Side one. Oral memoir by Liesl Joseph Loeb, recorded on November 16, 1998.

My name is Liesl Joseph Loeb. Spell it L-I-E-S-L, Joseph is J-O-S-E-P-H, and Loeb is L-O-E-B, like in Bob.

I was born on June 17, 1928, in a small industrial town in the Rhineland, West Germany. And the town's name was, at that time, Rheydt. And it's spelled R-H-E-Y-D-T. It was a town with many textile mills, some other industry and manufacturing. My father, Josef Joseph-- the first Josef is spelled with an F, J-O-S-E-F, and the second, J-O-S-E-P-H-- was a prominent lawyer in Rheydt.

My mother, Lilly Solomon Joseph-- Lily, L-I-L-L-Y. Salmon is her maiden name, S-A-L-M-O-N, and Joseph, J-O-S-E-P-H-- my mother was born in the next small town. And the name of that town was Odenkirchen. And that is spelled O-D-E-N-K-I-R-C-H-E-N.

Today these two smaller towns are incorporated into one large municipality, with another adjacent town, and that is called today Moenchengladbach. And that is spelled Moenchengladbach. M-O- M like mother-- O-E-N-C-H-E-N-G-L-A-D-B-A-C-H. It's a little bit hard to pronounce, I know. And these separate little municipalities are simply called Monchengladbach 1, 2, 3, and so on. There are, I think, four or five areas altogether that are all under one city government today.

Jews were already living in this area in the 12th century. A local historian wrote the history of the Jews of the area in 1989, two thick volumes, and my mother's family plays quite an important part in that history. Her family can trace its years back to about 1800 in that area. And from there, the family seems to have come from Nurenberg in Germany, N-U-R-E-N-B-E-R-G.

My mother's father, my grandfather, had a men's clothing manufacturing concern. And my mother told me that during World War I, my grandfather was a great patriot, always inviting soldiers to the house when they were on leave. If any of his employees came home on leave, he invited them for dinner and brought them home.

And my grandparents had a very hospitable home. My mother was the youngest of three daughters of my grandfather, whose name was David Salmon, S-A-L-M-O-N. And my grandmother was one of 12 children who came from the town of Kaiserslautern, K-A-I-S-E-R-S-L-A-U-T-E-N.

My grandmother's family was quite liberal, and among her many siblings there were some intermarriages already in those years. One of her more well-known cousins was Nathan Strauss, who, with his wife, sank on the Titanic. Also, my grandmother can trace her relationship to the Macy Strauss family, well-known here in the east coast of the United States.

My mother and father married in 1927, and I was born in 1928. And I must say that the first 10 years of my childhood were as ideal as any could be. I am an only child. The first six years of my life I had a governess who came to the house every day. She didn't live in, but came every day to be with me. And then when I started school, she got married, and she insisted that I would carry her veil at her wedding in church.

I mention this fact because when I was six years old, the year was 1934. And at that time already, Hitler had come to power and certain anti-Semitic sentiments had become very noticeable in Germany. Children with whom I used to play, children in the neighborhood often called me names such as dirty Jew and other such names, and I didn't understand why they did that. And carrying the veil in church, my mother felt, might be dangerous, not just to us, but, perhaps, also to my nanny. But she insisted that I must be at her wedding. And so I did what she asked me to do.

And I have to say also that throughout all the years we were in Germany until we left, she came to visit us regularly. I was her one and only charge at that time. She came to us straight from the school where she had trained as a kindergarten specialist. And there was much more between us than just an employee relationship. She was like my second mother. And our contact was discontinued during the war, but was taken up again after of the war until she passed away in 1987.

My grandmother lived nearby and often came to our house, and I was extremely fond of my grandmother. She was the only grandparent I knew. I had an aunt and uncle nearby. Until 1937, I had a big cousin nearby who was like my big sister, who, however, came to the United States, to Philadelphia in 1937. And I had various other cousins and aunts and uncles of whom I was extremely fond and whom we got to see at least once each year even though we didn't live in the same cities.

We were a close-knit family. I think I was a happy child. I was sad at being an only child, and therefore I loved to go to school, and I loved to be anywhere where there were other children. My parents were comfortable. We often had concerts in the house. Various friends and their musical friends came to make music. And my mother also was a trained coloratura soprano singer, and I loved it when she sang to me. Very often when I was sick, and I was sick very often during my childhood in the wintertime, she would sing to me. And I do treasure the memory of that a great deal. After Kristallnacht, my mother never sang again.

My father also played the piano, as did my mother. And I had piano lessons starting at age seven. And I must say, I just loved the piano. After being in bed sick for days on end, the first day where I was without temperature and I was allowed to come downstairs, my first place was to go to the piano and start playing. I'm not sure that I would have made any kind of a class artist on the piano, but I did love the instrument, and to this day I love piano music best. And I do love classical music.

As I said, I loved to be where there were children. I went to a Jewish school. In our town at the time of my childhood, the population was approximately 70,000 people. The Jewish community consisted of about 100 Jewish families and was a close-knit community. Everybody knew everybody. And the Jewish school was a one-room schoolroom. All eight grades were in that one room.

And the teacher was not just the teacher who taught all those grades, and everybody learned, but he was also the Reverend. He was not an ordained rabbi, but he was a Reverend, he was the Cantor. He did the marriages and he did the divorces and he visited the sick. And he was an all around person to minister to his congregation.

We often made fun of him, as children do. But in retrospect, I must say here that he was the most heroic person because later when it came to the deportations, the time when the deportations started, long after we had left already, he did have a chance to leave Germany with his family, his wife, and his two children, but chose to stay with his congregants who were still there, and was sent with them away to the ghetto of Riga. I think that is the most heroic thing. And I have revered him ever since I have known this about him. And I only did find that out about him in 1989.

So life was nice and comfortable and safe. And as long as my parents were around, I always felt very secure. But this did not last, unfortunately. I would say that on the night of November 10, my childhood suddenly was brought to an end. My childhood, my security, my whole life came to a stop that night.

What happened that night, what changed my life and the life of my family, it's called Kristallnacht. Up until that point, I think my father, who was politically very knowledgeable-- he was an active Social Democrat, which in itself was already a very negative thing to be in Germany of those days. He always believed that things that were going on in Germany just could not last, that the regime would change, something would change. It was such folly, he couldn't believe that Hitler would go on and on and on.

But after Kristallnacht, I think all the non-believers of the Hitler intentions changed their minds. Actually, at one time-- I think it was in 1936 or 1937-- my father considered emigration to Palestine. At that time, one could still take out a considerable amount of money. And a friend of his, as a matter of fact, a Gentile friend of my father married to a Jewish woman, went on a trip to Palestine to inquire what living conditions would be like.

During the time that he spent in Palestine there were Arab riots, and civilians, especially Jewish people, Jewish settlers, were killed, and there was much malaria. Tel Aviv was still a little village on the beach. And there was lots of sickness. Things were very primitive yet in Palestine. And he came back and he said to my father, we cannot expect our wives to have such a lifestyle, to live under such conditions. So that idea was tabled by these two men. As it happens, this friend

of my father's and his wife, unfortunately, both went to the concentration camps and were killed eventually.

We did have other non-Jewish friends. First of all, my parents, were friendly with the family of my governess. Then my father who had been a bachelor until the age of 45, had a very close friend. This friend was also his client. My father was the attorney for his firm. He had some kind of a manufacturing concern. But they were buddies, and they hung out together. This friend never married, although he had a woman friend but never married.

But they did all kinds of things together, especially before my father was married. Sometimes they would take trips together, and just hung out together, maybe rode their bicycles out into the country on a weekend or something. And my father didn't drive. He never drove a car. And there weren't too many cars around yet in those years anyway.

His name was Albert. And after my mother married, Albert was still part of the household. He'd come, drop in for dinner any old time, and very often he also invited my parents for dinner. The men had this special friendship that rarely exists among men. And for me, he was Uncle Albert. I mention him because he will come up again later in the story.

The boycott of 1933 and the Aryan laws that Hitler brought out, which took away the privilege to practice for doctors and lawyers and other professionals of the Jewish faith, temporarily put my father out of his job, more or less. My father had a junior partner, and the firm was well-known in the area. He was admitted at court in the capital of our district, which was Dusseldorf, a larger, well-known city in the Rhineland. And you spell that D-U-S-S-E-L-D-O-R-F.

My father lost his practice for a short time. But after a while, these laws were modified, and everyone who had already been practicing before the beginning of World War I was reinstated. I guess maybe they found out they had a brain drain or something. At any rate, my father had been a judge in Cologne before World War I, and he served in the military tribunal during World War I.

My father was a pacifist in those days, and he was glad not to be in any kind of front lines for the fatherland. I don't know if you would say he was not a patriot, but definitely his philosophy of pacifism made it so that it was against his principals to actively engage in fighting, I suppose. At any rate, my father was reinstated, which was really not to his advantage because again, he must have thought that things wouldn't get any worse. If anything, they might get better. And he didn't want my mother to have to change her lifestyle.

And so he perhaps became a little too complacent until a few years later, when his practice had to be limited only to Jewish clientele. Slowly but surely, the Gentile friends that used to come around stopped coming. And there came a day when his friend Albert, my Uncle Albert, called him up on the phone and told him, listen, Jupp. My father's nickname was Jupp, J-U-P-P.

And he said, I'm sorry, but I'm not going to be able to speak to you on the streets anymore. And I can't call you anymore, and please don't call me anymore because I've just been reinstated as an Admiral in the German Navy, and that would compromise me too much. You must understand.

My father was terribly hurt from this phone call. You must understand that all this information was told to me by my mother. But I can well understand how he must have felt, how his friend of so many years suddenly seemed to turn against him. Most likely, though, his phones were being tapped and he was being watched because it must have been knowledge also of the local little spies or the local Gestapo that Albert had a Jewish friend.

At any rate, they did not communicate from that time on until the last day that we were in Germany, and I'll tell you about that a little bit later on, too. And nevertheless, my nanny came to visit whenever she was in town. She had moved away from our town. And she didn't let anybody tell her whom she could visit. She had gotten word from the Nazi party, the local Nazi party, through her father, that it would be better if she didn't come to visit with us.

And she said she was going to visit whomever she wants to. And then they suggested that maybe she shouldn't be seen coming into our house during the daytime. And she said that she would come whenever she wanted to, daytime or evening time. She wasn't going to let anybody tell her whom she could visit.

My nanny's name was Otty, O-T-T-Y. And Otty's father was a member of the party. That doesn't mean to say that he was a Nazi. It was sometimes expedient to belong to the party. And as a matter of fact, when the non-Jewish children started to bait the Jewish children on their way to school, which started to happen frequently-- that they threw stones at us or harassed us in some way, they kind of tried to knock us about a little bit-- Otty's father told the local powers that be that he wants this stopped. He also spoke to the superintendent of schools. And at that time, it was mentioned that in return, maybe his daughter wouldn't be so friendly with the Jews. But as I've already told you, it didn't make much of an impression on her.

Then one day in school, something happened that really touched the whole school. We had one family in town, a Polish Jewish family that had come into town a few years before trying to make a better life for themselves. They were quite poor. And the father was a handyman, hired himself out to whomever needed work done. And everybody tried to keep him working in some way or another, which wasn't so hard to do. There's always people who need to have a handyman. And the children went to our school.

They came one day in October of 1938 with their Shabbas clothes on, their best clothes. And they said they had come to say goodbye. And we didn't understand why. And they told us that they and their parents were being sent out of the country. What really had happened was that Jews who were not German citizens had been ordered to leave the country.

There were more people like themselves, people who had mostly come from the east, Jewish people, to find a better life and more possibilities of making a living, had come into Germany, had not become citizens of Germany, whether that was by law that they couldn't become German citizens, or whether that was because of their own desire not to. I don't know that.

At any rate, these people were all expelled from Germany at that time. And they were sent to no man's land, which is a certain area of land between the borders of Poland and Germany, where German people live and also where some Polish people live. And one isn't quite certain just exactly to whom that strip of land belongs. It's a kind of no man's land, as I said.

And there they lived off the generosity of farmers, perhaps, and perhaps not. But the living conditions were like animals. And it was a terrible situation. A boy in Paris by the name of Herschel Greeszpan-- Herschel, H-E-R-S-C-H-E-L, Greeszpan, I think, was spelled G-R-E-E-S-Z-P-A-N, I think.

Herschel Greezspan lived in Paris, and his parents were among those people who had been chased out of Germany. And they had written a letter to Herschel and told him about the terrible living conditions that beset them. And Herschel was terribly upset, to such a point that somewhere, somehow he got a gun. He went to the German embassy and rang the bell. The person who answered was a minor official at the embassy, and Herschel just shot him. He was so distraught and so angry, he shot this man and killed this man.

This was the match that lit the pogrom that we know today as Kristallnacht. And the shooting in Paris must have happened around November 7. Not quite sure, but it must have happened around November 7. November 9 had been my father's birthday, and my mother had a few guests in.

The Gestapo had been at the house some days before looking through all kinds of papers of my father's because my father was president of the B'nai B'rith. And the B'nai B'rith was considered a subversive organization as far as the Nazis were concerned. And so they rippled through all this stuff and took some of it with them with not too much of any friendly words for my father.

On the morning of November 10 there was a harsh knock on the front door. And there stood some men in black uniforms with black boots on. And they asked to open up, and they came in, and they said they were arresting my father.

I was extremely upset because I couldn't understand why anybody would want to arrest my father. What had he done? He hadn't done anything. I was terribly fond of my father. I idolized him. And I can't tell you how upset I really was. They didn't give much of an explanation. They just took him away.

My mother, of course, was on the phone with friends and relatives to find out whether anyone else was being arrested also. And she found out that unless somebody was able to hide, unless somebody had heard about this ahead of time, the men, all the Jewish men in town from the age of 16 on up were arrested.

We didn't know where they were taking my father. We had no idea where any of these people were being taken. And you can imagine the distraught women who didn't understand or didn't know what was happening to their men. Of course, I didn't go to school that day, and I was very aware of the anxiety of my mother. And myself was just as upset.

At the time we had a visitor from Bonn, B-O-N-N, the present capital of Germany. She was a very, very close friend of ours and had come to visit for my father's birthday. We, at that time, had a young Jewish girl helping my mother in the house since we weren't allowed to have non-Jewish domestic help anymore. That evening I was torn out of bed in the middle of the night by my mother.

Tape one, side two. Liesl Joseph Loeb.

There was a terrible noise going on downstairs in my house. I was terrified. I hadn't woken up from it, but once my mother tore me out of bed, I was aware of all this crashing noises that I heard. Somebody seemed to be trying to bash in our front door. My mother put some housecoat over me and dragged me upstairs to our tenants.

We lived in a very large 20-room house, and we had rented one floor to tenants. They were not Jewish. They occupied the third floor in our house. And my mother, together with our visitor and our domestic help, knocked on their door, and they took us into their apartment.

In the meantime, all this noise kept going on downstairs, and I couldn't understand what was going on. I was 10 years old at the time. I was a slight little girl and very attached to my parents. I had been so upset during the day about my father having been taken away, and now somebody was trying to break into our house, and I couldn't understand why and what was going on.

I did not know of the shooting in Paris at that time. I did not know that that was what caused all this commotion. All I knew was I heard terrible noises in my house. I also heard fire engines and sirens outside. And it turned out that these were going to our synagogue, which had been set on fire. And I was so upset that I wanted in the worst way to run downstairs and tell whoever was down there to stop, to stop this noise and to stop breaking up our house. But my mother had a very hard time to hold me back because surely they would not have left me unharmed had I gone downstairs.

However, the man of that apartment, our tenant, went downstairs, and he told those hoodlums that they should kindly keep their activities on the first floor because he and his wife occupied the rest of the house. The hoodlums didn't know what was going on in our house. They at least accepted that and kept their activities in the first floor because mostly the vandals who made all the destructions were usually called from out of town so that nobody could finger them. Nobody could recognize them if they were seen. And they wouldn't know exactly whose house they were destroying. They were just told an address and told to go there and do their thing.

Another one of, probably, Mr. Joseph Goebbel's fine thinking. Josef Goebbels-- and you spell that J-O-S-E-F, and his last name is G-O-E-B-B-E-L-S, was the propaganda minister of the Hitler regime, a small, crippled man with a clubfoot who became a social misfit, but seemed to have found his niche in Hitler's cabinet, so to speak.

And the other thing was that he was a native son of our town. Not only that, but as a student and after he graduated college, and was very poor, he often ate at my father's table. But that's a whole another story. At any rate, the noise went on downstairs. Glass was broken, and it was just a night of terror.

Somebody stood at the front gate. We could see somebody standing there with a cigarette in his mouth. And luckily nobody smoked while they were doing their thing downstairs because they had pulled the gas range out of its connection. And if it weren't for the broken windows and that the gas could escape outside, they could have blown up the house.

As it got light in the morning, they left. And as soon as my mother was sure they were gone, she went downstairs and called the police. And the police told her to come over, and she took pictures of the house and the destruction, the broken windows you could see from the outside. And she went to the police station. And they said, oh, why didn't you call us? We would have come and stopped that. Sounded very nice, but there wasn't much truth to that.

And when I finally came downstairs, I was completely speechless. All I saw was our beautiful furniture hacked into pieces, the legs of tables and chairs strewn about the floor amidst the shards of glasses and crystal and window glass, and eggs thrown in the midst of that, and other food articles, a piano turned over on its front, and the back side had an ax stuck into it.

I mean, just simple, pure vandalism. It looked like a bomb hit there. Books had been torn out of the bookshelves, and everything was strewn about. It was just the biggest mess you ever want to see, and I was very upset about that. I loved my house, and I loved everything there. My toys had been thrown around and broken up, too, and that wasn't so good, either. But I was just completely speechless when I saw this.

Our visitor decided that it would be best if my mother and I came back to Bonn with her because it so happened that her daughter lived with her. And her daughter had married a Jewish man from Holland, a Dutch gentleman. And the house in which they lived, therefore, became that of a Dutch owner. And even though you had the vandalism of Kristallnacht, the law of the land said that any foreign property was off limits to Nazi intrusion. That was still at that time.

And so my mother decided that was a good idea. She had boarded up the windows and did what she could. And we went back with our guest to Bonn. And I stayed there from November, 1938 until May, 1939.

From that time on, all normal life stopped, and a whole other routine began. In Bonn there was also a Jewish school. And it so happened that that school was in a building that, from the outside, looked like an office building, not like a school. The schoolyard was behind the building, could not be seen from the street, and therefore the school was not in any way vandalized. So that school was still in session, and I could continue to go to school in Bonn.

I lived with our friends, and there were quite a few adults living in the house there, and everybody was very caring toward me. I also met one of my best friends in Bonn, who is still one of my best friends today. We were 10 years old when we met each other. And her way led her through Auschwitz to Philadelphia, and my way led me through the St. Louis to Philadelphia. And today we are still very close friends, as fate would have it. We both have stories to tell.

Naturally, there was no more school. The school building had been vandalized, although the teacher lived on top of the school building, and his apartment was not destroyed. As a matter of fact, the only other house in the city that was destroyed like ours was right up the street from us. It was a villa that belonged to a Jewish shoe manufacturer, one of the very wealthy men in town. Otherwise, Jewish businesses had been vandalized, but no other private homes. I don't know who or why picked on those two houses, but they did.

My father's practice was at an end. His partner had also been arrested. As a matter of fact, his partner was sent on to a concentration camp, I believe, whereas my father was fortunate enough to have been taken to the local jail. Knowing most of the people there at the police station because he had to visit his clients in jail sometimes, they were not too hard on him. He was confined, but he was not harassed by anyone.

And as a matter of fact, a policeman one night called my mother. My mother had gone back to Rheydt in order to straighten up the house and perhaps put it up for sale and see what she could do to find out where my father was and possibly help him to be released. And the policeman did, indeed, call her one night, asked her to meet him in some dark alley, and that he had news from my father, and would she please bring some of his medication and some clean clothes and underwear for him also.

And so my mother, who was very brave, I think, to take a man's word for it that he's a policeman and to meet him in a dark alley somewhere, she took some money along for him. And she met him, and he did, indeed, tell her that my father was all right, that he was not being mistreated, and that he would let her know when he will be released. I think the

policeman got in touch with her several more times, and finally also called her when he was, indeed, being released from jail.

All the men who had been incarcerated as a result of Kristallnacht had to sign upon their release that they would leave Germany very quickly, as quickly as possible within a certain time limit, and that they would never tell what happened to them or what they saw.

This was especially directed to the men, who were put into concentration camps. And most of the men were taken to the camps. There was already Dachau, D-A-C-H-A-U. And there was, I believe, Buchenwald. That's spelled B-U-C-H-E-N-W-A-L-D. And I think there was also Sachsenhausen, And that's spelled S-A-C-H-S-E-N-H-A-U-S-E-N.

And some of the men were much mistreated. Some were even killed. And they, too, had to sign that they would never reveal what they had experienced or seen in these camps that would leave Germany at all possible speed.

Now it so happened that my parents had made friends with a Cuban couple who had gone to Cuba to visit, had come back to Germany. They were living in Bonn at the time because their children were going to university there. And while they were in Cuba, they found out that the Cuban government seemed to be issuing emigration permits for a price. And knowing that my parents were desperate to leave Germany, they bought these immigration permits and brought them back to my parents.

The real story is that the immigration official of the Cuban government at the time was a very enterprising man. His name was Mr. Gonzales, G-O-N-Z-A-L-E-S, and he decided he would print these immigration permits on official-looking stationery and sell them at any kind of price that he could get for them. And he was making a nice little pile of money that way.

The president of Cuba, who at the time was president Bru, B-R-U, heard about it and he wanted a share in the profits that Mr. Gonzales was cashing in. And Gonzales said no, he wasn't going to share with him. So as president, the man said, well, if you're not going to share, I'm going to declare these documents illegal because they really are. They haven't been issued by permission of the government. You're just printing them. And you don't want to share, I'm just going to say they're illegal, and that's that.

Well, my parents had gotten a set of these immigration permits. And luckily, the German government had announced that they were scheduling a ship to sale to Cuba that would be available for Jews to leave the country. The Germans made leaving difficult for Jews, and the American consulates also made emigration into the United States difficult for the Jews of Germany.

In 1937, when there was a new wave of requests for immigration into the United States, mostly by Central European Jews, the consulates decided to give out numbers like they do in the delicatessen store, first come, first serve, because there was such an onslaught on the German quota of immigration into the United States. United States has quotas of how many people can come into this country from the various countries of the world. So many from Germany, so many from Holland, so many from Poland, so many from wherever.

And at the time, the German quota allowed 25,000 people per year to come into the United States from Germany. There were 350,000 Jews, approximately, living in Germany at that time. And you can figure out how many years it would take for everybody to be able to get out if everybody would request to come into this country.

My parents, as soon as they heard about this number business, went to Stuttgart, S-T-U-T-T-G-A-R-T, which was the locale for the American consulate closest to us, to get their number. They had to be there in person and were fortunate enough to get what was considered at the time a fairly low number. The number was in the 14,000S.

By the time my mother could call her mother in Berlin-- my grandmother was living in Berlin at that time-- by that time, and until they could get to their consulate, which I think was right there in Berlin, their number that was issued to them was in the 76,000s. And unfortunately, it was later determined that number was also their death sentence because it never even came up at all anymore.

So that was the next step to be taken toward our immigration. My parents, for some time before Kristallnacht, had made inquiries here in the United States to see if they could find some relatives that would give us an affidavit. An affidavit was required for any immigrant to come in. And what it was was a guarantee that the immigrant would not be a burden to the state, that in case the immigrant couldn't find work, the guarantor, the issuer of the affidavit, would support that person so that there would not be a question of the immigrant becoming a welfare person.

The Depression was still on in '38 and '39, and the American government was very stringent about that. Besides that, we have found out from the Holocaust Museum in Washington that there is evidence that the consuls in the various European cities and countries were told not to make immigration so easy, to make things as difficult as possible because America was not too anxious to receive people without means. By the time, in 1939, that immigrants left Germany, they could not take any kind of finances out of Germany anymore. As a matter of fact, they were stripped of all their assets. Everything was confiscated. Bank accounts were confiscated, houses were confiscated, businesses were confiscated.

And by confiscated. I mean just that, taken away. A bunch of people would march into an office, into the offices or the headquarters of Jewish businesses and manufacturers and doctors and lawyers, and would say, your practice or your business is now being confiscated by the German government. And out you went. That was it. Your bank account was confiscated. If you didn't have some money stashed away somewhere, were out of luck. Your jewelry had to be turned in with the exception of a wedding ring, a wedding band. All silverware, all valuables, all precious metals and jewels had to be turned in, coins, except for one set of silverware per person to eat with.

The Jewish people were being stripped of their belongings by a government that sanctioned this highway robbery. Can you understand that? I can't understand it, and I never will. I will never understand that people can come into your home and bash it into pieces, that people can take you away because you are of a certain religion, put you in a jail.

Even though it's still happening, I still don't understand it. Who gives them the right? I don't understand it. I don't understand how the Holocaust could happen. I don't understand that the whole world could watch this and nobody did anything about it, or doesn't even believe today that it might have happened. I don't understand. I don't think any of us do.

But to go on, I just want to backtrack for a moment to the morning when we came downstairs after Kristallnacht on November 10. The way these hoodlums had gained entrance into our house was that they had sawed off young tree trunks in our garden and had rammed these tree trunks against our front door, which was a very sturdy, heavy oak door. And also, they had gained entrance through one of the first floor windows, which happens to be the room in which my grandmother would normally sleep. My grandmother had moved in with us after her oldest daughter had emigrated to Holland, and she was now living with us.

But at the time, luckily, she was visiting her other daughter, my aunt, in Berlin because the hoodlums who came through the windows there had stuck a knife into the top of the mattress in her bed and had just slashed from top to bottom the mattress and the coverlet. And if, God forbid, there had been a person sleeping in there, I don't think you need much imagination to know what would have happened. This was an example of what some people, with the permission of the government, were capable of doing.

Now it was very important for my parents to get out of Germany. And it seemed so lucky that they had gotten these immigration permits and that the ship had been scheduled that was sailing to Cuba and was going to take German Jewish refugees out of the country.

The ship's name was the steamship St. Louis, and it sailed under the German flag and the German company known as Hamburg America Passenger Line, or H-A-P-A-G, HAPAG. I'll be mentioning the name HAPAG from time to time.

The St. Louis was scheduled to sail on May 13, 1939. I was still in Bonn, and my parents were busy finalizing the emigration. I want you to know, though, that until they had found a guarantor, and the guarantor happened to be not even blood family related, but related by marriage, and the day after Kristallnacht the affidavit had arrived, even though, up to that point, they had felt that my father was too old to make the emigration trip, that as a lawyer, he would not be

able to practice law in this country. He didn't know the language too well, and of course, would have to study all over again. And at that time, my father was already in his late 50s. He wasn't in the best of health.

But nevertheless, the day after Kristallnacht, the affidavits arrived per whatever, air mail, or per wire. And so we had the prerequisites of leaving Germany. We had the affidavit. We had a quota number. And my father wanted to wait for that quota number to come up somewhere else out of Germany. He wanted out. He had to get out. And we had the prerequisites, and also, fortunately, still enough money left to buy tickets first class on the St. Louis.

And we were getting ready for the trip. I was still in Bonn, and my parents sold the house, and they managed to supervise the packing of the furniture. These transports of furnitures were called lifts. And one lift went to New York because that was our intended goal, eventually. And one lift with new furniture for the tropics went to Havana, Cuba, and was shipped out.

Various documents had to be signed yet by my father, one document saying that he owes no taxes, and that financially, his slate is clean. He's done what he's supposed to do and turned in what he's supposed to turn in, and so on. I happen to have those documents, and that's how I know about them. And surely my parents must have been very harried about all the preparations for emigration.

I came back to Rheydt just a few days before we were leaving in order to say goodbye to those friends of mine who were still there. Lots of them had already left with their families, were fortunate enough to have emigrated out of Germany to other countries as far away as South America, the United States, perhaps closer by, to France or Holland or Great Britain.

But there were still quite a few left, and I made the rounds to say goodbye to my friends. And one of the people that I visited were the two children of our teacher, our teacher Mr. Heymann, H-E-Y-M-A-N-N. Their name were Edith and Walter. And while I was visiting there, we played some games, and we were playing with a deck of cards. And Walter showed me how to shuffle the cards like they do in the casinos. And that's really where I learned how to shuffle the cards that way.

And to this day, I remember what he said while he was doing that. And every time I shuffle the cards, I think of that. He said to me, you know, Hitler said that by 1942, there will not be any Jews alive in Germany anymore. That was a very frightening sentence, and I've never forgotten it, and I always think of it. I always think of those two young people that I visited to say goodbye to for the very last time.

What happened to them and to their father and mother I've already told you. They stayed behind because the father did not want to leave his flock, and they were all sent to Poland, I think to Riga, to a ghetto, and from there to extermination. It's a very sad thing, and sad memories among many sad memories in my life.

Our departure took us first to Berlin to say goodbye to my grandmother and my aunt and uncle and cousin. My aunt, my mother's sister, was a doctor, and of course, she too had lost her practice. My uncle was a professional concert pianist. My grandmother was going to stay there with them in Berlin. And my cousin Gunter, G-U-N-T-E-R, was one of my favorite cousins. He was a year younger than I, a blue-eyed, freckle-faced blonde little boy, cute as a button and full of humor. He often could speak the dialect of Berlin and made jokes in that dialect. And he made