had a big problem here.

WH: How many years ago was it?

WP: In the late '60's and early '70's. They used to attack here (inaudible) they used to break windows in the synagogues, they used to attack Jews on the streets and they used to march on the streets and they used to stay in front of stores and tell the Christians not to go buy . . .

WH: Did this get national coverage?

WP: All over the United States. You know the time in Chicago when they had the problem with – Skokie . . . I was involved there very much with my group. Very much involved.

WH: You went to Skokie?

WP: Oh, sure . . .and the problem that we had, that the Police Department, you see that name I told you before – when you looked in that book, Sal? Sorin? He cut us down in pieces and he was that time in the Jewish – whatever-

WH: Federation?

WP: Federation – (Inaudible) I wouldn't give you a nickel for them! And you know, I used to give big money to them, at one time, I felt that they helped us, the Jewish Family Service and so on and so forth, and then I turned against them. I used to go around and speak against them, and certain organizations, and encourage the Jews not to give them a nickel and I did hurt them very much, I want you to know. I did hurt them very much. But that's a long story behind it. I was stopped driving my car, pulled over the car, and they looked at the car a million times. They used to look in my pockets and look in my car. They thought I carry a weapon with me. I did! I did. There's no – I'm not ashamed of it. I did. Because I'll tell you why.

WH: You need it.

WP: I'll tell you why, because I got telephone calls – and I was attacked several times. I want you to know. That's no lie.

WH: Where, on the street?

WP: On the streets. That's right. I was pulled over many a times by plain clothesman. Many a times. Don't you think that they knew that I carried a weapon? They didn't look very hard to find it, I want you to know. But they didn't. We used to have training in the middle of the night. Two, three o'clock in the morning. A certain part. It was secluded. And we always had the police there, I don't know who sent them there.

WH: So the police, you'd say, were basically on your side, here.

WP: Not exactly. Not – if there were a few, not exact - .

WH: Because of the fact that it's Polish or German that it's more anti-Semitic than the average city in the United States?

WP: I wouldn't say that. I would say, wherever I travel or whatever I do, I do go, I found out it's the same thing. Anti-Semitism is spread so much, it's unbelievable. You see, you touched a subject before that I told you I'm so bitter about. And we don't do anything about. And, listen, in Israel, is, to me it's like my right arm. Like my life. There isn't anybody that can sit in front of me and talk against Israel, be against Israel, but we are being pointed out as a race again, and the whole world is ready, is trying to eliminate us. And we didn't do a darn thing.

WH: What do you mean.

WP: - I'll tell you what I mean. I might (inaudible) express myself, and I might be out of order, and you might – and I would appreciate it if you'll tell me I'm wrong . . . (inaudible) . . . you know, do you receive – there is a piece of literature that comes out every month . . . and they'll give you a summary every month that's going on in the Arab countries and what's going on against Israel . . . especially that they are trying to find out the places that do business that the Jews are involved . . . you probably are aware that there's a lot of companies in the United States that they do business with the Arab countries, and they are strictly, they wouldn't hire the Jews, and - some of them are being fined. So in other words, the Arabs are boycotting us. Are the Jews boycotting? Are the Jews doing something – (inaudible) . . . do you know, I can give you an address, you might be surprised, that they been printing for the past – between 19 and 20 years, printing hate literature against the Jews in 33 languages. And its being sent all over the world.

WH: And it floods the Asian countries . . . and the read it.

WP: Correct. Absolutely. Now, let me ask you a question, the building is still there how come the building was never –

WH: What building.

WP: The building that they print their literature.

WH: Where is it?

WP: I gave you the address . . .in ?Arlington?, West Virginia . . .how come the Jews don't do anything about it? I was willing to do, I want you to know. We got stopped.

WH: . . . isn't there a sense of tremendous frustration that the Jews in this country are not willing to fight for what they believe in, that they're not willing to take active steps?

WP: Correct.

WH: Was there a Jewish Defense League here in Milwaukee?

WP: Yes. And they labeled us for a Jewish Defense League, and we were not, we not the one for Rabbi Kahane . . .they wanted us to work together. Not that I'm against him, I'm not against - . . .

WH: Do you support Him?

WP: (heavy sigh) I did. I did support, - there's certain things that I don't agree with him. And I'll tell you one thing that I'm not trying to tell you that I'm smart because I don't support him, I'm not smart. I think people should listen to him. He's got some good points. But, what I'm trying to tell you is, we talk about Japan, we talk about Korea, we talk about some other countries, and I want you to know, and I mentioned that we didn't do anything about it, we didn't even protest. The rabbi don't stand the pulpits say, 'don't buy anything that's made in Japan, don't buy anything that's made in Korea, don't buy it there because (inaudible) we gotta do something against them. The Arabs are so dumb, they are so dumb, and uneducated, and they are not civilized and they know how to do it, and we don't. We are supposed to be civilized and educated, and we don't do a goddamn thing about it. Nothing. It's the same thing like it was in Poland. If he wanted to do something, the parents didn't let us do.

WH: Why are we like that?

WP: I don't know. My father wasn't that way . . .

WH: Do you think that religion is involved?

WP: Absolutely. 100%. Absolutely. Now, I want you to know one thing, you know, Japan, Korea and whoever, whatever countries are involved, if he would have wanted it opened, because they hate us, I don't have to support them. I don't have to buy his stuff that comes from Korea, and I don't have to buy stuff that comes from Japan. I'm going to make a statement here, okay? My wife and me, I'll go into any store, if I need something, if it isn't made in this country, we don't buy it. I don't drive any European cars. I fight with me friends that they buying European cars. And I talk to them. And German cars. Mercedes . . .



- WH: Survivors . . .What do you think makes a survivor buy a Mercedes? For spite?
- WP: Not for spite. They think – well, I don't want to go into it, because that burns me – right away they tell you, Israel, Israel got Mercedes. Israel got no choice!
- WH: Israel has to.
- WP: - that's what I'm trying to tell you. Now . . . here in Milwaukee . . . I'll bet . . . between 10 Japanese cars, around 5, 6, Jews driving Japanese cars.
- WH: Why? Do they think they got a metsieh?
- WP: Metsieh or not a metsieh, who the heck are they support? I'm asking you a question now. Whom did they support? And they laughing at us . . . most of the dealers, of the Japanese cars are Jews here in the city . . . so that's what burns me and that's why I'm sick. And I mean it. For instance, if I'll die, I'll die sick on account of that. I'll go to my grave with a bitter heart.
- WH: . . . do you think that America can really be trusted as a one thousand percent ally of Israel?
- WP: Well, I'll tell you what. It can go just as far – whoever the president's going to be in this country. BUT they do not feel – the way we feel against the Jews. They do not feel towards Israel the way we do. They do not feel even to the disaster that we had that killed 6 million Jews. They way we do. And I want you to know, what's going to happen another 20, 30, 40 years from – we not going to be around. If the Jews are going to feel that way. Even the children from the second generation, they're not third generation. That's gonna be all over with. That's gonna be forgotten, it's gonna be history.
- WH: That's why what you have to say is so important.
- WP: Yah, absolutely.
- WH: Because I don't want it to be forgotten.
- WP: That's correct!
- WH: If it goes into a book, at least it'll be there.
- WP: That's correct! That's what I'm trying to tell you. This is what hurts me. That's what I'm sick of.

WH: What about the Pollard affair?

WP: . . . I can't go into it. I don't – I just, as being a Jew and being an American, I want you to know, that I'm an American patriot, I am an American Patriot, I want you to know, I love this country, this country accepted me. And I raised a family here, and I live a good life. I was never called up by anybody that told me, 'Hey, you driving good cars' or 'you made too much money,' or whatever it is.

WH: Nobody ever said that to you?

WP: No. I am an American patriot. I want you to know. I even can't stand that if I hear people from our people, talking against this country, which they haven't got no business.

WH: . . . you have an American flag in front of your house . . . you got an American flag in front of your business . . . would you mind telling me a little more about that? . . .

WP: I want you to know, that being a Jew – and I told you that I love Israel, because it's a Jewish state, I think, I hoped, and I still hope, that Israel probably maybe, if Israel will exist in generations to come, that word 'Jew' is going to be a different meaning than it is today, by a lot of anti-Semites, and a lot of other people that in years from now, we gonna be considered to be as anybody else on this earth. And a good number at that! I lived in a country, that I would never say that what I'm gonna tell you, that if this country would need me to go fight, I would, tomorrow – this minute, this second. When they lived in a country, I wouldn't say that, and I wouldn't do it. Because, the country that I come from, I seen too many bad things, too many had things, and I've seen the way the Jews were treated.

WH: After the war, did you have any interest in going to Israel?

WP: Oh, yes. . . I was prepared to go to Israel. I still got my passes. But for selfish reasons, for selfism, selfish reasons, I want you to know, I came to this country. I'm telling it the way it is. I remember Cyous. I was involved, in 1947 beginning of '48. I was involved in snubbing ammunition and some other things. And people . . .

WH: . . . you were involved? In what way?

WP: Well, in a lot of ways. I'm not talking to you out of my head, I got things to prove, too . . . being a tailor, and the city that I lived in Germany, when Israel became a State, I had ready an Israeli flag, it was four stories – high. And I went to the highest building in the town, and the roof, and I anchored it on the roof, and let it down on the building.

WH: . . . getting back to religion . . . you said something about that you feel bitter. Before the war began would you say that you're a person who believes in G-d?

- WP: Oh, yea, I still do believe, I still do believe in something, deep in my heart. Deep in my heart, I still do believe.
- WH: But you still do have the question of, 'Hey, where was he?'
- WP: I do not ask questions, that they impossible to answer. Whom can I ask those questions – the rabbi
- WH: What does he say?
- WP: . . . 'Walter, I got haven't got my answer, and I want to talk to you about it?'
- WH: 'I don't want to talk about it?'
- WP: Yes. I can't tell you that you are wrong, and I can't tell you that you are right, okay? I did appreciate that answer. Who in the world, is the rabbi to give me an answer on those things to the questions that I've got.
- WH: When you were in the camps . . . can you tell me, were there instances, situations whether it was in Maidanek, or you were in Auschwitz, where you had to use – you have to think very quickly to get out of something, to survive something? . . . were there times when your life was saved because you thought of something very quickly? When there was a Selection for example?
- WP: Well, probably yes. I'll tell you what I did. The Selection, you just touched something. Being a tailor, I used to sew on a lot of those numbers, the triangles, and the Star of Davids for the Jews, and non-Jews, . . . and 1944, late '43, '44 when there were a lot of Selections, I took off my Star of David and I put on a red triangle, I didn't wear a Star of David.
- WH: Weren't you in a barrack though with other people?
- WP: Yah, they knew, and they told me 'What are you trying to do?' There's one guy here, that he knew about it. And, I was told, 'What are trying to do? They're going to kill you.' I said, 'They're going to kill me anyway.' But it saved me at the Selection, I want you to know. I did, I did save me at the Selection.
- WH: You were lined up. . .
- WP: . . . we were five abreast, there were Jews and non-Jews. Together. They only recognize - . . . how did they recognize you as a Jew or non-Jews? Is the Star of David or the triangle (inaudible).

WH: . . . what was your job there?

WP: Oh, gosh, a million and one jobs. Name it, and I was. Whenever they called a carpenter, believe it or not, - I was a barber, they called a barber, I was a barber. I tried to do everything . . . just to survive.

WH: What long range lessons did you draw from that experience about human nature, about life in general. What did you learn from this?

WP: I found out about human nature. Now let me say this to you. I'm going to put this in two phases. Human nature. Human nature about the Germans and the Nazi's and whoever was involved in the collaborators, whoever was involved. If somebody were to come to me today, and would say to me 'You got a choice, you'll have to live 6 months, up to a year with the Nazi's or whatever it is, or you'll have to live in the jungle amongst wild animals,' I'll go live with the wild animals. Now, on the other hand, human nature, I always ask a question, when I was in the camps, in Maidanek we had the biggest populations with Jews, there were only very few of Christians, and Auschwitz was a big (?) Christian population. When we were laying on the bunk . . amongst the 5,6 – you had different languages, and different religions, and different whatever it is. But, most of the people, I would say that most of the people get along. Jew and non-Jew. I doubted that if there were amongst the prisoners, the different religions that they did care if you were a Jew, or that the Jew did care if he was not another Jew. Because they were both, they were of tsores. You follow me – no matter what religion you were. Sure. And the people that lived, got along – how come, this was in terrible, terrible, conditions, and people can't get along in good conditions, when they are free. When they live and they raise families and how come the people cannot live together and understand each other regardless if, what kind of religion they are.

WH: Does that tell you that people forget?

WP: Well, I don't think that they forget. I don't think that they forget, no. They following a stream. They don't that the people forget. They following a stream. If I had an argument or a fight with a Pollack, well not all of them, but certainly the one that they did – they used to always say, 'Hey, don't be so tough. You know, somebody is going to wash their behind with you. They gonna make soap out of you.' I got to tell you a little story, if I may, we talking about human and humanity. Where a lot of people were torn and - with the extreme about good and bad, and I don't – and don't get me wrong, I don't try here to defend the Germans, or the Nazi's – I don't try to defend them, I could feel that there a lot amongst them, that they hated to do what they did, I want you to know. And I talked to some of them. But they were caught and in that stream, in the machinery, and they were trying to save their own life. But not, I cannot see why it did happen amongst the prisoners in the camps. But they were.

WH: You mean people were kapos?

WP: Well, kapos, - why did a kapo become kapo? Why do you think? – Some kapos were good, some kapos were bad. A guy, talking about a kapo, I'll tell you a little story if I may. This was in Birkenau. I was taken to a commander and we working . . . making wash rooms . . . I cannot tell exactly I think we were about 75 guys in the commando. The main kapo was a German, a prisoner, and he used to be very nice guy. Very nice guy. But I'll tell you what I did. And I deserved it. I deserved it. I started to think about it, not today, and not this minute, years and years ago, . . . I was working at ?Krankenbau? and it was 12 o'clock, it was noon time. For days I heard the guys were talking about that there are certain blacks where the sick people are. They delivered the soup and they can't eat, and then they throw away the soup. So they used to go and hide there and run and get a little soup. So one day I tried to do it. And I didn't know the time. I took off 12 o'clock, behind the barracks and I went into one barracks where this guy says 'Hey, have you got a little bit soup left?' And he says, 'Well, why don't you wait for a few minutes, I'll give out the soup. Whatever – if it's going to be left, I'll give you some -.' So I was waiting and I didn't know the time. And I was missing there. You know, they counted – and I missing. And it was a good thing that nobody from those bastards, those murderers, came from (inaudible) and tell them to count, you see one is missing, and not only that, I wouldn't have been here today, because I would have been accused of trying to escape. That's exactly the way it happened. So, I got that little soup, a little soup, and I drank it up, and I start to run back, and they were waiting for me. And this guy was just furious. I got a beating that time – I was paralyzed, I want you to know. I couldn't – they had to hold me underneath their arm. I couldn't – I was paralyzed, such a beating I got. I got a beating with - like a 4 x 4, you know. Over my muscles, my neck. And I'm suffering until today I want you to know.

WH: Is that where your back pain comes from?

WP: A lot of things. I'm suffering. I got a problem here too. I've got a problem, that I've got – not from this beatings, I used to get a lot of beatings – floating bone fragments.

WH: How did you survive that?

WP: I don't know.

WH: How did you make it?

WP: Fighting. Fighting. Fighting. And I'm still fighting. And I'll die and I'm going to fight it.

WH: But there was also a good measure of luck also.

WP: Well, -.

WH: How do you feel about that?

WP: I don't – luck? I don't know what you call luck. You know, I don't want to sound by being an idiot, but I tried to analyze a lot of things, a lot of things I'm afraid to analyze. I tried to live in the camps, even regardless the way it was, to live in peace, (inaudible) but when there were times that I couldn't make a fist, nobody could put a finger on me, I want you to know. I was in Birkenau and I carried a weapon with me, I want you to know. (inaudible) I was fighting, and I did stick my nose in certain things that I shouldn't, that I suffered on account of it.

WH: Didn't it absolutely outrage you and made you feel just terrible that for the most part, you were in these camps and you couldn't fight and here were these guys, they had the uniforms, they had the guns, they had the weapons, doesn't that make you feel that such a tremendous –

WP: I got to tell you a situation if I may. In Auschwitz . . . they used to bring rutabaga . . . and they had holes in the ground, they used to put them in the ground and cover them up with a potatoe skin. I used to work there . . . there was this one S.S. man, he was an Ukrainian . . . we were in the hole . . . and all of a sudden this other guy . . . we both lift up the heads and we talked only one second, that bastard seen us. He start – he was about 25 feet ways, he had his rifle on this way, he took it off, came to the hole, turned it around . . . with that wood, you know, and picked it up and wanted to clobber me. I got a hold of that rifle and pulled him into the hole. Kicked the shit out of him. I knew that I'm gonna get killed. And I don't care. When he got out he says to me, 'Please, (?), give him back the (inaudible). (inaudible) says to me, 'kill him!' . . . so I took the rifle by the other side, and turned around, and I throw the rifle, and he says to me, with those words, 'I'll get you for it!' Do you know that if somebody else would have seen this what this happened, do you think he would have been alive now? He was afraid. He didn't even reported me. He was afraid. A Jew take away a rifle from a German soldier, from a Nazi!

WH: Embarrassment.

WP: Embarrassment. You know, he got a hold of me!

WH: Do you think that what happened in Europe could happen here in this country?

WP: I – yes. I believe. I do believe.

WH: You do believe it could.

WP: You believe it could.

WH: To Blacks, or to Jews, or –

WP: You see, you are aware, just as I am aware that today the Blacks, a great majority of them are – became anti-Semitic. And they are against the Jews – you know, it doesn't take much, very much, to turn them against somebody. And again, with the organizations, they got amongst them, and you probably know just as much as I do with Farrakan, and-

WH: . . . in what way is it different to be a survivor living in Milwaukee compared to the way your life runs if you're living in New York?

WP: New York is a jungle. I think of N.Y., even the survivors, the Jews, their mentality is different than I will see in Milwaukee. We live in a small town. Their outlook is different than ours.

WH: In what way?

WP: Well, survival. And what's going on against us. Which, they are not much aware the way we are here. They live there, too much – they are surrounded by a world of people and New York people are more involved with their self being and making money and so on and so forth than we are here. I'm not trying to tell you that we are not here after the money to try to make a success, (inaudible). But I think that you cannot grab a New Yorker Jew, a survivor, and sit down and talk to him, that he should know why we – what's going on in the world against us.

WH: You think they surround themselves with other survivors, with other Jews, and they don't have a chance to meet people outside their community?

WP: That's correct.

WH: You wound up meeting people outside the community because you were forced to, almost. You lived in Milwaukee.

WP: I am. That's correct, absolutely. Not forced - .

WH: You could avoid it, but you had an opportunity to do it.

WP: Yes. But you see, I cannot compare myself to anybody. I know I do talk and I got a lot of friends in New York . . .

- WH: What do you think made it possible for you to seize the opportunities? I saw in the biography . . . that you came here as a tailor, and in 1967, you went into the scrap metal business. How did that opportunity emerge?
- WP: Well, let me say this to you. Unfortunately, I think when I came to this country, I was very sick. I was and still am. I went through a lot of hell there. A lot of hell. I went into the tailor business and I was in downtown for 8 years . . . during those 8 years I was quite often in the hospitals - .
- WH: Your back?
- WP: Not only the back, I had some other problems. First of all, when I came to this country, I had major surgeries. I got 80% of my stomach out. I had cancer.
- WH: When you came to this country? That's a long time ago.
- WP: Yeh. They gave me six months to live, in 1951 they gave me 6 months to live. And I was since then, operated three times already. My last surgery was in '67. And I'm still under doctor's care, and I go for check-ups, every six months (inaudible). But this is not the whole thing. You know, I went in the tailor business, and I made very good. I made a good living. You can imagine, with all the sores I had, and everything else, in 1957 I moved into my own home, a brand new home I got. I didn't do so bad.
- WH: Eight years after you got here.
- WP: It wasn't so bad . . . and besides that, bills and bills and bills. In 1960 I gave up the tailor shop . . . because I was so sick I thought that this is it. I went to Rochester, Minn., the Mayo Brothers, I been going there since 1955. I gave up the tailor shop, and I want you to know, I was practically penniless. But I came back from Rochester, I had surgery there, and I start, I had to - I needed a job to make a living, so I start to go from one extreme to another, name it and I was. From a salesman, I was in the insurance business, but I wanted to go into the scrap business. I always wanted to go into the scrap business and that's how I got teamed up with another guy, and we went on a truck, and that's how I got into the scrap business. I got in the scrap business, I bought somebody's else's business, which the people went broke. Bankrupt.
- WH: Why did you want to go into the scrap business?
- WP: Well, first of all, my doctors always told me to get a business or a job to work outside. And, this is the only thing that I could think of that I can work without no education, with no background. What could I have done?
- WH: What some survivors did in other cities was they would buy real estate . . .



WP: . . . I had a big supermarket too . . .

WH: Before or after - .

WP: Before . . . I bought a supermarket in an area which is predominantly German. And after a year and a half, the Black people start to move in. And the Germans told me if you gonna do business, if we gonna come in and see Black people here, we not gonna come in to you any more. So, what in the world could I have done? So I had to get out. I told them, so what can I do if they come in I can't tell them to go. MY cash register doesn't know the difference than the color. That's the truth.

WH: Did that neighborhood turn Black eventually?

WP: Yes. So I got out of it. So then I went into another deal . . .

WH: Why didn't survivors here go into real estate?

WP: They did, but here was no market for it . . .

WH: You were able to raise the money for the supermarket, right?

WP: Well, I'll tell you, I did have some friends, which they borrowed me some money too.

WH: Survivors?

WP: No.

WH: You had said before that the survivors helped each other.

WP: Yeh, I- you know, I got a lot of pride in me. If I would have gone to a survivor and he would have tell me 'no' that would have been the biggest disaster for me. I did borrow the money, yes, I did help them, yes. I did put them in a business, yes. I'm not sitting here telling you stories. You'll probably find out if you talk to the others, they'll tell you. I did bring people here from Europe here to Milwaukee, yes. I did . . . I even did bring over here families that they were sent to other states, I did bring them over to Milwaukee, and they made big successes . . .

WH: . . . I hope they appreciate you for it.

WP: I don't look. I never looked, and I don't look, for a thank you even. See? If they appreciate it, and in their heart find it, they know what I did. And some of them did for me, too. I'm not saying that they didn't do for me. Sure they did. Absolutely.

- WH: Do you think that American Jews can really understand what happened over there in Europe?
- WP: No, there's nobody – I'll tell you, there's – even you and me. When I talk to people, I tell them the same thing. I tell them that if I would have been on the other side of the fence, it would be for me very hard for me to understand, and to believe – that such a thing could have happen, that one human being did to the other. It's very hard, I'm telling you, it's very hard to understand, you see?
- WH: . . . the Americans . . . when they hear that somebody was survivor and lived through the camps, there's a fear that they have over what they might have been willing to do to someone else in order to survive.
- WP: I know, this is true. I . . . been asked questions . . . and they ask me those questions. They ask me, 'How did you survive?' Well I tell them the same thing what I told you before here. You know, we did not know, we did not know if we did go to sleep what's going to happen during the night, what's going to happen the next morning. We didn't know. Actually, we were prepared, and it almost comes to that I heard so many times when I came to this country, that we went to death like sheep. That almost comes to it, BUT, people fail to realize one thing, that the one, that they came in from the outside, those people were already, half their minds didn't work, because they lived in hunger, if they did bring them from the ghettos. They were (inaudible) that they going to be resettled and they gonna go to work. The people even that they knew, they found out, they didn't believe it that. See, nobody can come and tell me that, that nobody in those years believed, even somebody that escaped and came and told them, that what's going on, 'They killing,' They didn't believe! 'How in the world can they do it!'
- WH: They didn't want to believe.
- WP: I want you to know, it's documented, but I'm going to tell you right now, and there's some books written about – when I was in Auschwitz, two young men escaped from Auschwitz. You know, to escape from Auschwitz is just as possible to escape from if, somebody is 100 feet, a 1,000 feet underneath the ground. Underneath the ocean, and they can't swim. You had to have help from the outside. Otherwise forget about it. And anybody who would try to escape, and didn't have them help, -pst! That's it! They were amongst the few that tried to escape and they were not caught . . . one was 27 years old, and one was 23 years old, got the pictures from the men, they escaped, and they reached Czechoslovakia . . . the border is not too far away. When they came to Czechoslovakia, this was in 1943 . . . finally they made it to the Jewish community, and they didn't believe them. You know what happened? They were tipped off that they gonna go give them all to the police and they gonna hand them over to the police.

WH: For spreading lies.

WP: For spreading lies. So they escaped and went from Czechoslovakia to Hungary. What to you think happened in Hungary?

WH: Same thing.

WP: The same thing. They handed them over to the police and they did bring them back to Auschwitz.

WH: What happened to them there?

WP: I'll tell you what happened to them. They called all the, - they had the whole camp out, camp 'D.' And they always used to do it. Took them all, and they took these two young men, and two chairs, and tightened them down to chairs, and this goddamn (inaudible) Nazi read the proclamation, that they tried to escape, and they were sentenced to death. They killed them inch by inch, sitting on the chairs, and we had to stay that time, 24 hours and watch them. And then, they did lay on the chair – sit on the chairs tied down for three days. It was impossible to escape. I was encouraged by an S.S. man, and S.S. man by the name of Alfred Mintz, he was in charge. I worked there. He was in charge of those soldiers, the S.S. men that did bring in Jews to the camp and they stayed over night, or two nights, but they gave them a place, there were – had special small barracks where they could sleep there, so they needed bed sheets and blankets and whatever . . . this man used to encourage me. He wanted to help me to escape. I didn't trust him.

WH: You felt he might help you escape and turn you in?

WP: I don't know. . . it came to the point that when he used to get packages from home, I used to sit at the table and eat with him. And he told me that he is willing to help me to escape. But where? Okay, I'll get out from the camp, where in the hell would I go?

WH: Why was he willing to help you?

WP: I don't know. I just don't know. Til today I don't know.

WH: Did you think, did you always have hope that you were gonna get out of this, that you were going to make it?

WP: No, no, no. I never had any hope . . . not me, some others too, we did, try to figure out when the day is going to come for us. You know, with the percentage of people getting killed, the percentage of people getting sick, and diseases and so on and so forth . . . at one time we had in the camp a typhoid. My gosh, there was no help, there was no medication, no doctors, and you could see that people are dying just like flies. So we

tried to figure out when you gonna be next. I gotta tell you a little story. You heard that we had in Auschwitz and Birkenau, we had an orchestra, the men had an orchestra, and the women, you know, that's why they had on t.v. that they had one time they place, 'Playing for Time,' (inaudible name) they should have burned it, they should have never had shown that thing on it – I think that was the biggest proproganda.

WH: Look who played the part, remember, Vanessa Redgrave.

WP: I know, I know. The biggest proproganda. The kapomeister, the guy who was the leader from the orchestra, the conductor, was a well-know conductor in Russia, he was a Jewish man, and the musicians, they did wear all those dark blue jackets, whatever, but anyways, one day this man, this Russian conductor, vanished. They did away with him. There was a French Jew, he was the violinist, a very nice, special person, he was not a youngster any more. And he used to sleep – where I used to sleep, on the bunk . . .so they made him for the leader of this orchestra, this man. Very seldom did we talk about getting free. Maybe America was going to get us free. But this time we did talk about-somebody did talk about it. You know what this man said? And this is something that whenever we talk about it, it always comes to my mind, it never leaves my mind, and he used to say, he says, 'You know, you know your children?' I says, 'I doubt it. It might be a miracle if some of us is going to survive.' 'Maybe,' he says, but he says, 'if it's gonna be that miracle, if some of us is going to survive, we will wish that we should have been dead.' I want you to know that it made sense to me now. Then, it didn't make any sense, but it made sense to me after the war.

WH: Because you have to live with what you saw.

WP: Correct. People say, well you are a lucky man, you survived. Take a look here, you live beautiful, like you just mentioned before, I live a nice life. Ahh. You know I'm happy go-lucky fellow anyway, but - .

WH: Do you have nightmares – still?

WP: Terrible. Terrible.

WH: More now than before?

WP: Never stops. More.

WH: . . . did you ever talk to anybody about the nightmares, professionally?

WP: Oh yes. Many times. As a matter of fact, I'm talking right now, medicine for it . Right now . . . I'm just going to be a psychologist.

WH: And does it help?

WP: It helps a little bit, yah. It helps. It makes me very tired. But it helps.

WH: Do you have children?

WP: Oh yes . . . two sons and I got a daughter and I've got five grandchildren.

WH: So you've got nachas!

WP: Well, - my daughter lived in Israel for 16 years, and she's divorced, she's got two children . . . they just moved back here about a year ago . . . my son lives in Florida . . . he's got a wife and three children . . . and one son the youngest, just got married a year ago. He married Leopold's daughter.

WH: . . . if somebody came up to you and said, 'How did you find the strength to rebuild your life here, to survive,' what would you tell him?

WP: I think in my case, it's very simple. Very simple. I felt that I'm going to build a home and a family, and I was dreaming of giving them the world. That's what - gave me the courage. I never had, never have - when I grew up, I never had enough food. I'm not talking about any luxury things, or anything, I never had any food. There was not enough food.

WH: But didn't you feel crushed when you learned that you've lost you - brothers and sisters and parents. How do you get the strength to go on after that?

WP: This is the only way that I could get the strength, I didn't know what - the loss what I had, and after so many years, after 4 years later, 5 years coming to this country, don't forget one thing, you know, they say that time is a healer. Though you feel heart-broken, or whatever it is, but you were trying to build up a new life.

WH: Do you have any relatives here?

WP: Not at all . . . not one relative no place else in the world.

WH: . . . when people lose parents, sibling, they go into a profound depression. You, were in concentration camps for years, you were hiding, your whole family was killed, you came to a new country, I think that people undergo tragedies and crises that are much less than what you went through, and they complain much more. What lesson can you give them about on how to cope with tragedy . . . when you consider everything, you've coped remarkably well. How do you tell somebody else who has a problem, what they can do?

WP: Well, I'll tell you what I do . . . I do speak quite often to the B'nai B'rith youth here in the city – and some of them come from all over the country. Some of them come from other countries. And I do speak to them on intermarriages, so on and so forth, I only can tell them what I feel is right or wrong. And I'm not a connoisseur on it, I don't know, but I just, I can feel Myself, myself, associating with people not in my faith. And believe me, they nice, good people. . . (inaudible) . . . Now, again, that's me what I'm talking about. You, know, I'm a funny person. I had a problem after the war. I was drinking a lot. And I was treated by doctors, a terrible problem. I was smoking. Every third day a carton of Pall Malls. I was looking for fights. I got involved in a lot of fights. Even here in Milwaukee, if anybody only said a bad word about a Jew. I was working on my job and I was the only Jew working there, working for a Jew. And I was treated by certain people there, terrible bad, and when I talked to my boss, he always tried to push it away (inaudible). One guy in particular he was going to law school, and working there part time. He is a big Italian guy. A City Attorney in a small town. His parents and him they came from Yugoslavia. Very anti-Semitic. Terribl. And this young man used to do to me certain things that was just horrible. So I told him, 'Frank,' I says, 'Please, don't do it.' He came up with certain things there, with Nazi salutes, and Hitler and all that stuff you know. So I says to him, 'Frank, please don't do it. You're going to go so far until one day I'll beat the shit out of you that your own mother isn't gonna recognize you.' The day came, and I did. And I gave myself up to the police. They took him to the hospital and required 29 stitches. I almost killed that guy. He didn't press charges against me. He did not. That's why I left. That's why – I told you the story before, I just gave it over to Meyer Saks, with my job. When I went into my own business, about a year later, the same young man came to me, to apologize, and he says to me, 'I am inviting you to my wedding. I'm getting married.' And I did go to the wedding.

WH: What kind of Yugoslavian was he?

WP: Cro-asian . . .now, coming back to myself. I talked to myself. Now, this I want to point out to you. When I was talk to give up smoking, I said, 'How in the world can I give up smoking? I'm going to die, and I'm not going to give it up, how can I?' But I am an individual that sometimes my wife sys, 'You know, I see you, and I've heard so much, and I'm amazed,' (WP show WH pictures of son Michael.) . . .so, I can talk to myself when I'm alone and try to analyze things. From right to wrong. And that took me out from a lot of terrible spots.

WH: But how do you transmit that to other people?

WP: I try to. You know . . . I'm trying to talk to my children the same way. I do, 'before you do, talk to yourself.' Find out if it's right. If you doing the right thing. If you talk . . yourself into a lot of things, you can talk yourself OUT of a lot of things. And I mean it. And I prove it.

WH: My father used to say to me, (needs translation). But you could also talk to yourself out of it, that's true.

WP: I did say, 'How in the world can I give up smoking?' You know what I did? And I did. I park the car. I walked out from the car. I crossed the street. And I reached for a cigarette. And I took out the package of cigarettes, and I was thinking, and I says to myself, 'Shall I smoke? Or shall I stop? Shall I smoke?' And I just walked out from the car talking to myself. And subconsciously, I took the package of cigarettes, I twisted, tore it up and threw it away. I took out my Ronson lighter, a brand new lighter, the first guy that came towards me, and I says, 'Hey, do you smoke?' He says, 'Yes.' 'here is a gift, a lighter.' And since then, I didn't touch a cigarette.

WH: (inaudible) will power.

WP: That's why it's –

Conclusion of Interview