

OK, we're speaking with Mrs. Elizabeth Lubell of Peekskill, New York. Mrs. Lubell, would you like to start by telling us a little bit about your childhood? And where were you born, the date of birth? What was your life like?

I was born in 1920, December the 9th. I lived in Budapest with my parents. We had, I would say, middle class, I would say. My father was a hard-working man. He was a traveling salesman. He went with a bicycle from store to store, from town to town. Sometimes he took me with us.

I would say I had a happy childhood and carefree, happy life. Schools were very good. I went to elementary school and then went to regular gymnasium. And then I went to a [GERMAN]. How do you say it? Commerce school. And everything went well until Hitler came to power. Then we--

Can we jump back a little? Is that all right?

Jump back. Jump back any time.

What were you like as a child? And did you have some interests?

As a child?

Yes.

[LAUGHS] Movie stars.

[LAUGHTER]

I had interest as a little as a little child, I was always theatrically interested. All the school plays in school, I was always present. And my parents were proudly sitting there listening to me. And as I grew bigger and more serious on that line, I went more into the theatrical aspect of school plays and stuff like that. And it was very uneventful.

But it changed so abruptly that-- I had a diary, for instance, which I, by coincidence, found it. Because not so many documents I found from my life. And as I was reading the diary, today I was in love with this boy. Tomorrow, with that boy. So I lived really like any teenagers.

And all suddenly when Hitler came to power and started to come the news, I personally immediately took it to my head. And it always went-- to the thought always was in my head what will be if something happens to my parents? I was very much attached to them. And I was very much my papa's girl, papa's little girl.

Did you have brothers and sisters?

I had my brother, who lives in America right now. [INAUDIBLE]. And when Hitler came to power, it abruptly changed my whole lifestyle. When I was reading in my diaries from that little girl, you can see that there was no [GERMAN]. How do you say that? It went from one year to another--

Continuity?

It immediately became serious. There, it was a childish little girl telling all kinds of little stories. And all suddenly, "I heard this one on the radio. I hear that one on the radio. What will happen?" Because in 1938, it started the whole problem. And then of course when my brother left for America, that changed a lot in our lives and our life became more [INAUDIBLE].

Why did he leave? Did he know?

Because in 1938, it was the first political change in Austria with Schuschnigg. You know, there was the-- what was it in

Austria, what happened? How do you call that? The--

The Anschluss.

The Anschluss, thank you. So with the Anschluss, it was already-- everybody knew that things will happen. And my brother I had the foresight that he asked our relatives-- my mother had a brother in America, in Kingston. And he asked for the affidavit. He got married in Poland. They came to Hungary. And as a matter of fact, I remember the last time when she, my sister-in-law, called up her mother said goodbye because they are leaving tomorrow for America.

And that time, we didn't-- well, in 1938, it was the same story what was with the Germans. They said it can never happen to us. It was something entirely new in our life. Who would think, would think what would happen? But when that happened in 1938, my brother left.

And with that, with was that it started the decline in every way, how we felt. And there was always, even so that we still had our normal life, but as the weeks and months went by, more and more it came, the news from Germany. And a little bit here, a little bit there. And we more and more realized that we are looking forward for a sad time.

Can we stay in the pre-war period for a minute and can I ask you about your family, the Jewish aspect of your family? How-- were they religious or assimilated?

We were conservative. We kept every holiday, every significant and insignificant holiday. We did keep a kosher home. We were very much Jewish oriented. I had mostly-- I would say 90% Jewish friends. And not, no gentile boyfriend. And we kept the holidays. We went to shul. So I would say-- I had my confirmation in Budapest, which I had very nice memories from.

And I would say we kept a nice Jewish home. We were not Orthodox, but we were rather conservative. What else do you want to know about that aspect? In that aspect, we-- I went to-- I mean, it's not Hebrew school because that time in Hungary it was not like here. You had to take separate Jewish lessons if you went to school. And that's what I did.

And we had our own group. And we had our own hall where we went. We kept-- you know, socially and in the artistic field, we kept up with the Jewish place. And as the years went by-- 1938, 1939 --more and more we had our own little Zionist groups and talked a lot about Palestine. And young people got together. But we didn't realize the real tragedy what was facing us at that time.

So in that case, do you care-- where were you at this point? You were in business, studying at the business school?

I guess. After I finished my business school, I got a job as a lawyer. And the whole years, all the way on-- as a matter of fact, all the way until the Germans came to Budapest, I was a secretary with a lawyer.

A gentile lawyer?

They were all gentiles. But the interesting part of it was that toward the end in Budapest, we had-- before they made the ghetto, we had to wear the Jewish star. And the lawyer that I worked was not in the Jewish section. And when I went there I took my star off so I could cross that part to go to work.

And that lawyer where I worked was a very, very well-known lawyer. Not only because he had higher connections, but also he was in the religious field with nuns and priests. He was a very religious man. And one day as I was working there and somebody rang the bell.

And I opened the bell, and I saw two of these so-called Hungarian Nazis, who were worse sometimes than the German ones. And I thought, well, that's it. They will take me. But they came and they took my boss. Because he was in the religious-- you know, they didn't like very religious people either. And they took him to a concentration camp. And I, as a secretary, Jewish secretary whom they didn't know, stayed there. So that was a rather almost humorous aspect of that case.

So I stayed there for a couple of months without him. And then things got to be very dangerous. Then, I knew the safe number of that lawyer. That was right before things got very serious. Then I opened up the safe and took out the lawyer's daughter's papers, knowing if I have to run away, I will run away with these papers, which I did. Which I used, but that happened later on.

You want to tell me how?

Well, first of all, I have to tell you that we were-- my father and mother was Polish origin. And in 1941 when the Germans were not occupying Hungary yet, they came out, they gave the order to the Hungarians to deport all the non-Hungarian citizens. And my father, in spite of that, that he was as a Hungarian officer in the Hungarian and he had the Iron Cross and all that things.

When the order came out to deport-- you know there was a time in 1941 when all the non-Hungarian citizens were deported from Hungary and from Budapest. Unfortunately, we were among them. And unfortunately, we were among them the very first day when the deportation started. When we didn't know yet what's going on. Then they came to our house. And they said, pack your bag. We will take you to your own country. And you will work there and you'll survive after the war.

And that was in June 1941. And they came to our house. And they said, well, pack your back and go. And how do you pack your bag when you lived there a lifetime? So we cried. And my mother cried and I cried. And my fiancée was there. So the guy who-- he was new on the job and he had a certain human caring and sympathy to us. So he said, you know what? I will take your father. So I'm sure you stay here and you'll have one day to pack your bag and do whatever you want. And that's what he did.

And in that one day, I had the choice. And some people, some relatives told me, well, you are young. Go and hide before they take you. But my father wrote a letter that the family have to stay together. And please come. And whatever will be, we will survive it together. So we packed our bag and we went outside. We lived in a house, four floors. And all the tenants were looking and saying goodbye to us. Some of them cheering. Some of them jeering. And that's how we were deported to Poland that time.

I say deported to Poland, which is, again, easy to say. But how we were and what happened and how we went there and how we walked or whatever happened in between, a lot of Hungarian, so-called Polish Hungarian origin got killed in Kamianets-Podilskyi. That was a famous town where-- you heard about Kamianets-Podilskyi. So most of them who got killed there, 40,000, they were all Hungarian origins.

But knowing my parents knew Polish, they also hired a private buggy. And we had relatives in Kolomyia. And we stayed-- we hid the back from the transport. Because we knew that the transport is going to Kamianets-Podilskyi. And a lot of other people escaped too. But we went with that buggy to Kolomyia and that's where we stayed. In Kolomyia, that was that time yet more-or-less normal life because the ghetto was not [INAUDIBLE].

But of course, after a year of being in the ghetto and losing people-- it was over 20,000 people in Kolomyia. And by the time I escaped with a smuggler, there was only a couple of hundred left. So that's when it was that I said goodbye to my parents. And of course, I never saw them again. And I started on the road going back to Hungary, which was a road to talk about a lot.

Do you want to talk any more about the ghetto though before?

The ghetto, we lived-- it was a whole year. Before the ghetto, we lived in Kolomyia yet. And when the ghetto came, of course, like everybody else we had to move in the ghetto. And we also had-- they said on the tape that three or four families lived in the ghetto. Well, where we went it was rather five, six families living in the ghetto.

In a one room place?

In a one room place, right. And then, of course, some of them got killed during the time, so it got less and less. And that's when I decided, after a year of being in Kolomyia and about half a year in the ghetto, that it's time to go.

Was there anything while you were there that struck you and stands out in your mind?

Well, it was every day was what struck me. Because I was a young person with a rather careless, careful living and all of a sudden you're thrust into a situation. We went to work in the morning because my father, being a military person, and the Germans also gave him a job as a supervisor. And the other Jews didn't like him because he was a supervisor. And they didn't like nobody who supervised over other Jews.

And so we worked there for a time. As a matter of fact, I worked in a kitchen preparing dinner for German officers. And my job was, with three other girls, peeling potatoes. And at that time, hunger was already a big, big aspect of ghetto life because you know that people just died of hunger. So what we did, we got permission for the peels to take home. And we had the peels with whatever meal they made.

You cooked them?

We cooked the peels, right. But in order to have something on the peels, we peeled the potatoes in the kitchen take. And then we went home and we peeled the piece.

Oh, I see.

That we made it so that the peels would take. But then the Germans came to eat and they said that whatever will be like that take will have a punishment. So we couldn't do that. So from then on, we had to eat the peels and not peel the peels.

The other one, what I remember from the ghetto when we went out to work and through work, we got to know some other workers. Because this was German families who moved into Jewish houses. And they renovated it and decorated it. And we worked on it to keep it clean until their wife and children came.

And we saw the mementos of a life-- you know, Jewish life. Sometimes we came into a house where we saw the pots and pans yet as they carried them out. And we just had to close our eyes and see what happened there. And we had to clean up and make it ready for the German officers.

And I was working there once washing the floors with a pail-- you know, a big pail of water. Because you were asking me to tell you some mementos from the ghetto.

Yes, yes.

So the German-- and until that time, you know, I knew that I was in danger and everything. But I didn't have any personal contact with any physical punishment. [COUGHS] Excuse me a second.

--cleaning the floor and almost finished it. He came in and he took the pail. And he kicked the pail. And he said this is not clean enough, to clean it again. So that was my first encounter with a German officer. And as it happened to be, the German officer's wife who came back, she acted rather humanely to the Jewish girls. It happens to be that-- I don't know whether I should mention it. But she had some tendencies, liking girls.

And the question was whether to use this situation to your advantage or not to use it to your advantage. But sometimes it came to a point-- you told me an incident before about bread. Sometimes you came to a point when the only thing in your mind was you are 20 years old, and somewhere along in the sky when you looked up, there is a life yet for people. Let's do whatever is possible, but let's survive. And it happens to be that woman helped me a lot to get easier job, to get more food.

Until her husband came to the picture and then I lost my job. And then we had to go to a factory where he worked. Some kind of-- if I remember correctly, I don't know. I think something was an iron work or something. And the first

day when I went there, we were rather abused that time there. And then, but I decided that this is a good place maybe to run away or something or make connections. And that's what I heard the first time, that there is some where a smuggler [? ring. ?] That it is possible.

So I stayed in that factory and I worked there. We went out to ghetto, back to the ghetto. And the ghetto was always less and less and less. And my parents were always less and less independent and more and more relied on me. So the roles reversed between parents and children. Not children, because it was only me.

That it was me who directed them what to do and how I'd like-- for instance, when I had to go to work with mother. The Germans looked up and mother got old very suddenly in the ghetto. Where, as it happened, it coincided with her menopause too. So that was really a hard thing because she acted sometimes very strange and I was very much afraid.

Everything fell on her and she just couldn't digest the tragedy which fell upon her. And I sometimes was the one who had to lead her and say it will be good. And I remember I pinched her cheeks sometimes so she could survive, because maybe I made a little bit her hair so that the Germans won't say you are too old to work. So this was a couple of memories from the ghetto.

And then of course there was also memories where I met a young man who worked in a soup kitchen. And you know, when you are 20 years old you no matter what situation you have thrust into, you always have a little bit romantic space in you because that keeps you alive.

And I met a young man who was very kind to me. And he gave me always thick soups and things like that. So I sometimes met him. But he had somebody else, I had somebody else. But there developed some kind of rapport between us. And I remembered him long after that. That was, of course, my present husband. But I didn't know at that time yet.

But when it came the time that the ghetto got from 20,000 to a couple of hundred I said, that's it. And I discussed it with my mother the last day. And the last night when I knew that I'm leaving in the morning-- you know, we rather stayed away from kissing or touching or something because you change. In order to survive, you have to lose your-- certain feelings disappear from you. But that was the last night. And mother just touched me, because she had her own thoughts and I had my own thoughts.

And the only thing what I remember that I just wanted to just nobody should touch me and nobody should kiss me. Just to push it away because one more touch and one more kiss, I'm not going to leave. And that was the reason. I didn't-- I never explained it to her. I hope she understood it. Because then she wanted to touch me, I just like-- I pushed it away. And I did it in order that I should be able to leave.

And the next, before I left, my father gave me that talisman which I carried with me. And I never, never leave it. Wherever I go, that talisman goes with me. And somehow, I don't-- I'm not superstitious otherwise. But I truly believe that that talisman has saved me from a lot of situations. And when the time will be that I have to go, then I have to decide which of my children will have it.

And that was the ghetto. And I went away. And I went back to Budapest, where at that time, even so that Hitler hurrying, advancing and all over. But it was still not-- it was still not the ghetto. Only a couple of months later--

What year was this?

I was there a whole year in the ghetto, from 1941 to 1942. And I have to tell you one incident there. Because that is an-- I try not to go into little details.

No, it's OK.

But this detail is so remarkable that I have to mention it. After about 25 or 26 days-- the 20th day they caught us. I think-- did I mention it? Or I didn't mention it.

No.

Or I told you that before. So we were walking at night to reach Hungary from Poland to [INAUDIBLE]. I mean, it was a long road, but I cannot go into every aspect in it. But in any case, we were walking at night and sleeping in the daytime. And that was just about the last day before we saw already the Hungarian border.

When we-- somebody probably who noticed us talking to the German guards. And they came off this-- we were 10 of us who were escaping from the ghetto. And they came up, the German guard, and they shot everybody on sight. And I ran away that time. And it was laying there, a big tree, you know, eaten up from the moss, hollow inside.

There is a lot of fate was in my life that I have to strongly believe that there must be something, somebody, somewhere who prepared that tree for me there where I went in that tree. In that hollow tree was laying and I was laying. And I was in the tree. And I just heard the shouting and crying and said, no, no, no until everything got quiet.

And I walked out from the tree and what I saw was only dead people. And I started to walk. Because I think that time, that from that day on, I was not quite right. And I think I was singing or something. And I said, I'm going back to mama and how wonderful it is. And I stumbled by accident over the smuggler who was also escaping. But not only that, he was getting he was getting shot and escaping and I found him.

But everybody had the little knapsack. You know, a little knapsack where we had things. And he, in a big hurry, instead of taking his knapsack, he took my knapsack. And I'm the one who survived. So those little incidents what I sometimes wonder how that worked out. And so I found him, but he was injured. And he said he cannot do nothing.

And he gave me his pocket knife in his thigh He was-- they probably, as they shot, they shot at my back and it went into his thigh near the genital areas. And he gave that little knife. And he said that I have to take that bullet out, which I did. And he was there for the night.

And then he said write me that letter that you are here so I can get my money. I won't get too much in any case because from the 10 of you, you are the only one survived. So that's what the paper, what I showed you, that I wrote. And that was from the woods. This was the Hungarian woods in Korosmezo.

Could you spell that?

Korosmezo.

Yeah, you can write it for me.

Where shall-- well, how will I know? Here, I write down here. This is a border town. Korosmezo. This is a border town. And from there-- when I am in Korosmezo, I am already in Hungary. So he said that-- he covered me also with leaves and he said I don't feel good.

So he left me with my knapsack. But I had a little sweater on. And it was cold in the woods already. And he said-- and he gave me an onion, by the way, which was very good. And he went away. And he said he will come for me. He will whistle a certain way so I know. Because that was-- so it was in the woods, but people could still go there. And he said when you hear that whistle, then tell that this is you.

So and he went away. And he left me there four and half-- four days and one night I was in the woods by myself. So I was really-- can you imagine a 20-year-old girl in the woods, you know, rain or not rain or anything? And there was one incident where something moved. I probably moved. And the peasant came there who was taking lambs to eat, to graze or whatever you call it.

And he heard and he come straight, he came straight where I am. And I was just at heart length to there, covered with leaves there. And I heard the steps closer and closer. And the only what he did, he peed. And he peed on me. And I was just standing there. And that was one of the incidents.

And then people ask me, so what did you eat for four days? I mean, you have to eat for four days, which is not necessarily so. But I had that one onion and then blueberries grew that time in the-- so then I felt safe enough in the night then I went around me and I ate some blueberries.

But the fourth night, I dreamed about my fiancée in Hungary at that time. And it was a beautiful wedding and everything. And when I got up and I was in the situation in whatever I was in there, and I looked up I said this is-- I can't. There was a limit what I could endure. And I said, well, I just don't care anymore, nothing, when I heard the whistle. So little coincidences.

And he did come. And I told him, where were you? I couldn't talk so good to him because he didn't talk Hungarian, I didn't so good Polish. But he said he was sick. I mean, I believe it. I'm not such a good surgeon. So he came for me the fifth day. And he took me to a place that I had to walk up on the top because I was ill. So I was in Hungary. I think my husband explained it, when they catch you there, then they immediately send you back to Germany. So everybody was afraid to give-- well, to hide you.

Right.

So I was up there in some kind of an attic waiting for further instructions to go deeper into Hungary. The deeper you got into Hungary, the safer you were that the Germans, that they won't give you over to the Germans. This was in 1942. And as I was walking down the steps because he told me to come down now. We are ready. We have a car and we will go to the next town, which is [INAUDIBLE].

And as I walk down, I saw a figure on the bottom of the steps. And I didn't recognize quite and he probably didn't recognize me. But when I wrote that letter-- you know what I gave? My fiancée, he himself came all the way to the border town to bring that town. And that was him standing downstairs.

Well, I don't go into the feelings and sentimental aspects of it. I leave that to your imagination.

[LAUGHS]

But it was something to behold. And his life was, of course, that time in danger. Because if they would catch him, he would also-- even though he was a Hungarian citizen.

But what I wanted to tell you, what I don't want to leave out-- as we wanted to go to [INAUDIBLE] get [INAUDIBLE]. And from [INAUDIBLE], you already are in Hungary. You can go with the trains, cars, buses, whatever you want to. But until that time, you were in danger. And there was a long row of cars before the bridge. When you passed the bridge, you were already on my destination. There was a long line of cars. And on the beginning of the car, the chauffeur looked out, the one that was paid. And he said, we are in trouble because they're checking the cars.

And when I heard that they're checking the cars, my first instinct was to jump out. Because if they see me the way I looked, full with lice. I was full with lice, by the way. My head was full with lice. I was dirty. I was bleeding. I had wounds. I had all kinds of things from the woods. And if they catch him, they will-- he will pay with his life for it. So I wanted to jump out from the car. And if that's the way it has to be and he was holding me back.

And suddenly a soldier comes to our car. Mind you, there was a long line of cars there before us crossing the bridge. And he doesn't even look in the back. And this was such a remarkable incident that I will never forget it. And he doesn't look in the back. He just goes to the chauffeur and he says, you know, I lost my key. I can't even remember what he said-- license or my key or if he said something to the chauffeur. Would you please drive me to Korosmezo? And the chauffeur said, of course.

He was an officer of the Hungarian army. And the chauffeur said of course. And he came in and sat next to the chauffeur. And as we walked by the cars, and as we reached the point where the guy checked everybody's car, they just looked in and saw a Hungarian officer. And they just saluted and we went by.

So to this day, to this day, number one, I don't forget the incident. And number two, I don't believe in supernatural. I cannot quite believe it. But there is a tiny little doubt in me whether this was not some kind of an angel sent down. Because why would-- I mean, it is a coincidence to be mentioned.

Oh, yes. Indeed. You know you had mentioned earlier when we were talking that you had some type of an encounter with Wallenberg.

Yeah. Well, that came later. Yes, because when I came-- then I came back to Hungary. And in Hungary, as I said, that time was-- I was from 1941 from 1942 in the ghetto. And that time, Germany still didn't occupy Hungary. It was no ghetto yet. It was my aunt there. And she asked me what it was. And she didn't believe I ate potato peels and stuff like that. But as we closed into the year, more and more Germans came to Hungary.

Until finally, on the Main Street of Hungary, the Germans marched in. And that was the end. Hungary was occupied by German. And you know Horthy. Horthy was the-- so he went away with his white horse and stuff like that. But he tried, as a matter of fact, to save the Jews. But he was too weak to do anything in that respect. And then the Germans came in. And then, of course, German took over like they took over the other countries.

And then came the ghetto. And knowing what the ghetto is because I had a little bit of experience before, so I said, I am not going to go in the ghetto. And as I said, I worked with that lawyer and I had these papers from this lawyer's daughter, what I stole from the safe. And I said I'm not.

And my aunt said, well, come with us and everything. She said, by the way, that time, she said, now I know what you told me what went on in the ghetto. I can believe it now more. And as the year went by, she believed me, unfortunately, more and more. She was a very lovely lady, very nice aunt what I had.

So they all went to ghetto and I went with the Catholic papers. Do you know where the Balaton is?

Yes.

That's a lake. Balaton Lake, I was working with my friend, with a Hungarian friend of mine, as a maid and a nurse. One week I was the maid and she was the nurse, and one week I was a nurse and she was the maid. We work there months with my papers that I had. And she had other papers. It was Catholic. We went to church. And I learned to pray and all stuff with the children.

And one day, a policeman comes to our house and checks our papers. Checked her paper and checked my paper. And just said, OK. We will check it out and we'll come for you in the morning. And I knew that they will check out my papers. This was an aristocrat where I worked. He had a phone, you know?

Yeah, sure.

That lawyer. So I knew that they will know that I am not the daughter from that aristocratic man. So I said to my friend, Monica, I said, you know what? They will know that we have papers. Let's run away. And we went out to the railroad in the night. I had four children there and the parents were somewhere else. So I tucked them in. And I hope nothing will happen to the children. And we went through the window. And we went to the railroad station.

And at the railroad station, we met the same guy who came that day for us for our papers. That was the end of our freedom. They caught both of us. And that's how we went from camp to camp to camp to camp. And I was, that time-- that was in 1943. So two years.

These were all Hungarian work camps?

These were all Hungarian work camps. Only that one, [INAUDIBLE], which was near the Austrian border. And I ran away from most of them, by the way. Because I had the experience already. This, I cannot go to every aspect of camp



life. It would take too long. But if you want something to know, I can tell you. I had many, many incidents.

Which one or two stands out?

The one with Wallenberg. The one that stands out. We were in-- that was, I think it was [INAUDIBLE]. You see, my memory is failing me too. What Wallenberg did, he had a truck and he had a list of names. And he went to these camps. Because from these camps-- you know, like for instance [INAUDIBLE], where we were, there was a camp when the war was [? full ?] written "goodbye, goodbye."

Because from [INAUDIBLE], they went to the German concentration camps. This was a collective camp where they collected people when they had enough. You know? Because they didn't take just a hundred people that they would [? pay. ?] When there were more, then they took them away. So this was a camp where from there on there was only one way.

So Wallenberg, with his truck and his men, went to these camps with a list. At that time, they still acknowledged Wallenberg's authority. So he came to the camp and we were all standing there. And the German-- not the German, the Hungarian guard came with him. And he said, this list, what I am reading, all stand forward. Because this is under the Swiss, Swiss [? Schutz ?] protection. And he had that list.

And I was in the Swiss house. That's how he knows my name. I think I mentioned it to you that I was there. So he comes and reads the list. And people stand forward. And then he comes near me. And I remember his face and everything. We called him the "Angel of the Jews" because he saved so many Jews. He stand before me and he says, are Margaret so-and-so. And I was little-- I guess I was stupid because I didn't want to say nothing because I went after the rules. So I am not that.

And the girl next kicked me. And said, so why don't you say that you are Margaret so-and-so. I said, yes, yes. I am Margaret so-and-so. Well, why don't you step forward? He tells me, Wallenberg. Why does it take so long to recognize your name? And I stood forward and they took us in the bus and they took us back to Budapest. And that was one encounter what I had with Wallenberg in person.

And I went back to Budapest. And now I didn't have, again, papers. So the other things were what I had from my father, they were all these gold watches.

A pocket watch.

There was a chain. And I had that chain, I had that gold chain. And I sewed it in-- not my girdle. I didn't wear a girdle. But what holds the stockings on. What do you call that?

Garter belt.

Garter belt.

Right.

And I sewed that of the garter belt around it. And for that garter belt I bought the papers, what I still have home. This is the papers, what I showed you. And with that papers, I left in one of the Christian-- I never went to the ghetto. I rented the house. And Budapest was very, very hard bombed. And of course, between bombing and the Germans coming to where went in the basement. How do you call that?

The bomb shelter.

The bomb shelters we were. Between that and that, I sometimes walked on the streets. The bombs were falling. The dead people were around me. But I felt safer there than in the bomb shelter. Because the more it bombed, the more and more Germans came. They had nothing better to do. And the more and more came to the shelter. And took out people.

And took them out to the Danube. And the Danube was floating with thousands of dead people.

As a matter of fact, I will tell you-- remind me if I forget it. Because I have to tell you a very important incident after the war. Remind me for that.

So now what did I tell you before?

The Danube was--

Oh, yes. So January 18, we were liberated by the Russians. And January 16, they still came, the Germans looking for Jews. And one of them, when they came and I was there in the shelter. I couldn't walk anymore on the street because it was just really [INAUDIBLE]. Because the bombs were falling like anything.

And there I made an [? acquaintance. ?] You see, I must to tell you one other aspect here. What I don't like to go into that, but it may be sometimes embarrassing. But I said after the ghetto that I came back, I said I have to survive. Standing or laying, but I will survive. There was no morality left in me. Even so, I was brought up in a house where if I wasn't home by 8:00, my father was walking before the house, you know?

And there was one guy who said, well-- I think, I am almost sure that he knew I was Jewish. But he somehow got a liking to me. And he said that if I am nice, he will be nice. And I said I will be as nice as you want me to be. And when the guy came to check-- because they check the papers, who is Jewish, who is not Jewish.

And there was another family there. A woman, a husband-- a woman and her husband and the son. A nice, fat, beautiful-looking Jewish boy. And she was with papers and I was with papers. And somehow one Jew recognized the other one. Somehow by feeling or by look or by eyes. There was some kind of rapport that one knew when the other Jew.

But one aspect of this, which is-- maybe nobody told you or maybe they did. There was an aspect to it when one Jew was caught, then they had the tendency, unfortunately, if I was caught, then you should be caught too. I don't go into psychological reasoning. But maybe there is a reasoning. There is an answer to it.

And when the German guy came, when the Nazi came to check the papers, they saw the boy was standing beside me. It runs out?

Can we--