

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:02,490

2  
00:00:02,490 --> 00:00:05,760  
Today is June 12, 1992.

3  
00:00:05,760 --> 00:00:09,525  
I am with Mrs. Miki Pear of--

4  
00:00:09,525 --> 00:00:10,650  
Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

5  
00:00:10,650 --> 00:00:12,400  
Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.

6  
00:00:12,400 --> 00:00:15,970  
And she is here at the United  
States Holocaust Memorial

7  
00:00:15,970 --> 00:00:20,740  
Museum today to tell her  
story of the Holocaust.

8  
00:00:20,740 --> 00:00:22,204  
Good afternoon.

9  
00:00:22,204 --> 00:00:22,704  
Hi.

10  
00:00:22,704 --> 00:00:25,650

11  
00:00:25,650 --> 00:00:33,990  
I was born in Warsaw,  
Poland on May 14, 1935.

12  
00:00:33,990 --> 00:00:43,185  
My father was a violinist  
and a professor of music.

13

00:00:43,185 --> 00:00:48,530

14

00:00:48,530 --> 00:00:52,980

My mother came from  
a very large family.

15

00:00:52,980 --> 00:00:57,510

My father was an only  
child, as far as I know.

16

00:00:57,510 --> 00:00:59,360

He had a tiny family.

17

00:00:59,360 --> 00:01:02,660

My mother came from an  
enormous and very well-known

18

00:01:02,660 --> 00:01:08,160

family in Warsaw, a  
very prominent family.

19

00:01:08,160 --> 00:01:15,950

My grandfather had a soda--

20

00:01:15,950 --> 00:01:22,670

carbonated beverage--  
manufacturing factory.

21

00:01:22,670 --> 00:01:23,690

On your mother's side?

22

00:01:23,690 --> 00:01:25,860

On my mother's side.

23

00:01:25,860 --> 00:01:29,120

I don't know very much  
about my father's side.

24

00:01:29,120 --> 00:01:33,350

I know only that he came from  
a family of intellectuals,

25

00:01:33,350 --> 00:01:38,030

professors and linguists,  
and I don't know what all.

26

00:01:38,030 --> 00:01:41,660

And I do remember his parents.

27

00:01:41,660 --> 00:01:43,680

I remember meeting them once.

28

00:01:43,680 --> 00:01:49,190

I remember going to their home,  
and I remember their home--

29

00:01:49,190 --> 00:01:51,530

I remember the  
room that I was in,

30

00:01:51,530 --> 00:01:59,150

and I remember that there was  
a red oriental rug, very highly

31

00:01:59,150 --> 00:02:01,730

patterned,  
intricately patterned.

32

00:02:01,730 --> 00:02:05,450

And the walls were  
lined with books.

33

00:02:05,450 --> 00:02:09,500

And that was very  
impressive because--

34

00:02:09,500 --> 00:02:12,690

well, first of all, I've never  
seen anything quite like it.

35

00:02:12,690 --> 00:02:16,670

And second of all because  
my father's parents,

36

00:02:16,670 --> 00:02:21,090  
like my father, were very short.

37  
00:02:21,090 --> 00:02:24,410  
They were even much  
shorter than my father was.

38  
00:02:24,410 --> 00:02:27,680  
And I remember that--

39  
00:02:27,680 --> 00:02:31,770  
the room-- so clearly  
because I remember thinking,

40  
00:02:31,770 --> 00:02:36,950  
how do they reach those  
books, which went so high up?

41  
00:02:36,950 --> 00:02:41,720  
The ceilings in Europe were  
very high, and I don't remember,

42  
00:02:41,720 --> 00:02:43,310  
and I was very small.

43  
00:02:43,310 --> 00:02:45,475  
Were you crawling on the rug?

44  
00:02:45,475 --> 00:02:47,240  
No, I was walking on the rug.

45  
00:02:47,240 --> 00:02:50,730  
I had to be four years  
old at that point.

46  
00:02:50,730 --> 00:02:53,660  
And I remember  
thinking, how could

47  
00:02:53,660 --> 00:02:59,990  
my grandfather, who was so pale  
and delicate looking, climb--

48

00:02:59,990 --> 00:03:02,840

there were ladders on each  
side of the room, which

49

00:03:02,840 --> 00:03:05,363

I guess must have been on  
wheels or I don't know,

50

00:03:05,363 --> 00:03:06,530

however those things worked.

51

00:03:06,530 --> 00:03:09,560

But I remember  
imagining how could

52

00:03:09,560 --> 00:03:14,030

my grandfather, who  
looked so frail and tiny,

53

00:03:14,030 --> 00:03:15,320

reach those books?

54

00:03:15,320 --> 00:03:17,960

And that's the impression that  
I have of my grandparents.

55

00:03:17,960 --> 00:03:20,750

And that I remember absolutely  
nothing else about them,

56

00:03:20,750 --> 00:03:23,570

nor do I know  
anything about them,

57

00:03:23,570 --> 00:03:25,535

only that my father  
was an only child.

58

00:03:25,535 --> 00:03:28,420

59

00:03:28,420 --> 00:03:33,610

However, my mother's side of the family I remember very clearly.

60  
00:03:33,610 --> 00:03:36,550  
And they were  
exactly the opposite

61  
00:03:36,550 --> 00:03:40,120  
in every conceivable way.

62  
00:03:40,120 --> 00:03:44,020  
They were very loud and  
noisy and gregarious.

63  
00:03:44,020 --> 00:03:47,770  
My mother was the youngest  
of eight siblings.

64  
00:03:47,770 --> 00:03:49,600  
There were nine originally.

65  
00:03:49,600 --> 00:03:53,230  
One died at a young  
age, maybe a childhood.

66  
00:03:53,230 --> 00:03:54,100  
I really don't know.

67  
00:03:54,100 --> 00:03:59,360  
But she was one of  
five daughters--

68  
00:03:59,360 --> 00:04:01,780  
she was the youngest--

69  
00:04:01,780 --> 00:04:03,910  
and three sons.

70  
00:04:03,910 --> 00:04:08,670

71  
00:04:08,670 --> 00:04:14,700

The oldest son-- the oldest  
child was a daughter.

72  
00:04:14,700 --> 00:04:18,120  
The oldest child,  
my mother's sister,

73  
00:04:18,120 --> 00:04:23,850  
married a physician, who was  
her childhood sweetheart,

74  
00:04:23,850 --> 00:04:29,430  
and they moved to Russia.

75  
00:04:29,430 --> 00:04:33,480  
And this would have to  
have been in the '20s.

76  
00:04:33,480 --> 00:04:38,910  
And they had two daughters  
who I know became--

77  
00:04:38,910 --> 00:04:43,950  
one became a merchant  
ship captain,

78  
00:04:43,950 --> 00:04:45,780  
captain of a merchant ship.

79  
00:04:45,780 --> 00:04:48,930  
And the other daughter-- this  
would have been my cousin--

80  
00:04:48,930 --> 00:04:52,490

81  
00:04:52,490 --> 00:04:56,210  
became, I believe, a physician.

82  
00:04:56,210 --> 00:05:01,370  
But that entire part of the  
family was lost to the other,

83

00:05:01,370 --> 00:05:04,880

to the rest of the family,  
because they were in Russia.

84

00:05:04,880 --> 00:05:06,223

So I know nothing--

85

00:05:06,223 --> 00:05:06,890

Soviet citizens.

86

00:05:06,890 --> 00:05:07,860

Soviet, exactly.

87

00:05:07,860 --> 00:05:11,960

So I don't know any  
more about them.

88

00:05:11,960 --> 00:05:14,990

But I imagine that these  
two cousins anyway, who

89

00:05:14,990 --> 00:05:18,600

would probably be 20 or  
30 years older than I am,

90

00:05:18,600 --> 00:05:21,170

might still be living.

91

00:05:21,170 --> 00:05:28,550

And I imagine my cousin is a sea  
captain, provocative thought,

92

00:05:28,550 --> 00:05:33,950

and hopefully their descendants  
are living somewhere in Russia.

93

00:05:33,950 --> 00:05:40,490

And hopefully they're  
enjoying a peaceful life.

94

00:05:40,490 --> 00:05:44,690

The rest of the



brothers and sisters--

95

00:05:44,690 --> 00:05:47,360  
all the sisters married,  
and all the sisters,

96

00:05:47,360 --> 00:05:50,540  
all of my mother's sisters,  
all four of her sisters,

97

00:05:50,540 --> 00:05:56,650  
had families of three  
or more children.

98

00:05:56,650 --> 00:06:00,235  
And all of those  
families perished.

99

00:06:00,235 --> 00:06:02,850

100

00:06:02,850 --> 00:06:07,230  
Of the three  
brothers, the oldest

101

00:06:07,230 --> 00:06:15,450  
was banished to Siberia  
with his wife and child.

102

00:06:15,450 --> 00:06:18,120  
And he survived the war.

103

00:06:18,120 --> 00:06:23,640  
And it was he who  
later found me,

104

00:06:23,640 --> 00:06:28,350  
where I was hidden in the  
Ukraine, where I survived.

105

00:06:28,350 --> 00:06:31,350  
The other two brothers--  
the middle brother

106

00:06:31,350 --> 00:06:35,790

escaped sometime during  
the First World War.

107

00:06:35,790 --> 00:06:37,860

And the story goes that he was--

108

00:06:37,860 --> 00:06:40,710

109

00:06:40,710 --> 00:06:42,150

oh, what's the word?

110

00:06:42,150 --> 00:06:45,810

Well, he punched a  
senior officer in the jaw

111

00:06:45,810 --> 00:06:46,950

for some reason.

112

00:06:46,950 --> 00:06:48,300

This was in the Russian army?

113

00:06:48,300 --> 00:06:50,380

In the Polish army.

114

00:06:50,380 --> 00:06:52,710

He was in the Polish cavalry.

115

00:06:52,710 --> 00:06:56,970

And the Polish cavalry  
during the First World War

116

00:06:56,970 --> 00:06:59,550

was kind of interesting  
because if you

117

00:06:59,550 --> 00:07:05,190

could afford your own boots--

118

00:07:05,190 --> 00:07:06,850  
or at least this  
is what I'm told--

119  
00:07:06,850 --> 00:07:10,440  
if you could afford a  
fancy uniform with boots

120  
00:07:10,440 --> 00:07:12,210  
and so forth, you  
sort of automatically

121  
00:07:12,210 --> 00:07:13,560  
became an officer.

122  
00:07:13,560 --> 00:07:16,650  
And if you could afford  
to bring your own horse,

123  
00:07:16,650 --> 00:07:19,380  
you became an officer  
in the cavalry.

124  
00:07:19,380 --> 00:07:23,370  
And so he was a horseman,  
and he had the means

125  
00:07:23,370 --> 00:07:27,720  
to afford all this grand  
stuff, so he was an officer

126  
00:07:27,720 --> 00:07:29,250  
in the Polish cavalry.

127  
00:07:29,250 --> 00:07:33,450  
And he was quite rebellious  
and kind of a smart ass,

128  
00:07:33,450 --> 00:07:38,130  
and apparently he got into  
some, I don't know, fracas,

129  
00:07:38,130 --> 00:07:40,650

and punched out  
a senior officer,

130  
00:07:40,650 --> 00:07:44,970  
and they were going to shoot  
him for insubordination.

131  
00:07:44,970 --> 00:07:46,708  
And he jumped over the wall.

132  
00:07:46,708 --> 00:07:47,250  
I don't know.

133  
00:07:47,250 --> 00:07:48,870  
I may be romanticizing this.

134  
00:07:48,870 --> 00:07:51,420  
These are facts that I was told.

135  
00:07:51,420 --> 00:07:54,780  
And eventually escaped  
and made his way

136  
00:07:54,780 --> 00:08:00,330  
to America, where there was some  
distant relative who took him

137  
00:08:00,330 --> 00:08:07,080  
under his wing, and Morris  
Berliner, this middle uncle,

138  
00:08:07,080 --> 00:08:13,440  
became in later years the  
rich uncle in America.

139  
00:08:13,440 --> 00:08:18,990  
And he's the one  
that we came to.

140  
00:08:18,990 --> 00:08:23,040  
He was our sponsor  
in the United States.

141

00:08:23,040 --> 00:08:28,230

The youngest of my three  
uncles, who was just

142

00:08:28,230 --> 00:08:32,760

the next sibling to my mother--

143

00:08:32,760 --> 00:08:35,490

my mother was the  
youngest, and he was next--

144

00:08:35,490 --> 00:08:38,070

he was Martin Berliner.

145

00:08:38,070 --> 00:08:40,350

And he and his bride--

146

00:08:40,350 --> 00:08:46,590

he was a student in Paris,  
and he went to college there

147

00:08:46,590 --> 00:08:49,230

and became an engineer.

148

00:08:49,230 --> 00:08:54,660

And he and his new bride  
were fortunate enough

149

00:08:54,660 --> 00:09:00,060

to have come to the  
United States in 1939

150

00:09:00,060 --> 00:09:05,325

on the last ship which was  
admitted into New York Harbor.

151

00:09:05,325 --> 00:09:08,070

152

00:09:08,070 --> 00:09:16,680

So he was a surprise to  
us when we arrived here

153  
00:09:16,680 --> 00:09:20,850  
because we had no idea of  
his whereabouts at all.

154  
00:09:20,850 --> 00:09:25,290  
You had known him  
before you left?

155  
00:09:25,290 --> 00:09:26,010  
Possibly.

156  
00:09:26,010 --> 00:09:27,480  
I don't remember him at all.

157  
00:09:27,480 --> 00:09:29,640  
Hard to keep track  
of all your uncles.

158  
00:09:29,640 --> 00:09:32,400  
Yeah, but also he was in Paris.

159  
00:09:32,400 --> 00:09:33,810  
He was a student in Paris.

160  
00:09:33,810 --> 00:09:36,690  
And although he was very  
close with my mother

161  
00:09:36,690 --> 00:09:41,580  
because they were closest  
in age, I didn't know him,

162  
00:09:41,580 --> 00:09:46,380  
or if I knew him, you know,  
would have been very casually,

163  
00:09:46,380 --> 00:09:48,060  
very briefly.

164  
00:09:48,060 --> 00:09:54,570  
But my uncle Jacob, the oldest,

was closest in the family

165  
00:09:54,570 --> 00:09:56,340  
to my mother.

166  
00:09:56,340 --> 00:09:59,940  
And the two were each  
other's confidante,

167  
00:09:59,940 --> 00:10:02,730  
and they were friends.

168  
00:10:02,730 --> 00:10:05,760  
They were friends socially.

169  
00:10:05,760 --> 00:10:12,720  
They just had a very  
close friendship,

170  
00:10:12,720 --> 00:10:14,910  
even though they  
were a number of--

171  
00:10:14,910 --> 00:10:23,150  
quite a number of years  
apart, perhaps 15 years apart.

172  
00:10:23,150 --> 00:10:28,630  
And he was her protector,  
and he loved her a lot.

173  
00:10:28,630 --> 00:10:33,160

174  
00:10:33,160 --> 00:10:34,930  
Yet remained in Warsaw.

175  
00:10:34,930 --> 00:10:35,470  
Yes.

176  
00:10:35,470 --> 00:10:39,490  
He remained in Warsaw,

and he remained

177

00:10:39,490 --> 00:10:42,700  
in my grandfather's business.

178

00:10:42,700 --> 00:10:47,620  
He ran the finances  
of the business.

179

00:10:47,620 --> 00:10:54,640  
And apparently, one of the  
reasons that he was so--

180

00:10:54,640 --> 00:11:00,070  
that he did that is because  
he was so honest and so

181

00:11:00,070 --> 00:11:02,050  
trustworthy and so forth.

182

00:11:02,050 --> 00:11:07,270  
He was kind of the controller  
and the business head

183

00:11:07,270 --> 00:11:08,540  
of the business.

184

00:11:08,540 --> 00:11:18,160  
My grandfather was part inventor  
and entrepreneur and dreamer.

185

00:11:18,160 --> 00:11:23,110  
And my grandfather-- for  
example, my grandfather

186

00:11:23,110 --> 00:11:32,740  
was the first to  
introduce fresh fruit

187

00:11:32,740 --> 00:11:40,090  
juice or syrup to  
carbonated water.



188

00:11:40,090 --> 00:11:46,240

And that juice was raspberry.

189

00:11:46,240 --> 00:11:55,290

And he was at the  
beginning of creating

190

00:11:55,290 --> 00:12:00,765

fruit-flavored soft drinks,  
sparkling soft drinks.

191

00:12:00,765 --> 00:12:04,100

192

00:12:04,100 --> 00:12:12,240

And the fledgling company  
which he called Framboise,

193

00:12:12,240 --> 00:12:16,320

the French word for  
raspberries because that

194

00:12:16,320 --> 00:12:22,146

was the first fruit flavoring  
that he experimented with,

195

00:12:22,146 --> 00:12:25,290

with his carbonated water.

196

00:12:25,290 --> 00:12:27,210

You get to drink any?

197

00:12:27,210 --> 00:12:28,820

I don't remember at all.

198

00:12:28,820 --> 00:12:30,670

I don't remember that at all.

199

00:12:30,670 --> 00:12:35,490

But I remember that life  
at my grandparents' kind

200

00:12:35,490 --> 00:12:38,490  
of revolved around the siphons.

201

00:12:38,490 --> 00:12:40,740  
And I remember their home.

202

00:12:40,740 --> 00:12:44,580  
I remember-- I have wonderful  
memories of my grandparents'

203

00:12:44,580 --> 00:12:46,710  
home, and here comes  
the lump in my throat.

204

00:12:46,710 --> 00:12:49,710

205

00:12:49,710 --> 00:12:54,775  
My grandparents' home was on  
the sort of outskirts of Warsaw.

206

00:12:54,775 --> 00:12:59,930

207

00:12:59,930 --> 00:13:05,420  
My uncle Martin, the  
youngest of the brothers,

208

00:13:05,420 --> 00:13:11,330  
was interviewed for a book,  
Voices From the Holocaust.

209

00:13:11,330 --> 00:13:13,850  
And I believe in that  
interview is the--

210

00:13:13,850 --> 00:13:16,550

211

00:13:16,550 --> 00:13:20,180  
if not the address,  
the location of--

212  
00:13:20,180 --> 00:13:22,860  
I'm not very good with  
the names and places.

213  
00:13:22,860 --> 00:13:23,960  
Your grandparents' home.

214  
00:13:23,960 --> 00:13:25,820  
Yeah, because I was so young.

215  
00:13:25,820 --> 00:13:28,880  
But that information is known.

216  
00:13:28,880 --> 00:13:32,330  
And apparently my  
grandfather, who

217  
00:13:32,330 --> 00:13:35,510  
was extremely, unusually tall--

218  
00:13:35,510 --> 00:13:38,040  
he was the tallest member  
of the entire family.

219  
00:13:38,040 --> 00:13:41,360  
But my grandmother  
was quite small,

220  
00:13:41,360 --> 00:13:43,340  
and she had beautiful blue eyes.

221  
00:13:43,340 --> 00:13:45,800  
She was the only  
one with blue eyes,

222  
00:13:45,800 --> 00:13:48,620  
and she had a beautiful  
singing voice,

223  
00:13:48,620 --> 00:13:53,360  
which could have been operatic

but she preferred just

224

00:13:53,360 --> 00:13:57,030

to share her singing  
talents with her family.

225

00:13:57,030 --> 00:13:58,880

And she was the family songbird.

226

00:13:58,880 --> 00:14:02,700

She sang all the time as  
she cooked and so forth.

227

00:14:02,700 --> 00:14:09,230

And my grandfather was  
extremely, highly respected

228

00:14:09,230 --> 00:14:11,930

in the community,  
and he was sort

229

00:14:11,930 --> 00:14:18,700

of the unofficial Jewish mayor  
of the area, and was the--

230

00:14:18,700 --> 00:14:27,690

231

00:14:27,690 --> 00:14:31,540

he was the one who  
kind of communicated

232

00:14:31,540 --> 00:14:37,720

with the official government  
and the Gentile community.

233

00:14:37,720 --> 00:14:39,580

He was the--

234

00:14:39,580 --> 00:14:42,541

I can't think of the  
word, but anyway--

235

00:14:42,541 --> 00:14:43,710

Community leader.

236

00:14:43,710 --> 00:14:45,910

Yes, exactly.

237

00:14:45,910 --> 00:14:48,170

Today he would be a  
lobbyist, I suppose.

238

00:14:48,170 --> 00:14:49,360

Well, more than that.

239

00:14:49,360 --> 00:14:52,720

He was also kind  
of the wise man.

240

00:14:52,720 --> 00:14:55,960

People came to him for advice,  
and he settled disputes,

241

00:14:55,960 --> 00:14:59,230

and he loaned people money.

242

00:14:59,230 --> 00:15:02,638

And he was very  
loved and respected.

243

00:15:02,638 --> 00:15:03,430

An elder statesman.

244

00:15:03,430 --> 00:15:07,270

He was truly that, and  
looked the part too.

245

00:15:07,270 --> 00:15:10,460

He was a great big, tall  
man with a white beard,

246

00:15:10,460 --> 00:15:14,560

and, oh and I have a  
wonderful photograph of them

247  
00:15:14,560 --> 00:15:19,000  
too if your archives might be  
interested, of my grandmother

248  
00:15:19,000 --> 00:15:19,990  
and grandfather.

249  
00:15:19,990 --> 00:15:22,300  
Oh god, they're gorgeous.

250  
00:15:22,300 --> 00:15:22,800  
Anyway.

251  
00:15:22,800 --> 00:15:25,450  
Was your family orthodox?

252  
00:15:25,450 --> 00:15:28,600  
I believe my grandparents were.

253  
00:15:28,600 --> 00:15:30,160  
On your mother's side?

254  
00:15:30,160 --> 00:15:32,265  
I know really nothing  
about my father's side.

255  
00:15:32,265 --> 00:15:34,390  
Everything that I've told  
you is everything I know,

256  
00:15:34,390 --> 00:15:36,130  
and there is no more.

257  
00:15:36,130 --> 00:15:41,500  
But I think my grandparents  
were probably orthodox.

258  
00:15:41,500 --> 00:15:44,800

259

00:15:44,800 --> 00:15:46,570

I don't know that,  
but I think so.

260

00:15:46,570 --> 00:15:52,750

My grandmother also has  
a wonderful reputation.

261

00:15:52,750 --> 00:15:58,870

She took the  
teachings of the Torah

262

00:15:58,870 --> 00:16:04,750

rather literally in some  
respects, and every Friday

263

00:16:04,750 --> 00:16:10,090

and on every holiday she  
would go and collect beggars

264

00:16:10,090 --> 00:16:14,650

from the street, and she would  
feed them in her kitchen.

265

00:16:14,650 --> 00:16:17,020

And on the High Holy  
Days she invited

266

00:16:17,020 --> 00:16:23,230

some to share our holiday  
meal in our dining room.

267

00:16:23,230 --> 00:16:25,850

And I remember my  
grandmother's dining room,

268

00:16:25,850 --> 00:16:30,190

which because she had  
eight children, all of whom

269

00:16:30,190 --> 00:16:32,780

were married and had  
children of their own,

270

00:16:32,780 --> 00:16:36,220  
the table could seat I don't  
know how many people, many,

271

00:16:36,220 --> 00:16:37,090  
maybe 20.

272

00:16:37,090 --> 00:16:39,760  
And I remember the  
beautiful crystal chandelier

273

00:16:39,760 --> 00:16:41,230  
which hung over it.

274

00:16:41,230 --> 00:16:46,930  
And I remember a little story  
of a peasant from the Ukraine

275

00:16:46,930 --> 00:16:53,230  
who came to work as a sort of  
maid or, I don't know, helper.

276

00:16:53,230 --> 00:16:58,180  
And my grandmother  
told this servant

277

00:16:58,180 --> 00:17:01,510  
to go and turn out the  
light in the dining room.

278

00:17:01,510 --> 00:17:06,040  
And when the servant didn't  
reappear for a long time,

279

00:17:06,040 --> 00:17:10,720  
my grandmother went to search  
and found this peasant standing

280

00:17:10,720 --> 00:17:14,140  
on top of the table trying to  
blow out the electric lights

281



00:17:14,140 --> 00:17:16,900  
in the chandelier.

282  
00:17:16,900 --> 00:17:20,349  
So I remember little  
anecdotal facts like that.

283  
00:17:20,349 --> 00:17:22,270  
Stop me from telling  
you these stories

284  
00:17:22,270 --> 00:17:24,130  
because it'll take me forever.

285  
00:17:24,130 --> 00:17:25,690  
What kind of home  
did you live in?

286  
00:17:25,690 --> 00:17:31,100  
Well, my father was a teacher.

287  
00:17:31,100 --> 00:17:33,610  
He taught at one of  
the universities.

288  
00:17:33,610 --> 00:17:36,400  
I really am not sure which.

289  
00:17:36,400 --> 00:17:38,320  
Either the University  
of Warsaw--

290  
00:17:38,320 --> 00:17:40,180  
there were two  
universities, I believe.

291  
00:17:40,180 --> 00:17:42,790  
And I think he might have  
taught in the smaller of the two

292  
00:17:42,790 --> 00:17:46,420  
because there was great  
anti-Semitism at that time

293  
00:17:46,420 --> 00:17:52,630  
and difficulty within  
the university system.

294  
00:17:52,630 --> 00:17:55,487  
So he might not have taught  
in Warsaw University.

295  
00:17:55,487 --> 00:17:56,320  
I'm really not sure.

296  
00:17:56,320 --> 00:18:00,530  
In any case, he also gave  
private lessons at home.

297  
00:18:00,530 --> 00:18:06,610  
My father was not successful  
in the field of making money.

298  
00:18:06,610 --> 00:18:11,050  
And he was kind of a  
disappointment and disgrace

299  
00:18:11,050 --> 00:18:15,130  
within the family because  
my mother's family was all

300  
00:18:15,130 --> 00:18:17,530  
very aggressive and  
very well-to-do,

301  
00:18:17,530 --> 00:18:19,880  
and everybody did  
exceedingly well.

302  
00:18:19,880 --> 00:18:24,260  
And apparently they thought  
that that was very important.

303  
00:18:24,260 --> 00:18:27,820  
And everyone was talented  
in a different way,

304  
00:18:27,820 --> 00:18:31,960  
but everyone was  
sort of well off.

305  
00:18:31,960 --> 00:18:35,710  
My mother was not.

306  
00:18:35,710 --> 00:18:40,390  
And it was very  
disappointing to the family

307  
00:18:40,390 --> 00:18:43,665  
that my mother married my  
father because she married him

308  
00:18:43,665 --> 00:18:44,290  
on the rebound.

309  
00:18:44,290 --> 00:18:48,010

310  
00:18:48,010 --> 00:18:54,100  
And she had been in love  
with a local boy, who

311  
00:18:54,100 --> 00:19:01,450  
apparently was a great Zionist,  
and gave her the choice of--

312  
00:19:01,450 --> 00:19:07,300  
or asked her to go with  
him to build Palestine.

313  
00:19:07,300 --> 00:19:16,240  
And when she refused to  
leave the family nest

314  
00:19:16,240 --> 00:19:21,880  
and go to such a faraway  
place, he left without her.

315

00:19:21,880 --> 00:19:28,000  
And I've often wondered which  
hero in the state of Israel

316  
00:19:28,000 --> 00:19:36,370  
might have been my mother's  
childhood sweetheart.

317  
00:19:36,370 --> 00:19:38,720  
And so I romanticize about that.

318  
00:19:38,720 --> 00:19:41,810

319  
00:19:41,810 --> 00:19:45,490  
Anyway on the rebound, my mother  
married one of her teachers.

320  
00:19:45,490 --> 00:19:48,560  
My father was quite a  
bit older than my mother,

321  
00:19:48,560 --> 00:19:54,430  
and it was against my family's--  
my mother's family's wishes

322  
00:19:54,430 --> 00:19:58,180  
that she rebelliously  
married him.

323  
00:19:58,180 --> 00:20:01,180  
And I was their only child.

324  
00:20:01,180 --> 00:20:03,370  
How long had they been married?

325  
00:20:03,370 --> 00:20:05,050  
Well, I don't know.

326  
00:20:05,050 --> 00:20:06,940  
My mother was very  
young, so I imagine

327

00:20:06,940 --> 00:20:09,190

they were just  
married a short time,

328

00:20:09,190 --> 00:20:12,010

and I was their first child.

329

00:20:12,010 --> 00:20:22,090

And in 1939, when I was four,  
I remember with great clarity

330

00:20:22,090 --> 00:20:22,930

the blitzkrieg.

331

00:20:22,930 --> 00:20:29,060

332

00:20:29,060 --> 00:20:33,140

My-- I mentioned  
that my grandparents

333

00:20:33,140 --> 00:20:36,830

lived on the outskirts of  
Warsaw in a section, the name

334

00:20:36,830 --> 00:20:38,300

of which I don't remember.

335

00:20:38,300 --> 00:20:44,240

And we lived-- my mother and  
father and I-- in an apartment.

336

00:20:44,240 --> 00:20:49,370

And I can describe  
to you with in detail

337

00:20:49,370 --> 00:20:54,230

the apartment building, in fact  
a little bit our apartment too.

338

00:20:54,230 --> 00:20:55,820

But I won't.

339  
00:20:55,820 --> 00:20:56,660  
In any case--

340  
00:20:56,660 --> 00:20:59,030  
I was waiting for you to.

341  
00:20:59,030 --> 00:21:03,680  
Well, I'll describe only this  
much, that it was a red brick

342  
00:21:03,680 --> 00:21:08,990  
building, and it was built  
with a courtyard inside,

343  
00:21:08,990 --> 00:21:11,780  
but I think a lot of  
buildings in Europe were.

344  
00:21:11,780 --> 00:21:14,990  
And that there were iron  
gates through which you

345  
00:21:14,990 --> 00:21:16,520  
entered the courtyard.

346  
00:21:16,520 --> 00:21:23,360  
And the gate, the handle of  
the gate, was a monkey's paw.

347  
00:21:23,360 --> 00:21:26,330  
And I don't even know if  
that's all that unusual.

348  
00:21:26,330 --> 00:21:28,490  
But I remember  
that very clearly,

349  
00:21:28,490 --> 00:21:34,670  
and I remember that gypsies  
came and entertained,

350

00:21:34,670 --> 00:21:36,170  
and there was a gypsy wagon.

351  
00:21:36,170 --> 00:21:37,910  
And the people leaned  
out of the windows

352  
00:21:37,910 --> 00:21:41,210  
and looked down into the  
courtyard and threw coins down.

353  
00:21:41,210 --> 00:21:42,770  
And I remember that very well.

354  
00:21:42,770 --> 00:21:46,410  
And this circus troupe  
came, and I remember that.

355  
00:21:46,410 --> 00:21:48,180  
And I remember looking  
out of the window.

356  
00:21:48,180 --> 00:21:54,320  
And I remember that a line was  
strung from window to window,

357  
00:21:54,320 --> 00:21:56,450  
and I looked out of  
the window one morning

358  
00:21:56,450 --> 00:22:00,650  
and a ballerina was  
walking on a rope

359  
00:22:00,650 --> 00:22:02,585  
right in front of my window.

360  
00:22:02,585 --> 00:22:03,460  
Across the courtyard.

361  
00:22:03,460 --> 00:22:05,430  
Across the courtyard.

362

00:22:05,430 --> 00:22:09,500

And I remember that she held an umbrella, and she smiled at me.

363

00:22:09,500 --> 00:22:12,890

And I looked down, and there was a bear standing

364

00:22:12,890 --> 00:22:18,680

on its hind legs, and clowns, and it's such a clear memory.

365

00:22:18,680 --> 00:22:19,670

A visiting circus.

366

00:22:19,670 --> 00:22:21,800

A visiting circus in the courtyard.

367

00:22:21,800 --> 00:22:25,430

And the people threw down coins, and that's how they were paid,

368

00:22:25,430 --> 00:22:27,710

these itinerant entertainers.

369

00:22:27,710 --> 00:22:29,960

Do you remember whether this was a Jewish neighborhood

370

00:22:29,960 --> 00:22:30,860

or was it mixed?

371

00:22:30,860 --> 00:22:32,000

I don't know.

372

00:22:32,000 --> 00:22:33,260

I don't-- I really don't.

373

00:22:33,260 --> 00:22:33,980

I wouldn't know.



374

00:22:33,980 --> 00:22:36,950

In any case, I do remember  
that there was a trolley.

375

00:22:36,950 --> 00:22:40,340

We took a trolley to  
my grandparents' home.

376

00:22:40,340 --> 00:22:49,430

And the trolley-- there  
was a kind of circle.

377

00:22:49,430 --> 00:22:52,200

The trolley was turned on a--

378

00:22:52,200 --> 00:22:53,870

like a lazy Susan.

379

00:22:53,870 --> 00:22:54,390

Yes.

380

00:22:54,390 --> 00:22:57,560

And that was the  
end of the line.

381

00:22:57,560 --> 00:22:59,270

The terminal was  
near where you lived.

382

00:22:59,270 --> 00:22:59,770

Yeah.

383

00:22:59,770 --> 00:23:04,040

And that was where we lived, at  
the end of this trolley line.

384

00:23:04,040 --> 00:23:08,180

And we went all the way to the  
other end of the trolley line,

385

00:23:08,180 --> 00:23:11,420

where there was

another turn around.

386

00:23:11,420 --> 00:23:15,950

And within a walk from there  
was where my grandparents lived.

387

00:23:15,950 --> 00:23:20,840

So I could probably look  
on an old map of Warsaw

388

00:23:20,840 --> 00:23:24,770

and identify where  
both dwellings were.

389

00:23:24,770 --> 00:23:25,790

I might.

390

00:23:25,790 --> 00:23:27,170

We have one such map downstairs.

391

00:23:27,170 --> 00:23:27,930

You do?

392

00:23:27,930 --> 00:23:28,430

Yes.

393

00:23:28,430 --> 00:23:30,110

We will look this up after.

394

00:23:30,110 --> 00:23:30,660

Really?

395

00:23:30,660 --> 00:23:31,160

Yes.

396

00:23:31,160 --> 00:23:32,270

I'd like that, thank you.

397

00:23:32,270 --> 00:23:33,020

Or during a break.

398

00:23:33,020 --> 00:23:33,530  
OK.

399  
00:23:33,530 --> 00:23:34,070  
Thank you.

400  
00:23:34,070 --> 00:23:38,400

401  
00:23:38,400 --> 00:23:39,180  
Oh dear.

402  
00:23:39,180 --> 00:23:41,430  
We were talking  
about your apartment.

403  
00:23:41,430 --> 00:23:43,830  
Well, I won't go into  
detail about the apartment.

404  
00:23:43,830 --> 00:23:45,710  
It's really not  
all that critical.

405  
00:23:45,710 --> 00:23:48,900  
What I remember was that--

406  
00:23:48,900 --> 00:23:54,840  
very hurriedly getting out  
of it with a lot of bundles

407  
00:23:54,840 --> 00:23:58,450  
and having a--

408  
00:23:58,450 --> 00:24:02,400  
My father, I must tell you, that  
my early memories of my father

409  
00:24:02,400 --> 00:24:04,090  
are incredibly warm.

410  
00:24:04,090 --> 00:24:06,310

My father never  
raised his voice.

411  
00:24:06,310 --> 00:24:12,690  
My father would play with me on  
the floor with toys and make--

412  
00:24:12,690 --> 00:24:15,840  
he was very artistic  
apparently and very creative,

413  
00:24:15,840 --> 00:24:20,520  
and we played with different  
colored clay, which we made

414  
00:24:20,520 --> 00:24:22,470  
animals and whatever, you know.

415  
00:24:22,470 --> 00:24:25,260  
And my father would  
spend hours in play

416  
00:24:25,260 --> 00:24:27,540  
with me, whereas my  
mother was always busy.

417  
00:24:27,540 --> 00:24:32,520  
She was always baking and  
cooking and sewing and knitting

418  
00:24:32,520 --> 00:24:34,620  
and doing all sorts of--

419  
00:24:34,620 --> 00:24:35,730  
she was always busy.

420  
00:24:35,730 --> 00:24:37,980  
She was always going  
in and out and coming

421  
00:24:37,980 --> 00:24:39,400  
and shopping and going.

422

00:24:39,400 --> 00:24:41,250

My father spent a  
lot of time at home,

423

00:24:41,250 --> 00:24:45,690

probably waiting for  
students or marking

424

00:24:45,690 --> 00:24:47,290

papers or whatever he did.

425

00:24:47,290 --> 00:24:51,240

But in any case, I remember that  
he and I spent a lot of time

426

00:24:51,240 --> 00:24:52,800

together in my childhood.

427

00:24:52,800 --> 00:24:55,990

And I remember my  
fourth birthday party.

428

00:24:55,990 --> 00:24:58,440

And I remember about  
it that my father

429

00:24:58,440 --> 00:25:02,850

had decorated the entire  
house with streamers

430

00:25:02,850 --> 00:25:04,530

that he had made into--

431

00:25:04,530 --> 00:25:12,480

he had cut different colored  
shiny paper, very shiny paper

432

00:25:12,480 --> 00:25:15,390

of different colors,  
and he made chain

433

00:25:15,390 --> 00:25:19,320

by gluing loops  
of varied colors,

434  
00:25:19,320 --> 00:25:21,810  
and he decorated  
the room, I guess

435  
00:25:21,810 --> 00:25:25,920  
it was, with these  
paper chains which

436  
00:25:25,920 --> 00:25:28,380  
hung from the ceiling in  
loops and around the walls

437  
00:25:28,380 --> 00:25:29,140  
and so forth.

438  
00:25:29,140 --> 00:25:32,220  
And I remember that,  
oh, I don't know,

439  
00:25:32,220 --> 00:25:35,100  
20 children or  
whatever of my age

440  
00:25:35,100 --> 00:25:37,020  
came, and they all  
brought presents.

441  
00:25:37,020 --> 00:25:39,510  
And I had a hysterical  
fit because I had

442  
00:25:39,510 --> 00:25:43,380  
received two sets of dominoes.

443  
00:25:43,380 --> 00:25:45,300  
And I was--

444  
00:25:45,300 --> 00:25:48,060  
I lay on the floor and  
kicked and had a tantrum.

445

00:25:48,060 --> 00:25:51,180

And how wonderful and  
understanding my father

446

00:25:51,180 --> 00:25:54,660

was, and how impatient and  
annoyed with the whole nonsense

447

00:25:54,660 --> 00:25:56,220

my mother was.

448

00:25:56,220 --> 00:26:02,370

So my mother was kind of  
down-to-business personality,

449

00:26:02,370 --> 00:26:04,470

probably like I am.

450

00:26:04,470 --> 00:26:09,540

And my father was soft  
and sort of a dreamer.

451

00:26:09,540 --> 00:26:15,150

And it fits-- the memory  
that I have of him

452

00:26:15,150 --> 00:26:20,010

fits with the family  
version of what he was,

453

00:26:20,010 --> 00:26:25,306

which they sort of feel  
was sort of a failure.

454

00:26:25,306 --> 00:26:27,030

An idealist.

455

00:26:27,030 --> 00:26:30,060

Whatever, and an intellectual.

456

00:26:30,060 --> 00:26:34,050

He spoke many languages,  
among them German,

457  
00:26:34,050 --> 00:26:37,070  
with great fluency.

458  
00:26:37,070 --> 00:26:37,980  
He was a poet.

459  
00:26:37,980 --> 00:26:40,950  
He read and wrote poetry  
and so on and so forth.

460  
00:26:40,950 --> 00:26:42,070  
He was an intellectual.

461  
00:26:42,070 --> 00:26:46,680  
My mother was more  
of an earth mother.

462  
00:26:46,680 --> 00:26:48,930  
What languages were  
spoken in your home?

463  
00:26:48,930 --> 00:26:51,180  
[COUGHING] Excuse me.

464  
00:26:51,180 --> 00:26:54,000

465  
00:26:54,000 --> 00:27:02,430  
We spoke Polish, and very  
intellectual Polish, you know.

466  
00:27:02,430 --> 00:27:04,290  
Everyone was very well educated.

467  
00:27:04,290 --> 00:27:08,010  
And my mother's  
brothers and sisters

468  
00:27:08,010 --> 00:27:11,730



were all very  
involved in the arts.

469  
00:27:11,730 --> 00:27:17,520  
And each one had a different  
interest, one in theater,

470  
00:27:17,520 --> 00:27:20,020  
and another one in  
opera, and another one

471  
00:27:20,020 --> 00:27:22,620  
in, oh I don't know, this  
and that and whatever.

472  
00:27:22,620 --> 00:27:26,070  
And all of the guests  
and friends and so forth

473  
00:27:26,070 --> 00:27:30,450  
and their individual  
group circles of friends

474  
00:27:30,450 --> 00:27:33,640  
were all famous.

475  
00:27:33,640 --> 00:27:39,030  
They were all celebrity  
sort of people in the arts.

476  
00:27:39,030 --> 00:27:45,450  
And at parties they were all  
well-known-- they were sort

477  
00:27:45,450 --> 00:27:49,710  
of the jet set of the time.

478  
00:27:49,710 --> 00:27:52,830

479  
00:27:52,830 --> 00:27:55,110  
Were you old enough to  
get any lessons, either

480  
00:27:55,110 --> 00:27:56,940  
from your father, music or--

481  
00:27:56,940 --> 00:27:57,660  
No.

482  
00:27:57,660 --> 00:27:58,680  
No, I was not.

483  
00:27:58,680 --> 00:27:59,850  
I was four years old.

484  
00:27:59,850 --> 00:28:00,540  
I was not.

485  
00:28:00,540 --> 00:28:08,130  
I just remember sitting on the  
floor and drawing or making--

486  
00:28:08,130 --> 00:28:09,420  
playing with clay.

487  
00:28:09,420 --> 00:28:12,750  
And I remember cooking with my  
mother, baking with my mother.

488  
00:28:12,750 --> 00:28:16,240  
I remember the cookies  
that she baked.

489  
00:28:16,240 --> 00:28:19,417  
I think they're called  
Linser tarts, tortes,

490  
00:28:19,417 --> 00:28:20,250  
something like that.

491  
00:28:20,250 --> 00:28:22,680  
They're little round-- they  
were made little round cookies

492

00:28:22,680 --> 00:28:26,190

with some jelly, and then a  
second cookie with a hole in it

493

00:28:26,190 --> 00:28:27,390

on top.

494

00:28:27,390 --> 00:28:30,150

And that was one  
that she made a lot.

495

00:28:30,150 --> 00:28:35,550

And then she made a cookie,  
which a friend of my father's

496

00:28:35,550 --> 00:28:37,470

who visited quite frequently--

497

00:28:37,470 --> 00:28:42,660

I believe he was a professor,  
Professor Zuckerman,

498

00:28:42,660 --> 00:28:44,880

which means sugar man.

499

00:28:44,880 --> 00:28:49,620

And these were cookies  
with coarse sugar sprinkled

500

00:28:49,620 --> 00:28:50,790

on the top.

501

00:28:50,790 --> 00:28:53,010

And my mother used  
to call them--

502

00:28:53,010 --> 00:28:55,830

because this gentleman  
particularly enjoyed those

503

00:28:55,830 --> 00:28:57,030

cookies--

504  
00:28:57,030 --> 00:29:00,720  
so she called those  
Zuckerman cookies.

505  
00:29:00,720 --> 00:29:02,940  
And I remember making  
those with her.

506  
00:29:02,940 --> 00:29:06,390  
And I remember sitting--

507  
00:29:06,390 --> 00:29:10,320  
preparations in my grandmother's  
kitchen for the holidays.

508  
00:29:10,320 --> 00:29:14,310  
I remember my mother and her  
sisters and my grandmother all

509  
00:29:14,310 --> 00:29:15,540  
baking and cooking.

510  
00:29:15,540 --> 00:29:18,420  
And I remember the  
challahs that they made,

511  
00:29:18,420 --> 00:29:22,110  
these great long challahs  
braided with a little braid

512  
00:29:22,110 --> 00:29:23,040  
on top.

513  
00:29:23,040 --> 00:29:26,400  
And they always made  
a little one for me,

514  
00:29:26,400 --> 00:29:28,390  
or they gave me  
dough to play with.

515

00:29:28,390 --> 00:29:31,920  
And I remember that they  
sat me in a high chair

516  
00:29:31,920 --> 00:29:35,100  
kind of across from--

517  
00:29:35,100 --> 00:29:37,890  
the opposite side of the room  
for where the ovens were,

518  
00:29:37,890 --> 00:29:39,060  
the heat was.

519  
00:29:39,060 --> 00:29:44,550  
And to entertain me, they would  
say "Mirka, open your mouth."

520  
00:29:44,550 --> 00:29:47,660  
And they would fling a  
raisin across the room.

521  
00:29:47,660 --> 00:29:51,780  
And I loved raisins, and  
I would open my mouth

522  
00:29:51,780 --> 00:29:54,090  
and try to catch the  
raisin, and there

523  
00:29:54,090 --> 00:29:56,820  
were great peals of  
laughter when it hit my nose

524  
00:29:56,820 --> 00:29:59,260  
or never reached me  
or whatever it was.

525  
00:29:59,260 --> 00:30:01,890  
And I just remember  
that with such clarity.

526  
00:30:01,890 --> 00:30:02,790

It's incredible.

527

00:30:02,790 --> 00:30:05,400

And I was four years old.

528

00:30:05,400 --> 00:30:10,860

And then I recall that we left  
our apartment in great haste,

529

00:30:10,860 --> 00:30:13,500

schlepping all sorts of bundles.

530

00:30:13,500 --> 00:30:17,550

And I remember a big  
hysterical fight with my mother

531

00:30:17,550 --> 00:30:23,580

because I insisted on bringing  
my favorite possession, which

532

00:30:23,580 --> 00:30:28,030

was an enormous teddy  
bear almost my own size.

533

00:30:28,030 --> 00:30:32,640

It was a Steiff, shteef,  
whatever, teddy bear.

534

00:30:32,640 --> 00:30:38,250

And my grandmother had bought  
this teddy bear on the day

535

00:30:38,250 --> 00:30:40,440

that I was born and  
gave it to my mother,

536

00:30:40,440 --> 00:30:43,380

and I grew up with this  
teddy bear with me.

537

00:30:43,380 --> 00:30:45,270

And he was my companion.

538

00:30:45,270 --> 00:30:48,510

And I remember that I  
called that teddy bear

539

00:30:48,510 --> 00:30:51,570

by my grandfather's  
name, which was David.

540

00:30:51,570 --> 00:30:54,010

David.

541

00:30:54,010 --> 00:30:57,850

And that teddy bear  
had to go with me.

542

00:30:57,850 --> 00:31:00,430

And we left the apartment,  
and I don't remember

543

00:31:00,430 --> 00:31:02,320

by what means we got there.

544

00:31:02,320 --> 00:31:03,910

I doubt that it was the trolley.

545

00:31:03,910 --> 00:31:05,560

I don't remember  
that part, but we

546

00:31:05,560 --> 00:31:07,960

arrived in my  
grandparents' home, where

547

00:31:07,960 --> 00:31:11,380

there was enormous  
excitement in the courtyard.

548

00:31:11,380 --> 00:31:14,390

549

00:31:14,390 --> 00:31:17,020

The factory, the

house, and the people

550

00:31:17,020 --> 00:31:18,730

who worked in the  
factory all lived

551

00:31:18,730 --> 00:31:22,300

in surrounding little  
bungalows on their land.

552

00:31:22,300 --> 00:31:23,980

And there was  
enormous excitement.

553

00:31:23,980 --> 00:31:29,320

People being loaded  
into trucks and also

554

00:31:29,320 --> 00:31:31,750

into the horse-drawn  
carts which had

555

00:31:31,750 --> 00:31:36,370

been used to deliver the soda  
all over Poland and probably

556

00:31:36,370 --> 00:31:40,390

all over Eastern Europe.

557

00:31:40,390 --> 00:31:43,130

And everybody was  
getting into trucks.

558

00:31:43,130 --> 00:31:46,240

And there were sirens,  
and the light was fading.

559

00:31:46,240 --> 00:31:50,080

And then I remember  
being pushed up

560

00:31:50,080 --> 00:31:52,580

into the back of an open truck.



561  
00:31:52,580 --> 00:31:55,300  
And I remember my uncle  
being told to drive

562  
00:31:55,300 --> 00:31:57,090  
and orders being  
yelled at my fa--

563  
00:31:57,090 --> 00:31:59,143  
I just remember  
the entire scene.

564  
00:31:59,143 --> 00:32:00,310  
Did you have David with you?

565  
00:32:00,310 --> 00:32:04,510  
And I had David, and I  
sat on my mother's lap,

566  
00:32:04,510 --> 00:32:07,374  
and I remember my mother--

567  
00:32:07,374 --> 00:32:11,090  
oh god, this is tough--

568  
00:32:11,090 --> 00:32:15,540  
my mother put her hands--

569  
00:32:15,540 --> 00:32:20,280  
I sat in her lap with my  
back against her breast.

570  
00:32:20,280 --> 00:32:23,760  
And my mother put her  
hands in front of my face,

571  
00:32:23,760 --> 00:32:25,590  
trying to shield my eyes.

572  
00:32:25,590 --> 00:32:29,730  
And I tore at her

fingers trying to get

573

00:32:29,730 --> 00:32:36,350

a view of this incredible  
thing that was going on,

574

00:32:36,350 --> 00:32:44,160

huge explosions of light  
streaking across the sky,

575

00:32:44,160 --> 00:32:51,150

and fireballs and  
explosions and noise

576

00:32:51,150 --> 00:32:55,680

and whistling and screaming,  
and the horses screaming

577

00:32:55,680 --> 00:33:00,540

and automobile horns and people  
screaming, and bundles flying.

578

00:33:00,540 --> 00:33:06,630

All this mad excitement, and  
then we moved out in a caravan

579

00:33:06,630 --> 00:33:09,040

and joined a--

580

00:33:09,040 --> 00:33:13,620

oh, did you ever  
see ants following

581

00:33:13,620 --> 00:33:17,310

in a trail, making a road?

582

00:33:17,310 --> 00:33:19,200

Well, that's how we--

583

00:33:19,200 --> 00:33:23,820

like a river of humanity  
in carts and horses,

584

00:33:23,820 --> 00:33:25,500  
on foot, and screaming.

585

00:33:25,500 --> 00:33:28,290  
And it got darker and darker.

586

00:33:28,290 --> 00:33:37,760  
And then behind the skyline of  
the city, fires and explosions.

587

00:33:37,760 --> 00:33:40,410

588

00:33:40,410 --> 00:33:45,596  
And that's how we left Warsaw,  
and life as I knew it ended.

589

00:33:45,596 --> 00:33:50,640  
And you had no idea why or  
who or what was going on?

590

00:33:50,640 --> 00:33:52,140  
Probably not.

591

00:33:52,140 --> 00:33:53,260  
Could we take a break?

592

00:33:53,260 --> 00:33:54,335  
I need a glass of water.

593

00:33:54,335 --> 00:33:54,835  
Sure.

594

00:33:54,835 --> 00:34:46,050

595

00:34:46,050 --> 00:34:47,909  
--people who took  
care of the horses,

596

00:34:47,909 --> 00:34:50,280

and there were people who  
worked in the factory.

597  
00:34:50,280 --> 00:34:55,380  
And then there were these  
cabins on the land where

598  
00:34:55,380 --> 00:34:58,200  
the workers lived, and  
whole families lived there.

599  
00:34:58,200 --> 00:35:01,890  
And my grandfather sort of took  
care of all of these people,

600  
00:35:01,890 --> 00:35:05,010  
and these people  
were all peasants.

601  
00:35:05,010 --> 00:35:07,860  
And most of them came  
from the Ukraine,

602  
00:35:07,860 --> 00:35:10,120  
and they came and they  
lived there and they worked.

603  
00:35:10,120 --> 00:35:12,390  
And then they would go  
home and some relatives

604  
00:35:12,390 --> 00:35:13,860  
would be sent back and so forth.

605  
00:35:13,860 --> 00:35:18,700  
Whole families lived from  
my grandfather and his--

606  
00:35:18,700 --> 00:35:23,220  
But my grandfather was very  
involved with his horses.

607  
00:35:23,220 --> 00:35:29,100

And his big dream was to  
have a team of horses--

608  
00:35:29,100 --> 00:35:34,240  
you know the Clydesdale  
horses that deliver the beer?

609  
00:35:34,240 --> 00:35:35,130  
I've forgotten--

610  
00:35:35,130 --> 00:35:35,630  
Budweiser.

611  
00:35:35,630 --> 00:35:36,750  
Budweiser beer.

612  
00:35:36,750 --> 00:35:38,940  
Well, these were teams  
of horses like that.

613  
00:35:38,940 --> 00:35:42,600  
I mean, they weren't Clydesdales  
with the feathered feet,

614  
00:35:42,600 --> 00:35:46,740  
but they were just  
teams of big, brown--

615  
00:35:46,740 --> 00:35:47,800  
Belgian type.

616  
00:35:47,800 --> 00:35:48,750  
Yeah, right.

617  
00:35:48,750 --> 00:35:52,500  
And they were all  
dark, big dark horses.

618  
00:35:52,500 --> 00:35:57,210  
But my grandfather's dream  
was to have at least one team

619

00:35:57,210 --> 00:36:00,720  
of all white horses.

620  
00:36:00,720 --> 00:36:03,240  
And I remember that  
my-- and my grandfather

621  
00:36:03,240 --> 00:36:08,055  
fought this new-fangled  
business of using trucks.

622  
00:36:08,055 --> 00:36:10,860

623  
00:36:10,860 --> 00:36:15,450  
He was enamored of his horses  
and the idea of the horses

624  
00:36:15,450 --> 00:36:18,120  
and having the white  
team of horses.

625  
00:36:18,120 --> 00:36:21,750  
And he bought white--

626  
00:36:21,750 --> 00:36:23,730  
he kept buying white horses.

627  
00:36:23,730 --> 00:36:26,280  
And each time he had a failure.

628  
00:36:26,280 --> 00:36:28,200  
The horse would get  
sick and die or break

629  
00:36:28,200 --> 00:36:31,320  
a leg or whatever happened,  
and he could never quite

630  
00:36:31,320 --> 00:36:33,660  
collect a team of horses.

631

00:36:33,660 --> 00:36:40,200  
And I remember an incident  
before the blitzkrieg, of he

632  
00:36:40,200 --> 00:36:45,910  
had just bought a new white  
horse, stallion, I don't know,

633  
00:36:45,910 --> 00:36:46,410  
whatever.

634  
00:36:46,410 --> 00:36:49,410  
He was very proud of  
this huge white horse.

635  
00:36:49,410 --> 00:36:54,270  
And I remember being shown  
this horse along with my mother

636  
00:36:54,270 --> 00:36:57,960  
and father and my uncle  
Jacob, who was the--

637  
00:36:57,960 --> 00:37:03,690  
I told you before-- the oldest,  
and he was the controller--

638  
00:37:03,690 --> 00:37:07,890  
was very proud of this horse.

639  
00:37:07,890 --> 00:37:13,350  
And my grandfather led the  
horse out of the stable

640  
00:37:13,350 --> 00:37:18,510  
and into the central  
courtyard of his domain,

641  
00:37:18,510 --> 00:37:20,560  
and walked the horse around.

642  
00:37:20,560 --> 00:37:24,378  
And he said to Jacob,

here, you take the horse,

643  
00:37:24,378 --> 00:37:25,170  
or whatever it was.

644  
00:37:25,170 --> 00:37:28,320  
Anyway the horse--  
and I remember this--

645  
00:37:28,320 --> 00:37:33,690  
and it's a very important story  
a little later in my life--

646  
00:37:33,690 --> 00:37:40,000  
the horse reared up and kicked  
my uncle Jacob in the chest.

647  
00:37:40,000 --> 00:37:40,680  
He bucked.

648  
00:37:40,680 --> 00:37:46,170  
With his hind foot he hit  
Uncle Jacob in the chest

649  
00:37:46,170 --> 00:37:49,260  
and knocked Uncle  
Jacob unconscious.

650  
00:37:49,260 --> 00:37:54,180  
And they carried Uncle  
Jacob into the house.

651  
00:37:54,180 --> 00:37:58,320  
And I remember that back room  
through which we would go.

652  
00:37:58,320 --> 00:38:01,260  
It was in the back of the  
house and faced the courtyard.

653  
00:38:01,260 --> 00:38:04,760  
The front of the house where we  
lived was a little more formal,



654  
00:38:04,760 --> 00:38:08,520  
but you see, the  
soda manufacturing

655  
00:38:08,520 --> 00:38:15,780  
plant was in the back, and  
the courtyard was all earth,

656  
00:38:15,780 --> 00:38:17,190  
you know, no concrete.

657  
00:38:17,190 --> 00:38:20,520  
So when it rained,  
it was sort of muddy.

658  
00:38:20,520 --> 00:38:24,130  
And also inside the  
soda manufactory,

659  
00:38:24,130 --> 00:38:33,930  
it was all water, so the plant  
had boards nailed together,

660  
00:38:33,930 --> 00:38:35,000  
you know, wooden--

661  
00:38:35,000 --> 00:38:35,500  
Planks.

662  
00:38:35,500 --> 00:38:39,780  
Planks, so the water could  
go through and underneath.

663  
00:38:39,780 --> 00:38:44,520  
And all the workers wore  
wooden shoes, you know,

664  
00:38:44,520 --> 00:38:46,600  
like the Dutch shoes?

665  
00:38:46,600 --> 00:38:51,660

So they would leave  
their shoes at home,

666  
00:38:51,660 --> 00:38:54,300  
and everybody had sort  
of a little mud room,

667  
00:38:54,300 --> 00:38:56,130  
and they would put  
on wooden shoes

668  
00:38:56,130 --> 00:38:59,340  
and then go into  
the manufactory,

669  
00:38:59,340 --> 00:39:02,700  
through the courtyard into  
the manufactory, and work.

670  
00:39:02,700 --> 00:39:04,680  
And then when they  
came home, they

671  
00:39:04,680 --> 00:39:06,870  
would leave those wooden  
shoes in the mud room

672  
00:39:06,870 --> 00:39:10,920  
and put on their shoes or  
boots or whatever they had.

673  
00:39:10,920 --> 00:39:13,050  
Well, our mud room was--

674  
00:39:13,050 --> 00:39:16,170  
my grandmother's mud  
room was this big room,

675  
00:39:16,170 --> 00:39:22,110  
and it had hooks on the wall  
on which coats hung, and then

676  
00:39:22,110 --> 00:39:27,840

sort of shelves underneath  
that where the wooden shoes sat

677  
00:39:27,840 --> 00:39:31,350  
when they weren't in use,  
or the boots, you know.

678  
00:39:31,350 --> 00:39:39,180  
And there was a  
leather sort of a bed.

679  
00:39:39,180 --> 00:39:40,080  
It wasn't a sofa.

680  
00:39:40,080 --> 00:39:44,670  
It was like a flat low thing.

681  
00:39:44,670 --> 00:39:49,850  
And I guess they must have sat  
there to put on their boots.

682  
00:39:49,850 --> 00:39:54,250  
And so when my uncle Jacob  
was kicked by the horse,

683  
00:39:54,250 --> 00:39:57,430  
they carried him  
into this mud room,

684  
00:39:57,430 --> 00:40:07,990  
and they put him on this  
leather sofa, bed, I don't know,

685  
00:40:07,990 --> 00:40:09,430  
whatever it was.

686  
00:40:09,430 --> 00:40:10,660  
Cot.

687  
00:40:10,660 --> 00:40:12,310  
Cot, yeah, I guess cot.

688

00:40:12,310 --> 00:40:15,785

And well, it was more  
elegant than a cot.

689

00:40:15,785 --> 00:40:18,230

It was a big upholstered  
thing, but it was leather.

690

00:40:18,230 --> 00:40:18,730

Yeah.

691

00:40:18,730 --> 00:40:22,340

And it was dark  
leather, brown leather.

692

00:40:22,340 --> 00:40:24,610

I mean, I remember that thing.

693

00:40:24,610 --> 00:40:31,030

You know, I remember the squeak  
of the hinge of that back door.

694

00:40:31,030 --> 00:40:32,650

I can hear it in my memory.

695

00:40:32,650 --> 00:40:35,290

696

00:40:35,290 --> 00:40:38,950

The room where I slept when  
I stayed at my grandmother's

697

00:40:38,950 --> 00:40:43,900

must have been above or  
somewhere near that door

698

00:40:43,900 --> 00:40:47,560

because I remember it opening  
and closing in the morning

699

00:40:47,560 --> 00:40:50,710

when my grandfather  
went into the factory

700  
00:40:50,710 --> 00:40:54,400  
and my grandmother went  
out to get the chickens

701  
00:40:54,400 --> 00:40:55,365  
or whatever it was.

702  
00:40:55,365 --> 00:40:57,110  
You spent a lot of  
time up with them.

703  
00:40:57,110 --> 00:40:57,610  
Yes.

704  
00:40:57,610 --> 00:40:58,900  
And I loved being there.

705  
00:40:58,900 --> 00:41:01,090  
And I guess because  
my parents worked,

706  
00:41:01,090 --> 00:41:03,318  
you know, my mother must  
have worked, and my father--

707  
00:41:03,318 --> 00:41:03,860  
I don't know.

708  
00:41:03,860 --> 00:41:05,480  
I must have spent a  
lot of time there.

709  
00:41:05,480 --> 00:41:06,580  
And I liked it.

710  
00:41:06,580 --> 00:41:08,230  
Did you love horses?

711  
00:41:08,230 --> 00:41:09,310  
I don't remember.

712

00:41:09,310 --> 00:41:14,620

I really don't remember any  
interaction with horses.

713

00:41:14,620 --> 00:41:16,880

So everyone else was more  
excited about these horses

714

00:41:16,880 --> 00:41:17,380

than you?

715

00:41:17,380 --> 00:41:21,910

Well, I remember being  
awed, but you know, my--

716

00:41:21,910 --> 00:41:24,310

I remember spending my  
time with the cooking

717

00:41:24,310 --> 00:41:27,820

and that sort of thing, and the  
kitchen, and around my aunts.

718

00:41:27,820 --> 00:41:30,800

I don't-- and I remember  
being in the factory.

719

00:41:30,800 --> 00:41:32,890

My grandfather must  
have taken me there.

720

00:41:32,890 --> 00:41:38,170

And I remember sitting behind  
their house on big barrels.

721

00:41:38,170 --> 00:41:41,350

He had big barrels, which  
must have contained something

722

00:41:41,350 --> 00:41:43,870

to do with the soda plant.

723

00:41:43,870 --> 00:41:46,730

I don't know whatever fruit, or  
I don't know, whatever it was.

724

00:41:46,730 --> 00:41:50,200

And we would sit there on  
the barrels in the sun.

725

00:41:50,200 --> 00:41:52,930

And that part of the  
house faced South.

726

00:41:52,930 --> 00:41:55,270

In the afternoon  
the sun was there.

727

00:41:55,270 --> 00:41:57,410

And my grandfather  
and I would sit there,

728

00:41:57,410 --> 00:41:58,870

and he would tell me stories.

729

00:41:58,870 --> 00:42:04,990

And I remember one day he  
gave me Hanukkah gelt. And I

730

00:42:04,990 --> 00:42:08,110

remember he was explaining  
to me about Hanukkah gelt.

731

00:42:08,110 --> 00:42:11,560

And I just remember him giving  
me coins and sitting in the sun

732

00:42:11,560 --> 00:42:17,140

and talking about Hanukkah gelt,  
while inside wonderful things

733

00:42:17,140 --> 00:42:19,210

were being cooked,  
and delicious smells

734

00:42:19,210 --> 00:42:24,190  
were coming out of the windows  
and across the courtyard.

735  
00:42:24,190 --> 00:42:28,150  
Anyway, getting back to the  
story of my Uncle Jacob being

736  
00:42:28,150 --> 00:42:29,530  
kicked by the horse.

737  
00:42:29,530 --> 00:42:34,390  
I remember-- oh  
now, Uncle Jacob,

738  
00:42:34,390 --> 00:42:37,090  
because he was the  
comptroller, he

739  
00:42:37,090 --> 00:42:43,120  
wasn't really involved in  
the factory nor the stables.

740  
00:42:43,120 --> 00:42:45,940  
He was in the  
office, so he didn't

741  
00:42:45,940 --> 00:42:49,840  
wear wooden shoes or boots.

742  
00:42:49,840 --> 00:42:56,110  
He wore shoes with laces,  
like a businessman.

743  
00:42:56,110 --> 00:42:59,990  
So when he went out  
into the courtyard,

744  
00:42:59,990 --> 00:43:04,420  
it must not-- it must not  
have been a muddy situation

745  
00:43:04,420 --> 00:43:06,010



because he was  
wearing his shoes.

746  
00:43:06,010 --> 00:43:09,370  
When they brought him in  
and laid him on the couch,

747  
00:43:09,370 --> 00:43:16,300  
I remember while they were  
all running around excitedly,

748  
00:43:16,300 --> 00:43:19,680  
calling for doctors, and oh,  
what should we do, and do you

749  
00:43:19,680 --> 00:43:23,980  
undo his belt, and you get cold  
water to put on his forehead,

750  
00:43:23,980 --> 00:43:27,520  
and blah blah, and you  
know, my aunts, everybody

751  
00:43:27,520 --> 00:43:28,730  
was quite hysterical--

752  
00:43:28,730 --> 00:43:34,060  
I remember untying  
his shoelaces.

753  
00:43:34,060 --> 00:43:36,040  
I don't know why I  
remember doing that,

754  
00:43:36,040 --> 00:43:38,560  
but that's what I did  
while they were all--

755  
00:43:38,560 --> 00:43:40,780  
I was-- they were undoing--

756  
00:43:40,780 --> 00:43:43,330  
and I undid his shoelaces.

757  
00:43:43,330 --> 00:43:53,280  
And years later, when  
Uncle Jacob found me, he--

758  
00:43:53,280 --> 00:43:57,900  
well, should I tell you about it  
later or should I tell it now?

759  
00:43:57,900 --> 00:44:01,260  
He said to me, "Do you know me?"

760  
00:44:01,260 --> 00:44:04,560  
And I said, "Of  
course I know you."

761  
00:44:04,560 --> 00:44:08,580  
He said, "But you were so  
little when you saw me last.

762  
00:44:08,580 --> 00:44:10,480  
How do you know me?"

763  
00:44:10,480 --> 00:44:13,320  
I said, "Well, I  
remember you perfectly."

764  
00:44:13,320 --> 00:44:16,440  
And then I told him  
this story, and he

765  
00:44:16,440 --> 00:44:21,840  
was amazed because  
he figured out that I

766  
00:44:21,840 --> 00:44:23,235  
couldn't have been three.

767  
00:44:23,235 --> 00:44:25,830

768  
00:44:25,830 --> 00:44:27,870

You know, I must have  
been like 2 and 1/2

769  
00:44:27,870 --> 00:44:31,230  
when this happened  
because he knew when

770  
00:44:31,230 --> 00:44:35,490  
it was before the blitzkrieg,  
because that was probably

771  
00:44:35,490 --> 00:44:37,230  
the last time he saw me.

772  
00:44:37,230 --> 00:44:42,000  
So I had to have been  
less than three years old,

773  
00:44:42,000 --> 00:44:45,450  
and he found it so amazing  
that my memory was so clear,

774  
00:44:45,450 --> 00:44:49,110  
and that he remembered that,  
and how much he had loved me

775  
00:44:49,110 --> 00:44:51,750  
because I was the only--

776  
00:44:51,750 --> 00:44:55,860  
I was the youngest  
of his nieces,

777  
00:44:55,860 --> 00:45:01,320  
and I was the only child of  
his favorite and baby sister.

778  
00:45:01,320 --> 00:45:03,000  
So I was very special.

779  
00:45:03,000 --> 00:45:09,300  
And that act of taking off his  
shoes was very special for him,

780  
00:45:09,300 --> 00:45:12,900  
and the fact that I remembered  
that with such clarity

781  
00:45:12,900 --> 00:45:14,190  
meant a great deal to him.

782  
00:45:14,190 --> 00:45:16,740  
But I'll get back to  
that period later.

783  
00:45:16,740 --> 00:45:20,130

784  
00:45:20,130 --> 00:45:26,085  
The next couple of years  
of my life are very fuzzy.

785  
00:45:26,085 --> 00:45:29,260

786  
00:45:29,260 --> 00:45:32,670  
The family all stayed together  
for a very brief period

787  
00:45:32,670 --> 00:45:34,980  
of time, and then  
my grandparents

788  
00:45:34,980 --> 00:45:38,440  
insisted on returning to Warsaw.

789  
00:45:38,440 --> 00:45:40,120  
So you actually left Warsaw.

790  
00:45:40,120 --> 00:45:43,710  
Yes, we left-- the entire  
family and all the workers

791  
00:45:43,710 --> 00:45:45,900  
and everyone who lived there.

792  
00:45:45,900 --> 00:45:51,368  
Everybody we went in  
the truck because we--

793  
00:45:51,368 --> 00:45:51,910  
I don't know.

794  
00:45:51,910 --> 00:45:54,060  
The family went in the  
truck, but everyone else

795  
00:45:54,060 --> 00:45:57,540  
was given cars and  
carts and horses.

796  
00:45:57,540 --> 00:45:58,260  
Take whatever.

797  
00:45:58,260 --> 00:45:59,280  
Run for your lives.

798  
00:45:59,280 --> 00:46:00,870  
Take-- save yourselves.

799  
00:46:00,870 --> 00:46:03,030  
And you know, everybody  
got on the road.

800  
00:46:03,030 --> 00:46:06,270  
We all got on the road, and I  
guess dispersed on the road.

801  
00:46:06,270 --> 00:46:06,860  
I don't know.

802  
00:46:06,860 --> 00:46:08,552  
But your family remained toget--

803  
00:46:08,552 --> 00:46:14,820

804

00:46:14,820 --> 00:46:16,120

--were in two open trucks?

805

00:46:16,120 --> 00:46:16,620

Yes.

806

00:46:16,620 --> 00:46:19,350

The family was together

and two open trucks,

807

00:46:19,350 --> 00:46:22,530

and we stayed together.

808

00:46:22,530 --> 00:46:23,940

I don't know where we went.

809

00:46:23,940 --> 00:46:25,020

I don't know.

810

00:46:25,020 --> 00:46:28,890

We left the city, and

I don't know where we--

811

00:46:28,890 --> 00:46:31,580

Do you have any idea whether

it was a short distance or a--

812

00:46:31,580 --> 00:46:34,480

I really, honestly,

I don't know.

813

00:46:34,480 --> 00:46:38,355

I mean, I'm sure I went

to sleep and I don't.

814

00:46:38,355 --> 00:46:40,770

Hours or years

could have elapsed,

815

00:46:40,770 --> 00:46:42,060

and I really can't tell you.

816

00:46:42,060 --> 00:46:43,920

I'm very fuzzy there.

817

00:46:43,920 --> 00:46:45,570

I only know--

818

00:46:45,570 --> 00:46:48,780

I remember only  
isolated incidents.

819

00:46:48,780 --> 00:46:50,550

I don't remember a history.

820

00:46:50,550 --> 00:46:55,530

I remember anecdotal  
sort of things.

821

00:46:55,530 --> 00:46:56,730

Were you in a city or--

822

00:46:56,730 --> 00:46:57,660

I don't know.

823

00:46:57,660 --> 00:46:58,590

I don't know.

824

00:46:58,590 --> 00:47:00,300

We were in cities.

825

00:47:00,300 --> 00:47:01,920

I know we were in cities.

826

00:47:01,920 --> 00:47:04,890

I remember, as I said,  
anecdotal incidents.

827

00:47:04,890 --> 00:47:09,460

I'll tell you just a  
few and that might help.

828

00:47:09,460 --> 00:47:11,490

I remember that--

829

00:47:11,490 --> 00:47:15,210

I know that-- my mother's  
family were very close,

830

00:47:15,210 --> 00:47:16,590

as I've already indicated.

831

00:47:16,590 --> 00:47:22,770

And apparently my  
grandparents decided

832

00:47:22,770 --> 00:47:28,320

that they wanted to die  
in Warsaw, in their home,

833

00:47:28,320 --> 00:47:30,810

and they insisted on going back.

834

00:47:30,810 --> 00:47:36,960

And I know that some of the  
sisters went back with them.

835

00:47:36,960 --> 00:47:41,070

I don't know where Jacob and  
his family went or wound up.

836

00:47:41,070 --> 00:47:49,980

And I learned later that he  
refused to sign the communist--

837

00:47:49,980 --> 00:47:53,910

I don't know, whatever  
he had to pledge--

838

00:47:53,910 --> 00:47:57,630

and therefore he was  
banished to Siberia.

839

00:47:57,630 --> 00:48:00,720

So ultimately he and his  
family wound up in Siberia.



840  
00:48:00,720 --> 00:48:04,720  
The youngest brother, as  
I told you, was in Paris.

841  
00:48:04,720 --> 00:48:06,120  
So he's out of the picture.

842  
00:48:06,120 --> 00:48:09,870  
Where the aunts all  
went, the four--

843  
00:48:09,870 --> 00:48:11,850  
well, one was in  
Russia with her family.

844  
00:48:11,850 --> 00:48:15,150  
So the other three,  
I don't know.

845  
00:48:15,150 --> 00:48:21,390  
They might have all returned  
to Warsaw with my grandparents.

846  
00:48:21,390 --> 00:48:28,080  
I know there was another  
branch of family in Pinsk,

847  
00:48:28,080 --> 00:48:30,480  
and I know we went to Pinsk.

848  
00:48:30,480 --> 00:48:31,480  
Oh, that helps.

849  
00:48:31,480 --> 00:48:31,980  
Right?

850  
00:48:31,980 --> 00:48:32,760  
We went to Pinsk.

851  
00:48:32,760 --> 00:48:33,750  
That's the Russian

occupied part of--

852  
00:48:33,750 --> 00:48:34,250  
Yeah.

853  
00:48:34,250 --> 00:48:35,100  
That's the area.

854  
00:48:35,100 --> 00:48:36,360  
That's the direction.

855  
00:48:36,360 --> 00:48:37,410  
Oh, thank you.

856  
00:48:37,410 --> 00:48:39,360  
You're really--  
you're helping me too.

857  
00:48:39,360 --> 00:48:41,940  
So that was where--  
we went to Pinsk.

858  
00:48:41,940 --> 00:48:43,320  
That's where we must have gone.

859  
00:48:43,320 --> 00:48:45,630  
I don't know if we went  
there immediately or what.

860  
00:48:45,630 --> 00:48:49,440  
And then I remember that my  
parents had furious arguments

861  
00:48:49,440 --> 00:48:51,420  
because my mother  
wanted to go back.

862  
00:48:51,420 --> 00:48:52,080  
To Warsaw.

863  
00:48:52,080 --> 00:48:54,510  
To her parents, to her family.

864  
00:48:54,510 --> 00:48:59,310  
And they had horrible fights  
and didn't get along well.

865  
00:48:59,310 --> 00:49:01,690  
And I remember  
screaming and whatever.

866  
00:49:01,690 --> 00:49:09,150  
And then we probably  
left Warsaw--

867  
00:49:09,150 --> 00:49:14,370  
I'm sorry, Poland because I  
remember an incident where

868  
00:49:14,370 --> 00:49:19,650  
one night I heard  
my mother crying,

869  
00:49:19,650 --> 00:49:21,270  
and my parents were arguing.

870  
00:49:21,270 --> 00:49:26,400  
And I came out of bed,  
and there was a fireplace.

871  
00:49:26,400 --> 00:49:30,000  
That was the central  
heating in most--

872  
00:49:30,000 --> 00:49:31,140  
in Europe.

873  
00:49:31,140 --> 00:49:37,230  
And my parents were  
burning Polish money.

874  
00:49:37,230 --> 00:49:40,350  
They were burning the bills.

875

00:49:40,350 --> 00:49:43,830

And my mother was  
crying because she

876

00:49:43,830 --> 00:49:46,620

was lamenting all the  
sacrifices that she

877

00:49:46,620 --> 00:49:50,250

had made to save this money.

878

00:49:50,250 --> 00:49:53,190

And my father was  
telling her instead--

879

00:49:53,190 --> 00:49:57,420

forever the romantic-- "Look  
at the beautiful colors

880

00:49:57,420 --> 00:49:58,890

of the flames.

881

00:49:58,890 --> 00:50:00,540

Don't think about what it is.

882

00:50:00,540 --> 00:50:02,430

There is no paper  
in the world that

883

00:50:02,430 --> 00:50:04,030

burns as beautifully as that.

884

00:50:04,030 --> 00:50:04,530

Look at it.

885

00:50:04,530 --> 00:50:05,920

Look how it sparkles.

886

00:50:05,920 --> 00:50:07,470

Look here, come here, Mirka.

887

00:50:07,470 --> 00:50:08,070

Sit.

888  
00:50:08,070 --> 00:50:10,110  
Sit by the fire and watch.

889  
00:50:10,110 --> 00:50:11,160  
Isn't that beautiful?

890  
00:50:11,160 --> 00:50:14,308  
You'll never see anything  
like this again as long

891  
00:50:14,308 --> 00:50:14,850  
as you live."

892  
00:50:14,850 --> 00:50:19,980  
And of course, I never have seen  
anyone burn money, particularly

893  
00:50:19,980 --> 00:50:20,790  
Polish money.

894  
00:50:20,790 --> 00:50:24,240

895  
00:50:24,240 --> 00:50:32,940  
And I remember-- oh my god, I  
remember being with my parents

896  
00:50:32,940 --> 00:50:36,762  
once in some other city.

897  
00:50:36,762 --> 00:50:41,010  
And we were in a community  
of people, and my mother--

898  
00:50:41,010 --> 00:50:43,230  
and we were on the  
edge of a forest.

899  
00:50:43,230 --> 00:50:45,990  
It was a city on the

edge of a forest.

900

00:50:45,990 --> 00:50:53,010

And my mother knew  
about mushrooms.

901

00:50:53,010 --> 00:50:57,790

In Europe there are  
wild mushrooms--

902

00:50:57,790 --> 00:50:59,820

there was much more  
interest in mushrooms

903

00:50:59,820 --> 00:51:01,313

than we have in  
the United States,

904

00:51:01,313 --> 00:51:02,730

and there was a  
great deal to know

905

00:51:02,730 --> 00:51:05,650

about them because some of them  
are poisonous and whatever.

906

00:51:05,650 --> 00:51:10,040

Well, my mother apparently  
was a mushroom maven.

907

00:51:10,040 --> 00:51:15,270

And a group was organized  
to go to the forest

908

00:51:15,270 --> 00:51:19,170

to on a mushroom-- on a  
picnic and mushroom picking

909

00:51:19,170 --> 00:51:20,010

expedition.

910

00:51:20,010 --> 00:51:26,100

And several families went

in a horse-drawn carriage.

911

00:51:26,100 --> 00:51:29,772

And we drove to the edge of the  
woods-- or maybe two carriages.

912

00:51:29,772 --> 00:51:30,480

I don't remember.

913

00:51:30,480 --> 00:51:35,730

But anyway, we got to  
the edge of the woods,

914

00:51:35,730 --> 00:51:40,470

and there was a little  
boy about my age,

915

00:51:40,470 --> 00:51:45,450

and we had a picnic on  
blankets at the edge

916

00:51:45,450 --> 00:51:48,240

of the clearing in the woods.

917

00:51:48,240 --> 00:51:51,210

Very sunny and pretty  
clearing and grass.

918

00:51:51,210 --> 00:51:53,370

And we had this lovely picnic.

919

00:51:53,370 --> 00:51:56,580

And then my mother  
told this little boy,

920

00:51:56,580 --> 00:51:58,080

you keep an eye on her.

921

00:51:58,080 --> 00:51:59,940

He was a little older.

922

00:51:59,940 --> 00:52:06,430

And you take care of her, and  
we're going into the woods.

923  
00:52:06,430 --> 00:52:07,080  
Don't worry.

924  
00:52:07,080 --> 00:52:07,750  
We'll be back.

925  
00:52:07,750 --> 00:52:10,890  
You stay here and  
play right here.

926  
00:52:10,890 --> 00:52:13,170  
You know, don't go  
further than this spot

927  
00:52:13,170 --> 00:52:14,670  
or whatever she told him.

928  
00:52:14,670 --> 00:52:16,830  
And he and I began to  
play and run around.

929  
00:52:16,830 --> 00:52:24,780  
And we got to bushes  
suddenly, big bushy things,

930  
00:52:24,780 --> 00:52:28,290  
and I said to him,  
look, those are berries.

931  
00:52:28,290 --> 00:52:29,460  
They're raspberries.

932  
00:52:29,460 --> 00:52:33,000  
No, I'm sorry,  
blackberries, blueberries.

933  
00:52:33,000 --> 00:52:34,800  
You know, blueberries.

934



00:52:34,800 --> 00:52:39,030

And he said, yes, and  
there were several kinds

935

00:52:39,030 --> 00:52:40,380

of berries growing.

936

00:52:40,380 --> 00:52:44,460

And we began to pick  
these berries and eat them

937

00:52:44,460 --> 00:52:45,900

and stuff our mouths with them.

938

00:52:45,900 --> 00:52:49,800

And I had on a dress  
with a pinafore, an apron

939

00:52:49,800 --> 00:52:50,470

or something.

940

00:52:50,470 --> 00:52:56,760

And I took the skirt  
and made a sort of pouch

941

00:52:56,760 --> 00:53:02,700

and held it in one hand, and  
put the berries into my apron.

942

00:53:02,700 --> 00:53:05,910

And he began to pull the  
berries off the bush.

943

00:53:05,910 --> 00:53:08,070

And he climbed up.

944

00:53:08,070 --> 00:53:14,400

And we had my apron filled  
when we heard some noise,

945

00:53:14,400 --> 00:53:18,910

and suddenly all the adults  
came flying out of the forest.

946  
00:53:18,910 --> 00:53:22,920  
And I was so excited to show  
my mother what I had found.

947  
00:53:22,920 --> 00:53:27,960  
And my mother started  
to scream, "Come!"

948  
00:53:27,960 --> 00:53:29,670  
It's raining!"

949  
00:53:29,670 --> 00:53:32,370  
And she took the berries  
and put them in something,

950  
00:53:32,370 --> 00:53:33,180  
and she just--

951  
00:53:33,180 --> 00:53:35,640  
there wasn't time to be excited.

952  
00:53:35,640 --> 00:53:37,050  
My mother was impatient.

953  
00:53:37,050 --> 00:53:38,740  
I already told you that.

954  
00:53:38,740 --> 00:53:39,240  
Practical.

955  
00:53:39,240 --> 00:53:40,380  
Practical, yeah.

956  
00:53:40,380 --> 00:53:42,150  
And she said, "Come!"

957  
00:53:42,150 --> 00:53:43,020  
It's raining!

958  
00:53:43,020 --> 00:53:44,100

It's beginning to rain."

959

00:53:44,100 --> 00:53:51,450

And we started to go toward  
where the our carriage,

960

00:53:51,450 --> 00:53:53,970

cart, horse cart was.

961

00:53:53,970 --> 00:53:58,110

And we began to walk in  
a line, and the adults

962

00:53:58,110 --> 00:54:03,510

held up the blankets  
over our heads,

963

00:54:03,510 --> 00:54:06,000

made like a ceiling of blankets.

964

00:54:06,000 --> 00:54:08,610

And the little boy  
and I-- and there

965

00:54:08,610 --> 00:54:12,330

were several other children  
who were older and had

966

00:54:12,330 --> 00:54:14,910

gone into the woods with  
the mushroom pickers--

967

00:54:14,910 --> 00:54:21,910

but we were among their feet,  
underneath the blankets.

968

00:54:21,910 --> 00:54:27,180

The taller adults held  
the blankets aloft over us

969

00:54:27,180 --> 00:54:28,860

on the four corners.

970

00:54:28,860 --> 00:54:37,800

And huge drops of rain and  
possibly hail began to fall,

971

00:54:37,800 --> 00:54:47,380

and with that two airplanes  
came flying out of the sky

972

00:54:47,380 --> 00:54:53,140

and strafed us and  
began to shoot.

973

00:54:53,140 --> 00:54:55,450

And we scattered.

974

00:54:55,450 --> 00:55:00,460

And they made a pass,  
and my mother said--

975

00:55:00,460 --> 00:55:05,110

I remember my mother  
screaming something like,

976

00:55:05,110 --> 00:55:13,410

the blankets wouldn't protect  
us from bullets, and scatter.

977

00:55:13,410 --> 00:55:17,195

And we began to scatter,  
and I wound up in a ditch.

978

00:55:17,195 --> 00:55:20,820

979

00:55:20,820 --> 00:55:26,280

And when the excitement  
of the planes

980

00:55:26,280 --> 00:55:31,860

and the noise and the  
bombs or whatever ended,

981

00:55:31,860 --> 00:55:36,840  
the little boy who had been  
picking berries with me

982  
00:55:36,840 --> 00:55:38,430  
was lying dead next to me.

983  
00:55:38,430 --> 00:55:43,510

984  
00:55:43,510 --> 00:55:46,470  
So that's an anecdote.

985  
00:55:46,470 --> 00:55:51,700  
And you still didn't  
know why or what or who.

986  
00:55:51,700 --> 00:55:53,230  
No, I knew.

987  
00:55:53,230 --> 00:55:53,890  
I did know.

988  
00:55:53,890 --> 00:55:54,910  
I did understand.

989  
00:55:54,910 --> 00:55:59,770  
You know, it's like  
nobody ever explained sort

990  
00:55:59,770 --> 00:56:01,840  
of the facts of life to me.

991  
00:56:01,840 --> 00:56:07,780  
Nobody ever had a sex  
talk with me, but I knew.

992  
00:56:07,780 --> 00:56:12,730  
Nobody ever explained the  
war to me, but I knew.

993  
00:56:12,730 --> 00:56:21,970

I was old before my time and  
understood without explanation.

994  
00:56:21,970 --> 00:56:23,980  
I don't think I ever  
asked a question.

995  
00:56:23,980 --> 00:56:30,070

996  
00:56:30,070 --> 00:56:34,240  
I remember men disappearing.

997  
00:56:34,240 --> 00:56:38,320  
I remember the  
gathering of jewelry

998  
00:56:38,320 --> 00:56:43,990  
to pay some kind of ransom.

999  
00:56:43,990 --> 00:56:46,180  
Somebody was imprisoned.

1000  
00:56:46,180 --> 00:56:47,680  
Zuckerman.

1001  
00:56:47,680 --> 00:56:50,440  
Professor-- Doctor--  
Professor Zuckerman.

1002  
00:56:50,440 --> 00:56:56,350  
We had to-- my mother  
gave some jewelry,

1003  
00:56:56,350 --> 00:56:59,800  
and we collected jewelry  
because he was detained,

1004  
00:56:59,800 --> 00:57:01,930  
and we never did get him back.

1005  
00:57:01,930 --> 00:57:02,800

I remember that.

1006  
00:57:02,800 --> 00:57:08,170  
And then shortly after  
that, oh, my father

1007  
00:57:08,170 --> 00:57:11,080  
went foraging for  
food somewhere,

1008  
00:57:11,080 --> 00:57:13,930  
and he was in a farmer's field.

1009  
00:57:13,930 --> 00:57:19,780  
They went to steal food  
from a farm at night.

1010  
00:57:19,780 --> 00:57:22,300  
And I remember my father  
coming back and saying

1011  
00:57:22,300 --> 00:57:28,750  
that the soldiers were  
running, were chasing them,

1012  
00:57:28,750 --> 00:57:30,625  
and that he hid in a furrow--

1013  
00:57:30,625 --> 00:57:33,700

1014  
00:57:33,700 --> 00:57:35,080  
Irrigation ditch.

1015  
00:57:35,080 --> 00:57:35,738  
Or something.

1016  
00:57:35,738 --> 00:57:36,280  
I don't know.

1017  
00:57:36,280 --> 00:57:37,405  
In a furrow.

1018  
00:57:37,405 --> 00:57:38,410  
Between the rows.

1019  
00:57:38,410 --> 00:57:41,170  
Between the rows of  
whatever was growing,

1020  
00:57:41,170 --> 00:57:47,590  
and that a soldier stepped  
on the rim of his cap.

1021  
00:57:47,590 --> 00:57:53,740  
And very soon after that,  
my father disappeared.

1022  
00:57:53,740 --> 00:57:56,380  
And my mother said  
that he had left,

1023  
00:57:56,380 --> 00:57:59,560  
and that he would send for us.

1024  
00:57:59,560 --> 00:58:01,390  
And my mother and  
I were left alone.

1025  
00:58:01,390 --> 00:58:05,140  
And I remember asking my  
mother many, many times,

1026  
00:58:05,140 --> 00:58:09,280  
when will father come  
for us or send for us?

1027  
00:58:09,280 --> 00:58:12,170  
And she always answered  
in exactly the same way.

1028  
00:58:12,170 --> 00:58:16,210  
And it's really one of the  
half dozen Polish words



1029

00:58:16,210 --> 00:58:17,020  
that I remember.

1030

00:58:17,020 --> 00:58:20,020  
She always said,  
[SPEAKING POLISH],,

1031

00:58:20,020 --> 00:58:22,150  
and that means "soon."

1032

00:58:22,150 --> 00:58:25,010

1033

00:58:25,010 --> 00:58:27,620  
But of course, he never came.

1034

00:58:27,620 --> 00:58:31,550  
And then my mother and  
I moved to another city.

1035

00:58:31,550 --> 00:58:35,790  
And I wish to god I  
could tell you where,

1036

00:58:35,790 --> 00:58:40,470  
but that city was  
in the Ukraine.

1037

00:58:40,470 --> 00:58:41,910  
So you never returned to Warsaw.

1038

00:58:41,910 --> 00:58:42,480  
No, no.

1039

00:58:42,480 --> 00:58:44,850  
We never return to Warsaw.

1040

00:58:44,850 --> 00:58:46,440  
Oh, I remember another incident.

1041

00:58:46,440 --> 00:58:50,040

My parents and I  
were on a train,

1042  
00:58:50,040 --> 00:58:52,230  
and the train was bombed.

1043  
00:58:52,230 --> 00:58:57,510  
And several cars of the  
train fell down into a ditch,

1044  
00:58:57,510 --> 00:59:01,150  
and there were many dead and  
screaming and god knows what.

1045  
00:59:01,150 --> 00:59:05,100  
And we were in the  
last car of the train.

1046  
00:59:05,100 --> 00:59:08,280  
And I think that was the only  
one that was left standing

1047  
00:59:08,280 --> 00:59:10,890  
on the track and was not hit.

1048  
00:59:10,890 --> 00:59:11,910  
So I remember that.

1049  
00:59:11,910 --> 00:59:14,950

1050  
00:59:14,950 --> 00:59:16,920  
Anyway, my mother  
and I were alone.

1051  
00:59:16,920 --> 00:59:22,110  
And we wound up in this city,  
probably in the Ukraine,

1052  
00:59:22,110 --> 00:59:31,150  
and very near the village where  
I was ultimately to be hidden.

1053

00:59:31,150 --> 00:59:36,520

My mother supported us.

1054

00:59:36,520 --> 00:59:37,780

It's a terrible word.

1055

00:59:37,780 --> 00:59:44,170

I mean, she provided the  
little we had by knitting.

1056

00:59:44,170 --> 00:59:46,930

I know that sounds  
ridiculous, but my mother

1057

00:59:46,930 --> 00:59:53,020

would take your old sweater  
with the holes in the elbows,

1058

00:59:53,020 --> 00:59:55,810

and she would rip out the yarn.

1059

00:59:55,810 --> 00:59:59,500

And out of that  
torn, holy sweater,

1060

00:59:59,500 --> 01:00:05,660

she would make you a vest  
or a short-sleeved sweater

1061

01:00:05,660 --> 01:00:08,040

or whatever it was.

1062

01:00:08,040 --> 01:00:10,250

And she knitted day and night.

1063

01:00:10,250 --> 01:00:14,480

And I remember listening to  
my mother's knitting needles,

1064

01:00:14,480 --> 01:00:16,160

even in the night.

1065

01:00:16,160 --> 01:00:17,420

And my mother smoked.

1066

01:00:17,420 --> 01:00:21,230

I remember seeing her cigarette,  
the light of her cigarette

1067

01:00:21,230 --> 01:00:21,930

in the dark.

1068

01:00:21,930 --> 01:00:23,960

And my mother was an  
exceptional knitter,

1069

01:00:23,960 --> 01:00:29,660

and she could knit in the  
dark without having to look.

1070

01:00:29,660 --> 01:00:37,450

And I remember going into bomb  
shelters during air raids.

1071

01:00:37,450 --> 01:00:41,100

And my mother would  
say to me, I'm here,

1072

01:00:41,100 --> 01:00:44,670

just listen to my needles,  
and you'll know I'm here.

1073

01:00:44,670 --> 01:00:48,960

You needn't be afraid as  
long as you hear my needles.

1074

01:00:48,960 --> 01:00:51,630

And if she wasn't  
knitting, she was smoking.

1075

01:00:51,630 --> 01:00:53,310

And she'd say, look, watch the--

1076

01:00:53,310 --> 01:00:54,360

that's my cigarette.

1077  
01:00:54,360 --> 01:00:56,520  
And I would watch  
her face suddenly

1078  
01:00:56,520 --> 01:00:59,010  
light up as she took  
the cigarette-- took

1079  
01:00:59,010 --> 01:01:01,080  
a puff of her cigarette.

1080  
01:01:01,080 --> 01:01:02,680  
But most of the time  
she was knitting.

1081  
01:01:02,680 --> 01:01:04,410  
She knitted all the time.

1082  
01:01:04,410 --> 01:01:09,060  
And she would ask me  
to hold out my hands

1083  
01:01:09,060 --> 01:01:11,310  
when she ripped a sweater.

1084  
01:01:11,310 --> 01:01:15,662  
She would wind the  
yarn around my hands.

1085  
01:01:15,662 --> 01:01:16,620  
Your two outstretched--

1086  
01:01:16,620 --> 01:01:22,350  
My two outstretched hands,  
and then she would wind it

1087  
01:01:22,350 --> 01:01:26,940  
into a ball from my hands.

1088  
01:01:26,940 --> 01:01:31,050

And I remember holding out my  
hands and getting very tired

1089  
01:01:31,050 --> 01:01:33,420  
and complaining a  
great deal, but that

1090  
01:01:33,420 --> 01:01:34,890  
was how she supported us.

1091  
01:01:34,890 --> 01:01:37,410  
And I know that at night  
she would sneak out

1092  
01:01:37,410 --> 01:01:42,360  
after the curfew and she would  
go into the parts of the city

1093  
01:01:42,360 --> 01:01:51,400  
where she wasn't allowed  
to be to deliver her goods.

1094  
01:01:51,400 --> 01:01:56,160  
And one time she  
took me with her.

1095  
01:01:56,160 --> 01:01:57,090  
And that was rare.

1096  
01:01:57,090 --> 01:02:00,790  
Usually she left  
me back in our room

1097  
01:02:00,790 --> 01:02:06,770  
with my teddy bear, my David,  
my treasured possession.

1098  
01:02:06,770 --> 01:02:10,190

1099  
01:02:10,190 --> 01:02:13,940  
And she took me with  
her into the city,

1100  
01:02:13,940 --> 01:02:15,920  
and she said that  
she was taking us

1101  
01:02:15,920 --> 01:02:19,130  
to a lady who I must  
be very careful,

1102  
01:02:19,130 --> 01:02:22,850  
and I must not speak, only  
to say please and thank you,

1103  
01:02:22,850 --> 01:02:27,950  
and to be very polite, and  
other than that, to not speak

1104  
01:02:27,950 --> 01:02:32,035  
and if I'm asked a question,  
only to say yes and no,

1105  
01:02:32,035 --> 01:02:35,600  
and not to say anything  
because where we were going

1106  
01:02:35,600 --> 01:02:39,380  
was very dangerous, but this  
was a very generous lady,

1107  
01:02:39,380 --> 01:02:45,200  
and that she would probably  
serve tea and cake or cookies.

1108  
01:02:45,200 --> 01:02:48,170  
And that was why my mother  
was going to take a chance

1109  
01:02:48,170 --> 01:02:51,500  
and take me because we might  
get something very delicious

1110  
01:02:51,500 --> 01:02:52,250  
to eat.

1111  
01:02:52,250 --> 01:02:54,080  
Or jam.

1112  
01:02:54,080 --> 01:02:56,480  
Jam.

1113  
01:02:56,480 --> 01:03:00,260  
So we went, and we  
crossed into a section

1114  
01:03:00,260 --> 01:03:02,480  
that I don't remember  
by what means or what,

1115  
01:03:02,480 --> 01:03:05,860  
but I know we weren't  
allowed to be there.

1116  
01:03:05,860 --> 01:03:09,585  
And we went into a house.

1117  
01:03:09,585 --> 01:03:12,110

1118  
01:03:12,110 --> 01:03:13,970  
And I just seem to  
remember that it

1119  
01:03:13,970 --> 01:03:17,270  
was a white house and a door.

1120  
01:03:17,270 --> 01:03:19,880  
And then we went  
inside, and inside was

1121  
01:03:19,880 --> 01:03:32,030  
a very cozy home, cozy room with  
lovely upholstered furniture

1122  
01:03:32,030 --> 01:03:33,620  
and a lot of pillows.



1123  
01:03:33,620 --> 01:03:42,110  
And there was a piano, and  
it had a shawl over it,

1124  
01:03:42,110 --> 01:03:45,548  
and beautiful vase  
filled with flowers.

1125  
01:03:45,548 --> 01:03:47,090  
And there were  
photographs, and there

1126  
01:03:47,090 --> 01:03:51,470  
were a lot of  
pictures and paintings

1127  
01:03:51,470 --> 01:03:53,270  
and things on the walls.

1128  
01:03:53,270 --> 01:03:59,360  
And we sat on an upholstered,  
lovely, carved settee

1129  
01:03:59,360 --> 01:04:01,460  
with a table in front.

1130  
01:04:01,460 --> 01:04:04,190  
And just as my  
mother had predicted,

1131  
01:04:04,190 --> 01:04:09,860  
this lady brought out a tray  
with a tea service on it,

1132  
01:04:09,860 --> 01:04:16,340  
and cookies and jam and  
toast and wonderful things.

1133  
01:04:16,340 --> 01:04:17,810  
And I ate.

1134

01:04:17,810 --> 01:04:20,005

And, oh, it was  
so wonderful and--

1135

01:04:20,005 --> 01:04:21,880

You hadn't had anything  
like that in a while.

1136

01:04:21,880 --> 01:04:24,650

I hadn't had anything  
like that, my god.

1137

01:04:24,650 --> 01:04:26,360

And oh, it was so wonderful.

1138

01:04:26,360 --> 01:04:31,760

And with that, the lady said to  
my mother, come into my bedroom

1139

01:04:31,760 --> 01:04:35,730

and I'll show you what I made.

1140

01:04:35,730 --> 01:04:40,070

And it turned out  
that this lady was a--

1141

01:04:40,070 --> 01:04:43,280

well, she did  
beautiful needlework.

1142

01:04:43,280 --> 01:04:47,180

She did these framed  
pictures, which were framed,

1143

01:04:47,180 --> 01:04:51,800

which were both  
embroidered and appliqued.

1144

01:04:51,800 --> 01:04:54,440

For example, there was one--

1145

01:04:54,440 --> 01:04:55,880

well, I'll tell

you about that one

1146  
01:04:55,880 --> 01:04:59,210  
because it almost  
caused our death.

1147  
01:04:59,210 --> 01:05:00,590  
Well, OK.

1148  
01:05:00,590 --> 01:05:04,340  
Also, the reason she called  
my mother into another room

1149  
01:05:04,340 --> 01:05:09,530  
is because this lady  
also made dolls,

1150  
01:05:09,530 --> 01:05:12,980  
which were fully  
clothed adult dolls,

1151  
01:05:12,980 --> 01:05:18,240  
but they were apparently  
anatomically correct.

1152  
01:05:18,240 --> 01:05:21,860  
So she showed this  
lovely doll, but then

1153  
01:05:21,860 --> 01:05:23,990  
invited my mother  
into another room

1154  
01:05:23,990 --> 01:05:26,420  
so she could undress  
this male doll

1155  
01:05:26,420 --> 01:05:31,610  
and show my mother that it  
had all its anatomical parts.

1156  
01:05:31,610 --> 01:05:33,740  
Parts in there.

1157  
01:05:33,740 --> 01:05:37,280  
Well, while my mother and this  
lady were out of the room,

1158  
01:05:37,280 --> 01:05:41,060  
I turned and looked  
at the wall behind me

1159  
01:05:41,060 --> 01:05:44,870  
on which hung a picture that  
this woman had also made.

1160  
01:05:44,870 --> 01:05:50,360  
And the picture was  
of a sort of cottage

1161  
01:05:50,360 --> 01:05:54,590  
and a yard filled with chickens.

1162  
01:05:54,590 --> 01:05:58,400  
And there were flowers  
against the cottage,

1163  
01:05:58,400 --> 01:06:00,742  
and there were little windows  
with shutters and a door,

1164  
01:06:00,742 --> 01:06:01,700  
and so on and so forth.

1165  
01:06:01,700 --> 01:06:06,620  
And there was a girl  
throwing feed from an apron,

1166  
01:06:06,620 --> 01:06:09,200  
just like I had  
described before,

1167  
01:06:09,200 --> 01:06:10,970  
throwing feed out to chickens.

1168

01:06:10,970 --> 01:06:13,400  
And there were  
chickens all over,

1169  
01:06:13,400 --> 01:06:15,740  
feeding and flying  
around and whatever.

1170  
01:06:15,740 --> 01:06:20,270  
And all this was appliqued  
and embroidered and sewn,

1171  
01:06:20,270 --> 01:06:21,980  
and very intricate.

1172  
01:06:21,980 --> 01:06:30,350  
And suddenly I realized to  
my horror or fascination

1173  
01:06:30,350 --> 01:06:33,380  
that the girl  
feeding the chickens

1174  
01:06:33,380 --> 01:06:40,390  
had a yellow star on her chest.

1175  
01:06:40,390 --> 01:06:44,650  
And when my mother came out of  
the other room with this lady,

1176  
01:06:44,650 --> 01:06:48,460  
I absolutely couldn't  
help but point it out.

1177  
01:06:48,460 --> 01:06:51,610  
Look, she has a yellow star.

1178  
01:06:51,610 --> 01:06:54,850  
And with that, this  
woman flew into a rage,

1179  
01:06:54,850 --> 01:06:58,760  
pointed a finger at my mother,

and said, "You did that!

1180  
01:06:58,760 --> 01:07:00,490  
It wasn't there before!

1181  
01:07:00,490 --> 01:07:01,720  
You are responsible!

1182  
01:07:01,720 --> 01:07:02,440  
You did that!"

1183  
01:07:02,440 --> 01:07:07,880  
And she screamed out of  
the door for the police.

1184  
01:07:07,880 --> 01:07:17,740  
And my mother and I ran out and  
two-- there were two police,

1185  
01:07:17,740 --> 01:07:19,330  
and I can't tell  
you what they were,

1186  
01:07:19,330 --> 01:07:22,120  
but I think they had brown--

1187  
01:07:22,120 --> 01:07:22,780  
Brown uniforms.

1188  
01:07:22,780 --> 01:07:23,605  
Brown uniforms.

1189  
01:07:23,605 --> 01:07:26,250

1190  
01:07:26,250 --> 01:07:29,340  
Well that's-- I think  
my memory serves me.

1191  
01:07:29,340 --> 01:07:30,810  
They were brown.

1192

01:07:30,810 --> 01:07:36,810  
And one blew a whistle and ran  
around the corner for the truck

1193

01:07:36,810 --> 01:07:39,250  
or whatever it was.

1194

01:07:39,250 --> 01:07:43,992  
And the other one had a  
rifle or a gun or something.

1195

01:07:43,992 --> 01:07:44,700  
I don't remember.

1196

01:07:44,700 --> 01:07:47,070  
And he was holding  
on to my mother.

1197

01:07:47,070 --> 01:07:52,570  
And I realized the import  
of what was happening.

1198

01:07:52,570 --> 01:08:01,530  
And I began to scream, and I  
bit the hand of this policeman.

1199

01:08:01,530 --> 01:08:11,670  
And he began-- and he you know,  
pulled away his hand in pain

1200

01:08:11,670 --> 01:08:13,170  
and screamed out.

1201

01:08:13,170 --> 01:08:18,240  
And my mother grabbed me, and  
we ran and hid, and we got away.

1202

01:08:18,240 --> 01:08:21,020

1203

01:08:21,020 --> 01:08:21,520  
Yeah.

1204  
01:08:21,520 --> 01:08:28,870

1205  
01:08:28,870 --> 01:08:36,580  
At that time, my mother and I  
shared a room with another lady

1206  
01:08:36,580 --> 01:08:40,210  
in a sort of a boarding house,  
which must have been all Jews.

1207  
01:08:40,210 --> 01:08:43,990  
And I don't know whether the  
woman who owned this home

1208  
01:08:43,990 --> 01:08:45,100  
was Jewish or not.

1209  
01:08:45,100 --> 01:08:47,920  
I only remember that she--

1210  
01:08:47,920 --> 01:08:49,875  
I remember a lot  
about her actually.

1211  
01:08:49,875 --> 01:08:51,250  
One of the things  
that I remember

1212  
01:08:51,250 --> 01:08:55,210  
was that she kept talking about  
her son, who was in the army

1213  
01:08:55,210 --> 01:08:57,189  
and was going to come home.

1214  
01:08:57,189 --> 01:09:03,990  
And she had cookies  
or Mandelbrot,

1215  
01:09:03,990 --> 01:09:05,700



I think it was,  
that she had baked.

1216  
01:09:05,700 --> 01:09:10,859  
And she had it in  
packages under a cabinet.

1217  
01:09:10,859 --> 01:09:15,390  
And she showed us that  
she had baked this,

1218  
01:09:15,390 --> 01:09:17,340  
and she was saving  
it for her son.

1219  
01:09:17,340 --> 01:09:18,899  
It was his favorite thing.

1220  
01:09:18,899 --> 01:09:23,040  
And as soon as she could, as  
soon as she knew where he was,

1221  
01:09:23,040 --> 01:09:28,290  
she was going to send it to the  
front, send some to the front.

1222  
01:09:28,290 --> 01:09:31,140  
But if that wasn't  
possible, that's

1223  
01:09:31,140 --> 01:09:33,029  
OK, because he  
would be home soon,

1224  
01:09:33,029 --> 01:09:35,609  
and then she would  
have this for him.

1225  
01:09:35,609 --> 01:09:40,740  
And my mother and the lady  
who shared the room with us

1226  
01:09:40,740 --> 01:09:44,020

gave each other a  
knowing sort of look.

1227  
01:09:44,020 --> 01:09:47,189  
And then my mother  
every night proceeded

1228  
01:09:47,189 --> 01:09:52,410  
to steal some of the cookies.

1229  
01:09:52,410 --> 01:09:55,980  
Is this a Ukrainian woman?

1230  
01:09:55,980 --> 01:09:56,580  
I don't know.

1231  
01:09:56,580 --> 01:10:00,650

1232  
01:10:00,650 --> 01:10:07,030  
One day my mother  
went out, and she

1233  
01:10:07,030 --> 01:10:10,770  
came home very, very  
excited, very happy.

1234  
01:10:10,770 --> 01:10:13,300

1235  
01:10:13,300 --> 01:10:15,640  
At that time we were  
literally starving.

1236  
01:10:15,640 --> 01:10:17,770  
There was nothing to eat.

1237  
01:10:17,770 --> 01:10:21,820  
It was summer, and  
we were eating--

1238  
01:10:21,820 --> 01:10:24,310

it's a weed that grows.

1239

01:10:24,310 --> 01:10:28,270

It's kind of a jagged  
leaf, and it has a kind

1240

01:10:28,270 --> 01:10:35,030

of gray, silky, shiny surface.

1241

01:10:35,030 --> 01:10:37,160

And it grows here in  
the United States.

1242

01:10:37,160 --> 01:10:41,840

And every year, as a  
ritual, I eat some.

1243

01:10:41,840 --> 01:10:45,680

It kind of tastes like spinach.

1244

01:10:45,680 --> 01:10:50,750

And that's what we ate that  
summer, that and the stolen

1245

01:10:50,750 --> 01:10:53,180

cookies.

1246

01:10:53,180 --> 01:10:55,320

And every now and  
then, something else

1247

01:10:55,320 --> 01:10:57,960

that my mother was  
able to forage.

1248

01:10:57,960 --> 01:11:02,550

But my mother came home one day  
extremely excited and happy.

1249

01:11:02,550 --> 01:11:08,090

She had made a great  
coup, a conquest.

1250

01:11:08,090 --> 01:11:11,720

She brought home this  
treasure, and she carefully

1251

01:11:11,720 --> 01:11:13,200

unwrapped this thing.

1252

01:11:13,200 --> 01:11:16,400

I couldn't wait to see  
what it could possibly be.

1253

01:11:16,400 --> 01:11:20,030

And she kept unwrapping  
this handkerchief.

1254

01:11:20,030 --> 01:11:23,720

It was in a piece of cloth.

1255

01:11:23,720 --> 01:11:32,980

And finally, there was  
this two-inch square of--

1256

01:11:32,980 --> 01:11:34,248

or maybe it was one inch.

1257

01:11:34,248 --> 01:11:34,790

I don't know.

1258

01:11:34,790 --> 01:11:41,290

It looked like a big  
domino of something white.

1259

01:11:41,290 --> 01:11:43,150

And I had never seen it.

1260

01:11:43,150 --> 01:11:44,290

I didn't know what it was.

1261

01:11:44,290 --> 01:11:48,446

I said to my mother,  
"What is it?"

1262

01:11:48,446 --> 01:11:50,860

It was such a treasure.

1263

01:11:50,860 --> 01:11:58,880

And she said, "It's fat," which  
didn't mean anything to me.

1264

01:11:58,880 --> 01:12:04,530

But it did finally mean that she  
was able to fry those greens,

1265

01:12:04,530 --> 01:12:08,370

and they had a little taste  
rather than eating them raw

1266

01:12:08,370 --> 01:12:09,150

or boiling them.

1267

01:12:09,150 --> 01:12:14,930

1268

01:12:14,930 --> 01:12:19,260

Earlier you mentioned that you  
saw this embroidered picture.

1269

01:12:19,260 --> 01:12:19,760

Yes.

1270

01:12:19,760 --> 01:12:21,800

The star, person  
wearing the star.

1271

01:12:21,800 --> 01:12:22,300

Yes.

1272

01:12:22,300 --> 01:12:24,580

Did you see any people wearing--

1273

01:12:24,580 --> 01:12:25,970

real people wearing those stars?

1274

01:12:25,970 --> 01:12:27,285

Yes, I was one of them.

1275

01:12:27,285 --> 01:12:28,160

You were one of them.

1276

01:12:28,160 --> 01:12:29,560

And so was my mother.

1277

01:12:29,560 --> 01:12:40,660

My mother was very  
talented at all needlework.

1278

01:12:40,660 --> 01:12:43,940

she was a wonderful seamstress.

1279

01:12:43,940 --> 01:12:48,260

And my mother had  
made me a beautiful--

1280

01:12:48,260 --> 01:12:49,450

she must have made it--

1281

01:12:49,450 --> 01:12:52,050

1282

01:12:52,050 --> 01:12:54,330

well, I guess it could have  
been after the blitzkrieg.

1283

01:12:54,330 --> 01:12:56,430

I don't really know, but  
it was around that time.

1284

01:12:56,430 --> 01:12:58,810

Maybe it was a birthday present.

1285

01:12:58,810 --> 01:13:01,740

In fact, maybe I think it  
was a birthday present.

1286

01:13:01,740 --> 01:13:02,420

She made me a--

1287

01:13:02,420 --> 01:13:03,510

The birthday after  
the blitzkrieg.

1288

01:13:03,510 --> 01:13:04,260

Possibly.

1289

01:13:04,260 --> 01:13:05,340

Or the one after that.

1290

01:13:05,340 --> 01:13:07,200

I don't really know.

1291

01:13:07,200 --> 01:13:08,700

That period is very--

1292

01:13:08,700 --> 01:13:09,990

it's all very fuzzy.

1293

01:13:09,990 --> 01:13:12,120

I mean, my memories  
are more anecdotal

1294

01:13:12,120 --> 01:13:13,580

than they are historic.

1295

01:13:13,580 --> 01:13:15,930

There's no real sequence.

1296

01:13:15,930 --> 01:13:18,030

I guess they're in some  
sort of a sequence,

1297

01:13:18,030 --> 01:13:21,330

but it doesn't  
really tell you much.

1298

01:13:21,330 --> 01:13:22,170

Well, maybe it does.

1299

01:13:22,170 --> 01:13:24,990

I don't know.

1300

01:13:24,990 --> 01:13:27,660

So my mother made me  
this coat, and I remember

1301

01:13:27,660 --> 01:13:29,460

this lovely spring coat.

1302

01:13:29,460 --> 01:13:35,160

And it was a very  
pale gray tweed,

1303

01:13:35,160 --> 01:13:39,900

and it had little nubs  
of color, little colors.

1304

01:13:39,900 --> 01:13:43,920

And the colors were  
all pastel little bumps

1305

01:13:43,920 --> 01:13:46,020

all over this fabric.

1306

01:13:46,020 --> 01:13:49,350

And they were  
beautiful pale lavender

1307

01:13:49,350 --> 01:13:55,680

and pink and light green  
and blue and just beautiful

1308

01:13:55,680 --> 01:13:59,160

pastel bumps all over this coat.

1309

01:13:59,160 --> 01:14:05,160

And the coat had a little sort  
of a capelet, a little cape

1310

01:14:05,160 --> 01:14:07,290

on top of the shoulders.



1311  
01:14:07,290 --> 01:14:09,090  
And I remember that  
I couldn't wait

1312  
01:14:09,090 --> 01:14:13,470  
for it to get warm enough to  
wear this wonderful treasure

1313  
01:14:13,470 --> 01:14:15,870  
that my mother had made.

1314  
01:14:15,870 --> 01:14:22,790  
And when it finally  
was time to wear it,

1315  
01:14:22,790 --> 01:14:27,920  
my mother sewed this  
very ugly yellow star

1316  
01:14:27,920 --> 01:14:35,530  
on my left shoulder and  
my left shoulder blade.

1317  
01:14:35,530 --> 01:14:39,940  
And I protested vehemently.

1318  
01:14:39,940 --> 01:14:45,700  
And she simply told  
me to not discuss it.

1319  
01:14:45,700 --> 01:14:50,310  
It was a fact and to ignore it.

1320  
01:14:50,310 --> 01:14:52,650  
This was your first yellow star.

1321  
01:14:52,650 --> 01:14:54,540  
Yes.

1322  
01:14:54,540 --> 01:15:00,720  
This was before you had seen

that embroidered picture.

1323  
01:15:00,720 --> 01:15:01,920  
Yes.

1324  
01:15:01,920 --> 01:15:03,750  
Well, the yellow  
stars became common.

1325  
01:15:03,750 --> 01:15:06,540  
I also remember my mother  
coming home one day.

1326  
01:15:06,540 --> 01:15:09,480

1327  
01:15:09,480 --> 01:15:18,105  
She had a navy coat, and it had  
a black fur collar, a shiny.

1328  
01:15:18,105 --> 01:15:18,940  
A seal.

1329  
01:15:18,940 --> 01:15:24,180  
It must have been a seal  
collar, or a black Persian lamb

1330  
01:15:24,180 --> 01:15:27,150  
or something, black fur collar.

1331  
01:15:27,150 --> 01:15:29,130  
And when she came home--

1332  
01:15:29,130 --> 01:15:31,750  
and the coat had  
yellow stars on it.

1333  
01:15:31,750 --> 01:15:36,660  
And when she returned home from  
wherever she had been, she--

1334  
01:15:36,660 --> 01:15:40,095

the fur had been  
removed from her coat.

1335  
01:15:40,095 --> 01:15:42,800

1336  
01:15:42,800 --> 01:15:45,530  
And she explained  
to our roommate

1337  
01:15:45,530 --> 01:15:50,450  
that all fur had to be  
donated to the German army

1338  
01:15:50,450 --> 01:15:51,550  
because they needed it.

1339  
01:15:51,550 --> 01:15:54,230

1340  
01:15:54,230 --> 01:15:55,830  
And of course the  
coat was ruined.

1341  
01:15:55,830 --> 01:15:58,900

1342  
01:15:58,900 --> 01:16:00,530  
So I remember that.

1343  
01:16:00,530 --> 01:16:03,610

1344  
01:16:03,610 --> 01:16:05,560  
One day my mother  
came home and she

1345  
01:16:05,560 --> 01:16:07,510  
had this young girl with her.

1346  
01:16:07,510 --> 01:16:11,440

1347  
01:16:11,440 --> 01:16:13,720  
She was a teenage  
girl, and she--

1348  
01:16:13,720 --> 01:16:15,550  
and I was supposed  
to remember her,

1349  
01:16:15,550 --> 01:16:17,740  
but I only vaguely  
remembered her.

1350  
01:16:17,740 --> 01:16:25,830  
Apparently, this girl  
had been a student

1351  
01:16:25,830 --> 01:16:30,390  
of my father's in Warsaw.

1352  
01:16:30,390 --> 01:16:38,310  
And my mother by chance bumped  
into her somewhere in town

1353  
01:16:38,310 --> 01:16:43,620  
and brought this girl,  
whose name was Rya.

1354  
01:16:43,620 --> 01:16:53,250  
And she sat me on her lap, and  
in her no-nonsense sort of way,

1355  
01:16:53,250 --> 01:17:01,580  
she said to me, you must go  
with Rya, and when I can,

1356  
01:17:01,580 --> 01:17:04,840  
I will come for you.

1357  
01:17:04,840 --> 01:17:07,720  
When will you come for me?

1358

01:17:07,720 --> 01:17:09,910  
[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

1359  
01:17:09,910 --> 01:17:12,006  
You heard that one before.

1360  
01:17:12,006 --> 01:17:14,250  
Well, of course, my  
mother never came for me.

1361  
01:17:14,250 --> 01:17:20,080

1362  
01:17:20,080 --> 01:17:22,670  
Do you have any  
idea when this was?

1363  
01:17:22,670 --> 01:17:24,500  
How many winters,  
for example, had

1364  
01:17:24,500 --> 01:17:29,780  
past since leaving  
and wandering?

1365  
01:17:29,780 --> 01:17:34,460  
I know that this incident was  
at the very end of summer.

1366  
01:17:34,460 --> 01:17:40,070  
It was probably the same summer,  
which the preceding spring

1367  
01:17:40,070 --> 01:17:44,600  
had brought the pretty coat  
and the yellow star experience

1368  
01:17:44,600 --> 01:17:47,410  
and all that sort of thing.

1369  
01:17:47,410 --> 01:17:53,830

1370

01:17:53,830 --> 01:17:55,330

Was it the same  
year that you had

1371

01:17:55,330 --> 01:17:58,770

the incident with the picture,  
the embroidered picture?

1372

01:17:58,770 --> 01:17:59,380

Yes.

1373

01:17:59,380 --> 01:18:00,370

Probably.

1374

01:18:00,370 --> 01:18:04,760

Although I would imagine  
that that was very close,

1375

01:18:04,760 --> 01:18:07,600

those events were very  
close to each other.

1376

01:18:07,600 --> 01:18:09,460

The events that I  
told you before,

1377

01:18:09,460 --> 01:18:11,680

traveling with my  
father, the train,

1378

01:18:11,680 --> 01:18:15,100

the bombing with the blankets  
over the head and all that,

1379

01:18:15,100 --> 01:18:20,570

I think that that was  
probably a year before.

1380

01:18:20,570 --> 01:18:24,474

So that might have  
been, say, 1941.

1381

01:18:24,474 --> 01:18:26,540  
That's a pretty good guess.

1382  
01:18:26,540 --> 01:18:27,270  
Yeah.

1383  
01:18:27,270 --> 01:18:28,770  
Did you see German soldiers?

1384  
01:18:28,770 --> 01:18:29,550  
Yes, yes.

1385  
01:18:29,550 --> 01:18:31,260  
Well, of course, yes.

1386  
01:18:31,260 --> 01:18:32,860  
More so than before?

1387  
01:18:32,860 --> 01:18:34,020  
Yes.

1388  
01:18:34,020 --> 01:18:34,800  
Yes.

1389  
01:18:34,800 --> 01:18:38,790  
I didn't really see a great  
deal of German soldiers when

1390  
01:18:38,790 --> 01:18:42,210  
I was still with my  
mother, although, yes some.

1391  
01:18:42,210 --> 01:18:44,780

1392  
01:18:44,780 --> 01:18:48,690  
Any explosions,  
aircraft, bombings?

1393  
01:18:48,690 --> 01:18:49,500  
A lot.

1394

01:18:49,500 --> 01:18:50,100

A lot.

1395

01:18:50,100 --> 01:18:54,450

I told you about listening to  
my mother's knitting needles

1396

01:18:54,450 --> 01:18:57,600

in bomb shelters and cellars  
and that sort of thing.

1397

01:18:57,600 --> 01:19:00,570

I mean, that was--

1398

01:19:00,570 --> 01:19:01,320

that was nothing.

1399

01:19:01,320 --> 01:19:05,640

That was daily, sometimes  
twice daily, many times.

1400

01:19:05,640 --> 01:19:10,080

That was just ordinary.

1401

01:19:10,080 --> 01:19:14,370

In fact, at one  
point, I was pushed

1402

01:19:14,370 --> 01:19:19,780

down some stairs or a  
ladder or something,

1403

01:19:19,780 --> 01:19:23,010

and my nose was broken.

1404

01:19:23,010 --> 01:19:27,060

And it wasn't even  
known until the next day

1405

01:19:27,060 --> 01:19:30,480

that my nose had been broken  
because we were in the dark.



1406  
01:19:30,480 --> 01:19:34,050  
And it wasn't until the  
light that my mother saw

1407  
01:19:34,050 --> 01:19:35,610  
that I was completely bruised.

1408  
01:19:35,610 --> 01:19:38,340  
My nose had been shattered.

1409  
01:19:38,340 --> 01:19:41,080

1410  
01:19:41,080 --> 01:19:45,420  
You were someplace in the  
Western Ukraine, late summer,

1411  
01:19:45,420 --> 01:19:47,670  
end of summer of  
'41, and your mother

1412  
01:19:47,670 --> 01:19:53,490  
is now giving you to this young  
woman who was also from Warsaw

1413  
01:19:53,490 --> 01:19:54,100  
originally.

1414  
01:19:54,100 --> 01:19:54,600  
No.

1415  
01:19:54,600 --> 01:19:57,090  
No?

1416  
01:19:57,090 --> 01:19:59,280  
Now, I have to give you a  
little bit of background.

1417  
01:19:59,280 --> 01:20:03,120  
First of all, Rya was no more  
than a teenager at that point.

1418  
01:20:03,120 --> 01:20:09,190  
I would say that at the  
most she was 16 or 17.

1419  
01:20:09,190 --> 01:20:13,545  
I would have been, say,  
five and a half, six.

1420  
01:20:13,545 --> 01:20:18,040

1421  
01:20:18,040 --> 01:20:20,340  
So Rya was, I don't  
know, 10 years older.

1422  
01:20:20,340 --> 01:20:27,070

1423  
01:20:27,070 --> 01:20:29,650  
A little background.

1424  
01:20:29,650 --> 01:20:36,260  
In the Ukraine-- what  
I know of the Ukraine--

1425  
01:20:36,260 --> 01:20:39,570  
there are little villages.

1426  
01:20:39,570 --> 01:20:41,790  
I mean, obviously  
there are big towns,

1427  
01:20:41,790 --> 01:20:46,380  
but the countryside  
of the Ukraine was--

1428  
01:20:46,380 --> 01:20:47,520  
this is another life.

1429  
01:20:47,520 --> 01:20:51,660  
Now I'm giving you

history that I--

1430  
01:20:51,660 --> 01:20:52,890  
this is what I lived.

1431  
01:20:52,890 --> 01:20:58,860  
There were little villages which  
were connected to each other

1432  
01:20:58,860 --> 01:21:04,050  
by dirt roads.

1433  
01:21:04,050 --> 01:21:08,640  
During the summer these  
roads were traversed

1434  
01:21:08,640 --> 01:21:13,580  
by horse-drawn carriages.

1435  
01:21:13,580 --> 01:21:14,820  
Not carriages, but--

1436  
01:21:14,820 --> 01:21:15,780  
Carts.

1437  
01:21:15,780 --> 01:21:17,970  
Carts.

1438  
01:21:17,970 --> 01:21:24,900  
The villages-- surrounding  
these villages were the farms.

1439  
01:21:24,900 --> 01:21:32,680  
And the land had been divided  
after the fall of the tsars,

1440  
01:21:32,680 --> 01:21:35,130  
tsar, the First World War--

1441  
01:21:35,130 --> 01:21:37,650  
had been divided  
among the peasants.

1442  
01:21:37,650 --> 01:21:40,850  
Previous to that, it  
was owned by the church.

1443  
01:21:40,850 --> 01:21:43,230  
Yes.

1444  
01:21:43,230 --> 01:21:49,590  
So that now, although the  
people were very religious

1445  
01:21:49,590 --> 01:21:59,040  
and were very loyal  
to the village priest,

1446  
01:21:59,040 --> 01:22:01,800  
and they were very  
generous to him,

1447  
01:22:01,800 --> 01:22:08,340  
he was no longer as wealthy  
and flamboyant as they

1448  
01:22:08,340 --> 01:22:14,220  
had been during the time of  
the tsars, during White Russia.

1449  
01:22:14,220 --> 01:22:20,910  
But because the  
peasants were religious,

1450  
01:22:20,910 --> 01:22:27,930  
the priests lived a far better  
life than did the peasants.

1451  
01:22:27,930 --> 01:22:32,310  
Now, it's the Greek  
Orthodox Church.

1452  
01:22:32,310 --> 01:22:33,525  
The Bible is in Greek.

1453

01:22:33,525 --> 01:22:36,180

1454

01:22:36,180 --> 01:22:40,440

The priests marry  
and have families,

1455

01:22:40,440 --> 01:22:45,400

and the families were the  
intelligentsia, if you will,

1456

01:22:45,400 --> 01:22:46,440

of the village.

1457

01:22:46,440 --> 01:22:52,140

And the children of the  
priests became the postmaster,

1458

01:22:52,140 --> 01:22:56,640

the schoolteachers, the mayor,  
if there was such a thing.

1459

01:22:56,640 --> 01:22:58,707

They sort of ran the community.

1460

01:22:58,707 --> 01:22:59,790

They could read and write.

1461

01:22:59,790 --> 01:23:02,160

They could read and  
write, and some of them

1462

01:23:02,160 --> 01:23:04,470

were very highly educated.

1463

01:23:04,470 --> 01:23:09,390

And the more wealthy was the  
priest, the better educated

1464

01:23:09,390 --> 01:23:10,290

were his children.

1465

01:23:10,290 --> 01:23:12,180

And in order to  
be educated, they

1466

01:23:12,180 --> 01:23:16,380

were sent, in quotes, abroad.

1467

01:23:16,380 --> 01:23:22,590

And abroad meant great  
cities in Europe like Warsaw,

1468

01:23:22,590 --> 01:23:28,560

where this particular  
Rya, child of a priest

1469

01:23:28,560 --> 01:23:32,790

in a Ukrainian village,  
wound up studying

1470

01:23:32,790 --> 01:23:36,660

in Warsaw with my father.

1471

01:23:36,660 --> 01:23:41,370

And apparently, she took private  
lessons at home, or somehow

1472

01:23:41,370 --> 01:23:44,550

or other got home  
to meet my mother

1473

01:23:44,550 --> 01:23:48,330

and became enamored  
of my mother,

1474

01:23:48,330 --> 01:23:49,980

and became a frequent visitor.

1475

01:23:49,980 --> 01:23:54,180

And I told you earlier about  
the generosity of my grandmother

1476

01:23:54,180 --> 01:23:57,210

and her warmth and  
so forth, and I'm

1477  
01:23:57,210 --> 01:24:01,020  
sure that my mother  
befriended this young girl

1478  
01:24:01,020 --> 01:24:06,000  
from the Ukraine in a  
similar sort of way,

1479  
01:24:06,000 --> 01:24:09,450  
although this girl was not  
a peasant-- peasant stock.

1480  
01:24:09,450 --> 01:24:12,970  
But you know, my  
mother liked her,

1481  
01:24:12,970 --> 01:24:15,390  
and they had a relationship.

1482  
01:24:15,390 --> 01:24:20,070  
And therefore when my mother  
bumped into her in town

1483  
01:24:20,070 --> 01:24:23,800  
and explained our plight,  
Rya must have asked.

1484  
01:24:23,800 --> 01:24:26,910  
I had to have been a  
baby, less than four.

1485  
01:24:26,910 --> 01:24:30,240  
And Rya must have played  
with me or possibly babysat

1486  
01:24:30,240 --> 01:24:31,270  
or whatever.

1487  
01:24:31,270 --> 01:24:38,910  
So when my mother explained our

plight and the possibilities

1488

01:24:38,910 --> 01:24:47,340  
of our disaster, Rya, being  
an altruistic and kind

1489

01:24:47,340 --> 01:24:52,170  
and religious teenager said,  
well, I'll take her home

1490

01:24:52,170 --> 01:24:53,490  
and hide her with me.

1491

01:24:53,490 --> 01:24:57,240  
Without any thought  
to the consequences

1492

01:24:57,240 --> 01:25:02,400  
or to the reaction of her  
family or the possible danger

1493

01:25:02,400 --> 01:25:06,897  
to herself, her family, the  
entire village, the future.

1494

01:25:06,897 --> 01:25:07,980  
I mean, you know, nothing.

1495

01:25:07,980 --> 01:25:10,710  
She simply offered,  
and my mother

1496

01:25:10,710 --> 01:25:14,020  
jumped at the opportunity.

1497

01:25:14,020 --> 01:25:24,150  
And so my mother sent me  
off with a little package

1498

01:25:24,150 --> 01:25:33,090  
of clothing wrapped around a  
handkerchief, my teddy bear.



1499

01:25:33,090 --> 01:25:35,770

Still David.

1500

01:25:35,770 --> 01:25:40,780

Who was now significantly  
smaller than I was.

1501

01:25:40,780 --> 01:25:46,780

And I remember walking  
down the front steps.

1502

01:25:46,780 --> 01:25:49,240

I remember my mother  
standing on the stairs

1503

01:25:49,240 --> 01:25:51,550

saying, "Don't turn around.

1504

01:25:51,550 --> 01:25:52,480

Just go.

1505

01:25:52,480 --> 01:25:56,080

Walk through the gate,  
and don't turn around.

1506

01:25:56,080 --> 01:25:58,150

Keep walking.

1507

01:25:58,150 --> 01:25:59,800

And remember what I told you.

1508

01:25:59,800 --> 01:26:02,350

Remember what I told you."

1509

01:26:02,350 --> 01:26:06,450

And we walked through the--

1510

01:26:06,450 --> 01:26:09,040

down the stairs and  
through the garden.

1511

01:26:09,040 --> 01:26:11,530

And I remember  
that the garden was

1512

01:26:11,530 --> 01:26:18,310

overgrown and unkempt and wilted  
and a great mass of jungle.

1513

01:26:18,310 --> 01:26:22,640

It had been cultivated  
at one time.

1514

01:26:22,640 --> 01:26:28,020

So that's why-- it  
was late summer.

1515

01:26:28,020 --> 01:26:33,850

And I remember walking  
with Rya holding my hand,

1516

01:26:33,850 --> 01:26:38,410

and I holding on to my teddy  
bear, and Rya with the bundle.

1517

01:26:38,410 --> 01:26:42,340

And we walked out, and I turned  
once to look at my mother,

1518

01:26:42,340 --> 01:26:47,260

and she was holding a  
handkerchief up to her face.

1519

01:26:47,260 --> 01:26:50,580

And she yelled again,  
"Don't turn around.

1520

01:26:50,580 --> 01:26:51,190

Keep walking."

1521

01:26:51,190 --> 01:26:54,490

1522

01:26:54,490 --> 01:26:57,130

And that's my last  
memory of my mother.

1523  
01:26:57,130 --> 01:27:02,320

1524  
01:27:02,320 --> 01:27:05,340  
I don't even remember  
getting to the village

1525  
01:27:05,340 --> 01:27:06,370  
or anything about it.

1526  
01:27:06,370 --> 01:27:09,130  
I don't remember arriving.

1527  
01:27:09,130 --> 01:27:10,950  
And I don't remember  
any of that.

1528  
01:27:10,950 --> 01:27:12,630  
And you remembered  
Rya from before?

1529  
01:27:12,630 --> 01:27:14,730  
Or were you-- as far  
as you were concerned--

1530  
01:27:14,730 --> 01:27:15,411  
I might have.

1531  
01:27:15,411 --> 01:27:16,328  
--this was a stranger.

1532  
01:27:16,328 --> 01:27:16,828  
No.

1533  
01:27:16,828 --> 01:27:19,440  
I don't know.

1534  
01:27:19,440 --> 01:27:20,130  
I really don't.

1535  
01:27:20,130 --> 01:27:20,850  
I don't know.

1536  
01:27:20,850 --> 01:27:21,940  
I don't know.

1537  
01:27:21,940 --> 01:27:24,930  
I don't remember whether  
I remembered then or--

1538  
01:27:24,930 --> 01:27:29,370  
I just was an obedient  
child, and I went.

1539  
01:27:29,370 --> 01:27:33,840  
And if my mother said  
she would come for me,

1540  
01:27:33,840 --> 01:27:34,950  
she would come for me.

1541  
01:27:34,950 --> 01:27:38,636  
And if she said that I would  
be safe and I should go,

1542  
01:27:38,636 --> 01:27:39,690  
that was it.

1543  
01:27:39,690 --> 01:27:40,860  
I trusted my mother.

1544  
01:27:40,860 --> 01:27:43,890  
And I knew not to  
argue with my mother.

1545  
01:27:43,890 --> 01:27:47,370  
Were you wearing  
your yellow star?

1546  
01:27:47,370 --> 01:27:48,390  
I don't know.

1547  
01:27:48,390 --> 01:27:50,820  
I don't imagine so.

1548  
01:27:50,820 --> 01:27:52,350  
I don't know.

1549  
01:27:52,350 --> 01:27:55,530  
I'm not sure that that yellow  
star was on summer clothing.

1550  
01:27:55,530 --> 01:28:01,230  
I think it might have only  
been on sort of outerwear.

1551  
01:28:01,230 --> 01:28:04,060  
I really don't recall that.

1552  
01:28:04,060 --> 01:28:06,060  
But Ryna knew you were Jewish.

1553  
01:28:06,060 --> 01:28:06,890  
Rya.

1554  
01:28:06,890 --> 01:28:08,030  
Rya.

1555  
01:28:08,030 --> 01:28:08,530  
Yes.

1556  
01:28:08,530 --> 01:28:12,220

1557  
01:28:12,220 --> 01:28:16,600  
So now we arrive in the  
village in the Ukraine,

1558  
01:28:16,600 --> 01:28:18,310  
and I'll describe  
the village to you.

1559

01:28:18,310 --> 01:28:20,950

1560

01:28:20,950 --> 01:28:26,200

There was a dirt road through  
which you got to the village.

1561

01:28:26,200 --> 01:28:31,180

When you got to the  
village, there were houses.

1562

01:28:31,180 --> 01:28:33,800

1563

01:28:33,800 --> 01:28:37,370

There's one in these  
pictures somewhere.

1564

01:28:37,370 --> 01:28:41,250

There's a man standing  
in front of it.

1565

01:28:41,250 --> 01:28:44,660

Oh, I was looking at it before.

1566

01:28:44,660 --> 01:28:45,680

Now I can't find it.

1567

01:28:45,680 --> 01:28:48,332

1568

01:28:48,332 --> 01:28:53,445

It's kind of log cabins  
with thatched roofs.

1569

01:28:53,445 --> 01:28:56,920

1570

01:28:56,920 --> 01:28:59,352

Oh.

1571

01:28:59,352 --> 01:29:01,060

Why don't you turn  
that off for a moment,

1572  
01:29:01,060 --> 01:29:02,218  
and I'll look for the pic--

1573  
01:29:02,218 --> 01:29:11,680

1574  
01:29:11,680 --> 01:29:14,950  
Road-- there were  
houses, those like

1575  
01:29:14,950 --> 01:29:17,980  
I pointed out to with  
thatched roofs, log cabin

1576  
01:29:17,980 --> 01:29:23,620  
kind of houses, but whitewashed,  
whitewashed log cabins.

1577  
01:29:23,620 --> 01:29:31,210  
And then the road  
split like a wishbone.

1578  
01:29:31,210 --> 01:29:37,120  
And in the crook of the wishbone  
sat a small, white church

1579  
01:29:37,120 --> 01:29:39,400  
with steps going up.

1580  
01:29:39,400 --> 01:29:42,640  
And it had a large  
door and two windows.

1581  
01:29:42,640 --> 01:29:46,630  
When I looked at it, it  
looked like a clown face

1582  
01:29:46,630 --> 01:29:48,880  
because it had a big  
window on each side,

1583  
01:29:48,880 --> 01:29:51,250  
and the door and the steps,  
it looked like a clown

1584  
01:29:51,250 --> 01:29:53,980  
with his tongue hanging out.

1585  
01:29:53,980 --> 01:29:58,060  
And it had a sharp  
point at the top

1586  
01:29:58,060 --> 01:30:01,780  
with a cross with  
a slash underneath.

1587  
01:30:01,780 --> 01:30:03,820  
And the road went around it.

1588  
01:30:03,820 --> 01:30:09,580  
Behind the church was a  
small cemetery with crosses,

1589  
01:30:09,580 --> 01:30:10,690  
stone crosses.

1590  
01:30:10,690 --> 01:30:13,450  
And there was a  
legend that the cross

1591  
01:30:13,450 --> 01:30:21,910  
of the priest whose family I was  
about to live with, that stone

1592  
01:30:21,910 --> 01:30:26,350  
cross grew every year.

1593  
01:30:26,350 --> 01:30:28,990  
The people were  
so superstitious,

1594  
01:30:28,990 --> 01:30:32,530



and they had revered  
this particular priest

1595  
01:30:32,530 --> 01:30:37,660  
to such a degree that these  
legends about him grew.

1596  
01:30:37,660 --> 01:30:42,490  
Anyway, the houses  
continued as the road--

1597  
01:30:42,490 --> 01:30:45,370

1598  
01:30:45,370 --> 01:30:47,690  
the two roads--

1599  
01:30:47,690 --> 01:30:48,190  
Diverged.

1600  
01:30:48,190 --> 01:30:50,350  
Diverged, exactly  
behind the church.

1601  
01:30:50,350 --> 01:30:56,770  
And I would say there were at  
the very most 30 to 50 houses.

1602  
01:30:56,770 --> 01:30:58,450  
That was the entire town.

1603  
01:30:58,450 --> 01:31:02,150  
On the left side  
behind our house,

1604  
01:31:02,150 --> 01:31:03,790  
which was the most  
elegant house.

1605  
01:31:03,790 --> 01:31:05,888  
It was a clapboard  
house, very different

1606

01:31:05,888 --> 01:31:06,805  
from the other cabins.

1607

01:31:06,805 --> 01:31:10,030

1608

01:31:10,030 --> 01:31:12,160  
Further back behind  
our house there

1609

01:31:12,160 --> 01:31:14,770  
was a stream and then a forest.

1610

01:31:14,770 --> 01:31:18,640  
And on the opposite side  
of town to my right,

1611

01:31:18,640 --> 01:31:21,130  
as I was facing the  
church, was a road

1612

01:31:21,130 --> 01:31:26,500  
that led out to the fields  
where all of the various wheat

1613

01:31:26,500 --> 01:31:29,560  
and grain and hemp and  
barley and I don't know,

1614

01:31:29,560 --> 01:31:31,900  
whatever all was grown.

1615

01:31:31,900 --> 01:31:33,940  
And that was the entire town.

1616

01:31:33,940 --> 01:31:35,710  
There was no electricity.

1617

01:31:35,710 --> 01:31:37,570  
There were no automobiles.

1618

01:31:37,570 --> 01:31:39,670  
There were no telephones.

1619  
01:31:39,670 --> 01:31:42,220

1620  
01:31:42,220 --> 01:31:45,370  
The donation that I made to  
you, I wrote a little piece

1621  
01:31:45,370 --> 01:31:48,880  
to go with it,  
that little dress.

1622  
01:31:48,880 --> 01:31:51,010  
We grew our own hemp.

1623  
01:31:51,010 --> 01:31:56,830  
We spun-- on a spinning  
wheel we spend the yarn.

1624  
01:31:56,830 --> 01:32:00,610  
It was loomed at home on a loom.

1625  
01:32:00,610 --> 01:32:03,190  
I sewed it by hand.

1626  
01:32:03,190 --> 01:32:04,520  
Life was primitive.

1627  
01:32:04,520 --> 01:32:06,460  
I'm sure that it was  
no different than it

1628  
01:32:06,460 --> 01:32:09,610  
had been two centuries before.

1629  
01:32:09,610 --> 01:32:12,720  
And that was the  
life of the village.

1630  
01:32:12,720 --> 01:32:16,000

Contact [reference@ushmm.org](mailto:reference@ushmm.org) for further information about this collection