

Did you lose any?

I don't think so.

OK.

I actually don't know.

I lost my train of thought there.

I do that.

With like the Gestapo and stuff like that, you said that they-- you had the people ratting on each other, essentially, in order-- you said that you had noticed that?

Notice what now?

Like people turning in-- like you said about-- if they had a neighbor who was hiding a Jew or something like that. You think that was one of the-- I don't know-- something that could be to blame?

It happened everywhere, and it happened in every country because there were Nazis everywhere. There were Nazis in Holland.

Do you think--

It wasn't very strong, but it was there, and it was in every other country, too. In Norway they called them the Quislings. You might have heard that word. And he was a Nazi, and whoever followed him was a Quisling, so. And that happened everywhere, but it wasn't predominant. The Germans would find people much more often than would the people that actually lived in the country.

So you think it's more Nazi-motivated or economics?

At that time it was more Nazism. [INAUDIBLE] I'll give you an idea. I was on my bicycle right in the middle-- in the center of town, and I was trying to get home. And in Holland, you have a license to ride a bike like you have a car license here. You also had one for your bicycle.

And a policeman stopped me and wanted to see my license, but it's fastened onto the bike. And I showed it to him, and he said to me, may I see your identification card? Well, the Germans had given out identification cards. Everybody had a nice white card. We had a white card, too, but it had a big red J stamped on it, which identified us immediately as a Jew.

He took one look and saw that red J. He said, get out of here right now. Make it home the fast way you can because they're going to start picking up people again. That was a Dutch policeman. See? They were still on our side, too, and I got home all right.

But that's the way we defended ourselves. People were everywhere. Wherever they could help you they would. I have a girlfriend. She still lives in Amsterdam. She's not Jewish, but the whole family was in the underground. She was 17 years old and took, one by one, 75 Jewish babies out of Amsterdam and distributed those babies up in the northern part of Holland to farmers and people that lived there that would take a child in their home. And they kept them until the war was over, and those children were saved.

She ran munition. They delivered underground newspapers. Her home-- at least 20 people every night were hiding there. Her father made a hiding place just like the Franks did, but he did it in the bathroom. He had a place there that he

opened up, and 17 people could slip in in that space, and then he would close it off. And they would have to stay there, no coughing, no sneezing, no nothing until the Gestapo had left the house again.

It was pretty tight and pretty dangerous because that would have been killed if they found them, all of them. And that's just the way the Dutch were. Everybody tried to help as much as they could, except the ones that became Nazis, and there weren't that many of them, considering the population. And that's all before camp.

So have you-- have you seen Schindler's List?

Yes. Did you see it?

What did you think of it? I haven't seen it yet.

You haven't? I can't believe that. Well, what the kids usually ask me is, did you see Schindler's List? Yes, I did. Did you? Yes, ma'am. And then they want to know, was it real? And I say, did you see it in black and white? Yes, ma'am. I said, well, it was so real I saw it in glorious color. And that's not a lie either.

I've been there, and the camps I was in were worse. Of course, a regular concentration camp was certainly worse as what Schindler had, and it was pretty bad. It wasn't a place where you really want it to be. Yes, it was very real.

Did it bring back negative feelings or--

Well--

Since you-- you talk about this stuff a lot, so I don't-- I wouldn't think it would.

Yes. Yes, it did. And then, again, well, I've seen all of this before. It is 50 years later. It was not a fun movie to watch, but it was a very realistic movie to watch. And I'm glad I did see it.

Because I have family and friends-- my husband would not have gone. Bless his heart, he was so tender-hearted. It would have absolutely done him in.

See, I was wondering because I know--

I'm surprised you said you haven't seen it, as a history buff.

Well, I'm-- my time-- I'm not very good with my time.

No, you have to learn.

Well, my friend's dad--

You can get it on tape now, can't you?

I believe what I'm going to do-- see, the thing is, I have a-- I want to watch it on my LaserDisc player, which-- you get real good sound and everything, but we don't have a LaserDisc place down in Starkville because it's in the middle of nowhere.

So I haven't rented-- because I don't want to rent it on video because the sound-- the sound really-- it can-- especially with the type of system I have-- I have like a home theater system, so I would like to get it on LaserDisc so I can get the-- I'll get the theater wide, and I'll get the pure-- you get a different movie because some people say-- I can show you a movie on a video and then show it on my system, and you'll get a totally different effect in order to do it justice.

You know, I have a hearing aid on, so it's a little bit better now. But I just got it. Stereo didn't mean a thing to me with

one ear. You do have two.

See? You can be in this apartment and holler, Dickie, and I'll say, where are you, and you'll say, here. It means nothing, absolutely-- I can't tell where the sound came from. It's a bit better now, but stereo sound wouldn't mean a thing to me, not now. Did you see?

Yeah. But the reason I ask about the movie is because I have-- a friend of mine's dad-- he was in the Vietnam War, and a couple of the movies-- he went to see one of them, and it was so realistic to him that he ended up having a lot of problems with it afterwards because he hadn't really been having the nightmares and stuff like that in a long time or waking up in cold sweats or whatever. And he started having them again after he had seen a movie that was that real.

OK, let me say it to you this way. Don't worry about the laser thing. It's so realistic. You have plenty of it on a video. The one that you might be too real for you.

Well, I like that-- the thing is, especially with movies like that, Spielberg in particular with this orchestra and stuff like that, it really, really comes through real well because I have my five speakers, so you get the pure-- it's like you are--

--in it.

--in-- and it's definitely a difference.

I'm sure.

And I can just imagine when-- the next step in watching movies as far as being there-- because it's really amazing. My friends-- I've kind of impressed them with some movies because you have this-- it sounds like the guy's behind you.

And if you are watching on video, you don't get the same effect. And you really get some-- and I'm sure Schindler's List does this, which-- it's not really a good thing, but it gets the effect across. In movies where there's a beating or something like that, you feel it, really. I mean that's--

And that's what I'm trying to-- that might be a little bit much--

Well--

--because it is very realistic already.

I guess there's a-- you have to draw the line somewhere because it's-- I don't know. It's like you get to a certain point where it's kind of like how they were training a lot of the guards--

Oh, there were [BOTH TALKING] of guards shooting and so on.

--to practice to where they got numb to what they were doing and seeing.

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

And that's-- I don't know. I'm sure-- you said you saw a lot of stuff go on, so was it hard for you to-- you have part of you wanting to become numb to it and part of you--

Well, I told you this before. And you have to learn it. You have to learn to do it. You have to turn off your mind. It's important really have to do that. And if you don't, you succumb to it. You just can't take it anymore.

And that's exactly what we didn't want to do. We were going to prove we could make it, and we did make it. There was only one time when my friend and I hung on each other, literally. You have to realize we weighed at that point-- it was near the end, but it wasn't the end yet. We all weighed 88 pounds. That was it. We didn't get to eat hardly anything.

And we said to each other, I don't want any more, just leaning, and then within that next second we said, uh-uh. And we drew enough strength again to continue again. We were going to make it. We didn't know that, if we would or not. But we sure thought positive at most times.

So it's almost like trying to not let them get--

Yeah, kind of in a dream world anyway.

Keep them from getting--

--to you.

--and letting them-- give in to what they--

Felt they were--

--what they wanted anyway.

That's right. See, we were-- we were making-- as I say, near the end, we were in Hamburg at that time, in the camp, and they wanted us to dig tank traps. What are tank traps?

OK. They wanted to dig 3-meter-deep-- from the top, 3 meters down, coming to a point, and 3 meter wide. So you can see this tank comes, and it gets to the edge. There's nothing there. It topples down, and it stands straight up. And there's no way to get out that way.

Well, first of all, we didn't want to build that because it was for the Americans. Let's face it. They weren't our enemy. But we were so weak-- imagine that you barely have any strength anymore to start with. You have shovels that-- a good-sized shovel. And it has a handle, and it was one and a half time as tall as I am.

And you stand in the bottom, and you tried to get some dirt up and throw it up 3 meters, 3 yards high. Uh-uh. You haven't got the strength. Besides, it was raining. That dirt was so heavy, you have no idea. That was hard, hard, hard work. And that's when we came to conclusion we didn't want to live any longer and this was not worth it anymore. And then within the next second, yes, we're going to do it anyway. Tough, yes. It was tough.

Did you know-- towards the end, did you know what was-- or did you kind of gather what was going on as far as the war?

We never had any radios or anything like that. I can tell you, however, that we arrived in Auschwitz on D-Day. Did you know in history when D-Day was?

Switched-- I'm trying to make sure I don't get--

It's my most important day.

It's not June 6.

Yes, it is.

June 6?

It's my birthday. June 6 is my birthday, and in June 6, 1944 I arrived in Auschwitz. What a present. I got a number stamped in my arm. That was my present from the Germans. That's not a pleasant affair either.

The pen that they used looked much like a ballpoint pen, and what they did-- they grabbed your arm, and they had that number in front of them. That was the next one up. There's a sharp pin here, and they just made in dots until they have the whole number. So you-- each time you feel this, it goes right into your skin.

Didn't any of us cry. We weren't going to cry in front of a German in the first place, so certainly not then. It is painful, yes, but it is not that painful that you need to cry over it if you don't want to. But you get weak in the stomach. It kind of makes you nauseated. And then you look at it, and it's pitch-black ink and blood all coming out at the same time. It looks awful.

And then they wipe it off and you can see partial number, but it swells up so that you really can't tell until several days later. And it's a weird feeling, very weird. And you know you can't get rid of it. It's in there for good.

And the doctor took mine out-- I was in Atlanta-- after I arrived in the United States. And he had looked at it long enough as far as he was concerned. He was a neighbor. He was a surgeon. And he was a POW in Manila. He was taken by the Japanese and was one of their prisoners. He knew what I felt over that number.

And you come to the United States, and it's nice and smooth. And you can see that whole number. And I worked in my aunt's store, and it was a men's store. So there are a lot of young men that came in wanting to buy something or another, and they'd see that number, and, hey, what you got? Is that your phone number? It gets pretty tiring.

And this doctor just decided that I should have that out, and he took it out, didn't charge me. I told him I had only been here two months at that time. And he said, don't you want that out? I said, yes, I certainly do. But I said, I haven't got the money to pay. I haven't got that much money together yet. I've only been here two months.

He said, did I ask you for money? No. He says, well, OK. I'll pick you up at 9:00 tomorrow morning. And he did and took me to the hospital, got himself a nurse in there in the operating room and took it out. And he brought me back home. So he got even with me. He took my appendix out six months later. Right.

And he got his money another way.

Yeah.

He must-- he probably knew you're were probably going to have [INAUDIBLE].

Right.

When everybody kind of-- when it was over, what type of reactions were going around from--

It's a really hard to describe the feeling because you really don't believe it yet. It's--

--too good to be true.

--it's so unreal. Yeah, it's so unreal. It is so unreal. And I remember arriving in Sweden. We were liberated by the Swedish Red Cross. And the head of the Swedish Red Cross was Count Bernadotte, and he stood at the water's edge as we arrived on our ferry from Copenhagen to Malmo, Sweden.

He was standing there at the pier, and he spoke to us. We didn't understand anything he said. After all, that was Swedish. We hadn't heard that before. But we knew he was saying some very kind things just from facial expressions and from the tone of the voice. And we applauded like never before. We were so happy to be there. And you have no idea what we looked like.

But there was a Dutch ligation that was in Malmo, all came to the pier, too, where they had been informed that we were all Dutchmen. At this particular point, we were by around 250 of us, and we were all transported to Sweden. And we were still on the ferry.

Now, you have seen some homeless people, I'm sure, here and there. They're dressed well next to what we looked like. We were in shreds, literally. I mean we looked awful.

And it said in the paper that night that the Dutch ligation was there, watching us come in. They didn't think these were their Dutchmen. What are they? A bunch of gypsies? They were absolutely amazed. They couldn't imagine that we were just ordinary Dutch people. And the way we looked-- and we were all so skinny and looked just-- walking skeletons kind of. And you just couldn't imagine.

And the questions that we hammered at them-- suddenly heard somebody speak Dutch.. Oh, wow, you know, oh. Then they identified themselves. They were on the pier. We were still on the ferry.

And the first question we had-- what are they going to do with us? Oh, they're going to take you to a public bathhouse. That was still common in Europe.

And I'd never been in the bathhouse. We always had all the right facilities when we lived there. But anyway, and that was most amazing. To a bathhouse? We're going to get-- oh, yes, you're going to have showers.

By golly, we went to the bathhouse, and there stood the tallest, blondest nurses, Swedish nurses, that you've ever seen, each with a bath soap in their hand and a brush this big. And we were brushed from top to bottom with soap and water, and we all looked like nice, little, young, pink pigs. All the dirt came off and the lice. We were full of lice.

We never had lice until toward the end. They decided one day to turn the water off on us, not a drop. That went on for an entire month. We couldn't wash or keep clean or anything. That's when we got lice, and that's the most unpleasant feeling. They crawl, you know? Everywhere had lice. Awful. They start right behind the ear.

As far as your relatives and stuff, did a lot of them-- did they move at the same time as y'all did, or did they--

Nobody left.

Just--

We were the only ones. We were there-- see, we left so early, in 1933. Most of my relatives left in '38 through '39.

See, because that was about the--

The end. I mean that was it.

It was-- because back then or towards that time, that was when it was-- it was being just shut off.

It was cut off, and it certainly was cut off to the United States. The United States closed their doors. My family that still got out got as far as Cuba, and they had to stay in Cuba for a year before their quota numbers came up and they opened up the doors again. That's a little late.

So most of your relatives got out of Germany itself? Or did they--

Not most.

Or just--

On my father's side alone we lost 53 members, and I could not exactly find out how many on my mother's side. But they were of equal amounts. Like my father was one of six. My mother was one of six, and you multiply them.

I don't know, but there must have been at least that many also on my mother's side. But I couldn't ask anybody because

they weren't where I was.

Up until what point did you did your family still have contact with those within Germany? As far as stuff going on like the pogroms and stuff-- the Nuremberg laws--

We got--

--what type of reaction did you--

We got some news, more than they did in Germany before they came to Holland. But we had better news, in other words, than they did have in Germany, and none of it was very good. And it became extremely more difficult to leave and to get out of Germany.

But I'll tell you this-- my aunt got out, and she-- with two boys, went to Cuba. When she came to the United States she had \$25. That's all she could take out.

And she came to Atlanta. The oldest boy was already there. He got out a little earlier. His number was up earlier. So he came to Atlanta, and we had some family there.

Anyway, he went to work for a company that made slacks, men's slacks, and he got \$12.50 a week, and then when my aunt came-- and they lived off that and could. Chicken was a quarter. Things were very cheap in our eyes now.

And they saved money off of that, off that \$12.50. They were tight with it. And one day she had saved off of that-- had \$75, and she went to a wholesale house in Atlanta. And the man heard her story and what they had been through, and then living in Cuba, and starting something there, and coming here, trying to start something in Atlanta, too.

He extended her \$750 worth of merchandise, and that set her up in a men's store. And when I came-- I came in 1948-- she had three men's stores. It was possible. And no welfare, uh-uh. We didn't do that.

Do you think that some of your relatives waited a little longer because in '35--

They still thought it was not going to happen.

Because I know a lot of-- from what I've been taught and what I've read, that it seems like a lot of people felt, once the Nuremberg laws were there, that Jews knew where they were not supposed to-- what they weren't supposed to do, so it kind of-- it seems like [BOTH TALKING]

You see, they felt they were Germans and that Hitler could not possibly succeed. They were wrong. And I'll say that to you this day. Don't ever, ever say it can't happen here. We already did that, and it did. It did happen. It started so small.

Because they just-- like a lot of people said that some people felt that when they were-- the laws were in effect that it's almost like they've been told where their place was, so some people felt safe since they--

Oh, well, they told us--

Since they were keeping-- if they kept in their place, they felt like, well, then they were safe.

Yeah, well--

Was that-- you think that was--

You weren't. You weren't safe, and they found that out, too. There was no way to be safe, not as a Jew, no way. It just wasn't there. But they had lived all their lives in that country, and they were a part of that country just like I'm a part of the country here. And it just-- that just couldn't be. But they found out, definitely.

What do you think then? You don't think it happens here?

Think what happens?

I was denied buying a house twice in this country. If you didn't think that didn't hurt, I cried like a baby. I just couldn't believe it couldn't believe it. I was beside myself. It was so hard to take. I had come here because, and because wasn't there. Twice my mailbox was painted. If you had lit a cross in the middle of my lawn it couldn't have hurt any more. It does happen. And it was tough to take.

Where-- was that in Atlanta?

Mm-hm.

What do you think-- where did you think it came from, stuff like that? Was it the people or--

OK. Let's see. Do you think that-- one thing that-- like we learned with Hitler, his use of what was considered a race. Like Jews being a--

The Aryan race.

Well, I mean, on the other end, that there was such a thing as a Jewish race, and it wasn't a religion. Do you think that stuff like we've studied with-- they played on scientific stuff like social Darwinism? They were playing on stuff that was not unusual. It wasn't just a German thing. They were using stuff that-- studies from prominent scientists worldwide but applying it to the Jewish and Aryan-- that concept.

Do you think that-- you think-- because one thing that the Nazis, I think, liked or one thing that-- I wouldn't say-- like that you could, like the Orthodox Jews agreed that the Jews were a race, as we've read and stuff like that, that they were-- that there was an actual Jewish race and that it wasn't a religion. And the Nazis kind of played upon that, like, well, if they think they're a race, then they must be at race. Do you think that was really--

I can only really give you my opinion, and that's the way I think. I am an American, but I'm Jewish. Jewish is my religion. That's my thought. I never thought of it as a race. It always was a religion as far as I was concerned, as far as I knew.

Do you think that the Orthodox say--

Excuse me, but they are a little bit odd.

Do you think that that hurt, though? Or do you think that was just a minor-- or do you think that helped the Nazi cause in a sense?

There is an old negative, and I cannot identify it as of right now. It must have fallen out-- it must have fallen out of that book that I had out when my daughter was here. Just put it on there. I can possibly not lose it. OK, talking about race.

I know I don't-- of course, I don't see-- it's a religion, but the way they played upon that--

Oh, honey, they played on anything they could.

Do you think that the fact that the Orthodox accepted that as being true, the race part-- do you think that--

I have truly no idea. I don't know So much of it, with me, got lost because I couldn't go to school. Yeah, I couldn't be any blonder. I was almost white. I was two years old. If you don't think there's an Aryan picture, you haven't seen one.

And one of the thing our teacher kind of-- he was mocking or laughing about was the fact that Himmler was--

I've met Mr. Himmler.

--was big--

I've seen him.

--was big on that stuff, and he was--

What about Hitler? He was so dark.

Well, I mean as far as size and stature, it's peculiar that there was a--

Goering was even smaller. Not Goering, Goebbels. Which one was the air guy, the air force? Goebbels.

Goebbels was public-- like the PR man.

Yeah, that's it. He was this big [INAUDIBLE].

Because we were talking about-- we've been discussing Himmler, and our teacher was showing the-- and he paused it when they got the picture on the video and was showing how he seemed like he was about the guards you were talking about.

Yeah. But--

But he was so adamant in believing in the--

Oh, God, and he could talk mile a minute. Everything was propaganda, and he was going. The way he said it was, in German, [SPEAKING GERMAN], we will erase them all. And the way he said it, you could see the eraser go and erase us all. And that's the way he talked.

Because to think that it's-- it's odd in the sense that people would almost would follow someone talking about such a thing-- it's kind of like me saying that I believe that dark complexion, black hair, brown eyes-- that's the supreme people, and me rounding people up for that cause. And yet look at me.

That's right. Well, my husband--

The tall--

--had a better way of doing it-- an election would come up, and he says, well, the Blacks all vote en bloc. I'm gonna get me a party together. I'm going to cover all the Mikes. At that time, every boy was named Mike. Mikes were all over the place. He says, I'm going to get me a party of Mikes, and we can win. That's just as stupid.

Just this kind of like-- me promoting an ideal, as far as physique and everything, and yet I'm the total opposite. It's odd that people would--

And with this dark hair, how could he be a good Aryan? Hm, um

And just the [BOTH TALKING] and one thing I think-- I love the Three Stooges, and I don't know if you watched them much. But you know how they--

In this time I watched them.

--how they do-- how they do their parody on Hitler. I think that's-- he does the best-- I bought the videotape. I found one that had three of them, and it's funny because--

I don't remember that one.

--because they-- of course they were Jewish, and he does the best-- you can kind of see it. But it was just so funny that-- because they're always talking about the I think the nation of hypocrisy. They really play-- it was-- I bought that videotape, and I still haven't watched it all. But I've seen probably every Three Stooges short.

But it's so funny to see-- because he plays on it perfectly. I don't know if they did the writing themselves on this particular-- because you would think that they probably had a lot to do with it to do it so well because--

It could be. I don't remember that at all. I don't remember-- might have not seen it.

It wasn't really-- it was a mockery of--

--the whole thing.

--Nazi Germany, but it was just a made-up country. We must hypocritize this thing.

Then he came. He used to do a pretty good German, too. He was so funny.

But they were-- I don't know. It's kind of funny. And I think that's a good thing to say. I think, to me, if you were on that mindset to see something like Moe doing Hitler shows you how ridiculous the whole thing--

Yeah.

You know, I mean, I guess you don't see so much the-- because I always thought it was kind of weird myself, and, of course, I hadn't been-- I still don't know a good deal about World War II and this and that. But I always thought it was so weird. Ever since I, I guess, first grasped the concept of World War II, and this and that, and Hitler, and knew his Aryan ideal, and all that, I was always puzzled. I was like, why is he promoting blond hair and blue eyes when he doesn't--

Absolutely, yeah.

It's like-- that was puzzling to me in my head. I was like, that makes no sense.

He comes from Austria, and that already makes him a Catholic because the most Catholics were in Austria. Like in Germany, the top part is Lutheran and very Protestant. When you get down to Bavaria, it all gets Catholic.

And in Holland it's the same way more or less. Catholics were in the South. The Protestants were in the North. I don't know why that is, but--

Well, that's--

Like this is the Baptist belt. What can I say?

Well, I think a lot of it has to do with just the way the Catholic Church was and with their power, and people had to move farther away in order to practice what was considered heresy by the Catholic Church, anyway. I think that's the reason why that came into play. But it's--

I read a book. I read a book, and it is called God, Jews, and History by Max Dimont. See, I wasn't allowed to go to Sunday school anymore either. So I had-- in that respect, I had very little religion taught.

But my son-in-law is a Lutheran and called me on the telephone one day asked me, very old-fashionedly, could he get

the hand of my daughter in marriage. I almost fainted. I didn't expect that anymore.

But that's the way he was. And I said, well, Mike, I've been expecting this. It's no news to me. I just didn't know when. And by the way, he said, I'm going to change my religion.

I said, hold it just a minute, please. You're not going to do that on the spur of the moment. I made up my mind. I said, hold it. I said, you're graduating, and I know you're going into the Air Force. That's what you've been trying to do. He graduated cum laude at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, top of his class in ROTC, Air Force.

And going into the Air Force, I said, Mike you better start thinking a little bit. See, I've been Jewish from birth, and ever since I was nine, well, I consciously knew I was different. And I was pointed at, and shouted at, and picked at, and thrown at, and