

*Tape three, side one:*

EA: How do you think, Sylvia, your parenting has been affected through your experience, in retrospect?

SS: Well, as I said before, I think I was over cautious. I lived in fear of losing her. It seems I'm consciously, everyone I've loved, I've lost. Of course I, my husband I haven't lost, thank God.

EA: Are you overprotective of him too? Does he have to call when...

SS: No.

EA: He's going to be late?

SS: He does it anyway but that's his way. So I've never had that with him. If he doesn't call I worry. I tend to be a worrier about people I love. I can't help it. And, perhaps I'm not so unusual in that. We all worry about the people we love. It makes sense. But I think since my husband was an adult when I met him, there wasn't that feeling of protection that you feel for a newborn child. And from then on there was always this fear. I was always afraid of something happening to her, or, that would cause me to lose her.

EA: But she went to school and she went through school all right?

SS: Yes. And she went to college and she...

EA: Did she go to college in New York?

SS: She went to college in, she went away to college, in New York, but away from home, for one term.

EA: And how did mommy feel about that?

SS: Not too good, and of course daughter felt even worse. She ended up coming back, but this may not be, I think she had difficulties at school. I'm not sure whether they had to do with her being away from home. But she did come home after the first semester and went to school locally. And she had difficulty leaving home.

EA: Hmm. Do you think that was for her own reason or maybe because of you?

SS: No, I think that may have been because of me. I think that possibly I made her fearful, unknowingly, and not meaning to, but I believe I did.

EA: So, you think she came home again...

SS: In the end...

EA: For your sake rather than for her sake?

SS: No, not for my, no, no, not for my, in fact she quite resented that, I think she, that she was not able to stand on her own two feet away from home. And she probably felt it was my fault, somewhere. And she's probably right. If that's what she felt I'm sure it...

EA: Have you talked about it?

SS: Some. Not a great deal. There was a time when it was not so easy for us to talk. Now it's, I don't have so much of a problem. It seems to me though that we had to help her to leave home. She wanted very much to be on her own when she got a job and she was

earning money. She wanted her own apartment but was fearful. And we sort of helped her out of the nest. And...

EA: When you say, "We," you and your husband?

SS: Yes. But once it was accomplished, she loved it and was happy, and I think she's slept at home twice since. So...

EA: So you have adjusted to the empty nest routine as it were?

SS: Oh yes. Yes. And it wasn't easy, but I did adjust to it. She made it easy for us, because she welcomed us in her apartment, and we were there quite often and I saw her regularly. So it was really not as if she were far away.

EA: Oh, she got an apartment in New York.

SS: She, in New York. And she wanted me to go with her to choose furniture.

EA: Oh good.

SS: And...

EA: So you...

SS: We had fun together, you know?

EA: Great. What did she study?

SS: Anthropology.

EA: Huh!

SS: She was interested in Anthropology.

EA: And is she working in that field?

SS: No, she's in the advertising field. Apparently there is no job for her in the field. She was told when she studied it but she still wanted to do it, so she did. But then she got a job in the advertising field, and did very well, and decided she'd better get an MBA, which she did.

EA: Great!

SS: And now she's doing exceedingly well. She's got a marvelous job.

EA: Great!

SS: And I'm very...

EA: Do you see her often?

SS: Extremely proud of her. Yes, we have lunch, when we were both working in the city, when I was still working, we had lunch on a weekly basis. And now since I stopped working it's not quite as often but we talk on the phone and we do see each other. I expect to see her this week.

EA: Oh good.

SS: But...

EA: Is there something perhaps you find difficult to talk about directly and might like to give her a message with this? There are areas sometimes that face to face...

SS: I don't know, I...

EA: A message that you would like to give her on her way?

SS: No, I think what I really wanted to give her is this tape. I very, very much wanted to give her that, especially since she, when I told her I was going to do this she expressed such interest, which really made me feel so good, that she cared. Because I thought perhaps she just wanted to divorce herself from it. And just knowing that she was anxious to have this means a great deal to me.

EA: That's great.

SS: And so this is what I want her to have.

EA: And, you say she's married? How long has she been married?

SS: It's almost two years, nearly two years.

EA: Oh great. So, you're really living, leaving a legacy behind. And this is of course going to the archives as well. And this is great...

SS: Yes, I feel...

EA: That you've been able to talk about it.

SS: I feel very good about this. I feel I, it needed doing. I've wanted to do it for so long and didn't know how to go about it, obviously. Well, not obviously. But I know it would have been impossible for me to do it myself. And...

EA: It is, you needed somebody...

SS: And I'm very grateful to you.

EA: Tell me something, Sylvia, where is home?

SS: Where is home? Oh, home is where the heart is. Isn't it?

EA: And your heart is?

SS: My heart is with my family, with my, my own family, with my husband and with my child, and with my now my children. I have two children now. I have a son-in-law.

EA: That's wonderful! You've gained a son.

SS: I've gained a son, yes.

EA: Great.

SS: I feel that way.

EA: He's American?

SS: Yes.

EA: American born?

SS: Yes.

EA: What about his parents?

SS: His parents I believe are Amer--yes, his parents are American born. I'm not sure about his grandparents. I suspect they're not but I'm not sure.

EA: Did he have grandparents that he knew?

SS: Yes, he did.

EA: And so he was enriched by that experience.

SS: Oh yes, yes.

EA: Which of course your daughter missed out on.

SS: Unfortunately. Well, she had one set of grandparents--my husband's parents.

EA: And does he have brothers and sisters?

SS: He has a brother.

EA: Is there a close family relationship there?

SS: I think so. I think so.

EA: That's good. And you were included in that?

SS: Oh yes! Yes.

EA: Do you feel that you've gained a family, not only a son but also...

SS: I think so. I'm very fond of him. And I'm fond of his parents. They're very nice people. I like them very much.

EA: That's great.

SS: Yes.

EA: I wonder if they know your story. Have they ever asked?

SS: No, we don't see that much of them. They...

EA: They live in New York also?

SS: No, they live in New Jersey.

EA: Oh.

SS: And while we see them, which I imagine they must know something about my background, because at the, dur--in any case during the wedding ceremony the rabbi referred to it. So they must have told him something about...

EA: Your background.

SS: The background, right.

EA: They got married in the synagogue also?

SS: No. They got married in a hotel, but under a *chupah* in a...

EA: Oh, yes. Are they traditional in any way?

SS: My daughter keeps a kosher home.

EA: Does she really?

SS: Yes. Yes. Her husband requested it. They are not religious. They are traditionalists, I think.

EA: Right.

SS: I think. And I'm very pleased. My daughter lights sabbath candles.

EA: Oh that's wonderful.

SS: It gives me great pleasure to know that.

EA: I'm sure.

SS: Her, yes.

EA: I'm sure.

SS: Yes.

EA: So, has she drawn you back a little more towards Judaism?

SS: No. I feel very Jewish. I mean, I never felt otherwise. It's just that I feel Jewish in a traditional way also, not in a religious, particularly in a religious way.

EA: During their growing up did you join a temple?

SS: No.

EA: You did not give her...

SS: No.

EA: Any kind of religious...

SS: No really, no.

EA: Schooling?

SS: No, no, I did not. No. I felt very estranged, because of my background.

EA: You mentioned that. But it makes your heart feel good that your daughter...

SS: Yes.

EA: Is traditionally Jewish.

SS: It does, yes. And I wish now that I had given her more. But it's too late.

EA: It's never too late.

SS: Well...

EA: Obviously she is...

SS: She is now...

EA: Being drawn into it...

SS: She is drawn into it...

EA: And hopefully there will be grandchildren.

SS: Yes. Yes.

EA: And, the traditions...

SS: I wish it had come from me. But it, since it didn't, I'm glad it came from her husband.

EA: Wonderful.

SS: Yes, I'm very pleased. It's, it means a lot to me. And I'm very grateful to him for this.

EA: Do you know we were, we met at the *Kinder* transport 50th reunion in London this June...

SS: Yes. Yes.

EA: And the main, there were two main themes at the conference. One of them is, "What is Our Identity?" Do you remember...

SS: Yes. [unclear]...

EA: I'm sure you attended that work--well, it wasn't a workshop. It was the address. And, how would you describe your identity?

SS: I would have difficulty with that, I'm afraid.

EA: Yes.

SS: It seems that my life has been directed toward doing, early in life, doing what is expedient, in terms of causing the least pain to myself.

EA: For survival's sake.

SS: For survival purposes. And beyond that, I really haven't given it too much thought. I don't think I have a lot of problem with identity. I'm, I have no conscious problems with identity.

EA: You mentioned that, well, for one thing, you have survived.

SS: Yes.

EA: And, by the looks of you, thank God, very, very well.

SS: I've done it fairly well, yes.

EA: You have a Jewish identity.

SS: Certainly a traditional one, yes.

EA: Jewish in whatever way we wish to interpret that.

SS: Exactly.

EA: And I think you have a feeling of belonging to the Jewish community at large, as being a Jew.

SS: Oh yes! Oh yes!

EA: So, you are a Jew.

SS: I certainly am very Jewish. I feel very Jewish.

EA: And, right. So that is your identity.

SS: Yes.

EA: I think that's a very, very...

SS: Oh yes, yes.

EA: Good identity. You're a mother. You're a wife.

SS: A wife. Yes. I don't have any problem really with that. You know, I'm an individual.

EA: That's it.

SS: But [unclear]...

EA: Can you accept that you now deserve to live, just for being Sylvia Schneider?

SS: Absolutely.

EA: Good.

SS: Oh yes. Absolutely.

EA: Can you, do you think you deserve...

SS: I do now. Yes, there was a time when I felt I was the one that should not have survived, that the others were better than I was and they should have survived. I think they, I still think they should have survived. Unfortunately, they didn't, and I did. I consider that an accident of fate, and that's all it is.

EA: But you deserve to live.

SS: Certainly! Certainly!

EA: Say it.

SS: I deserve to live as long as I can.

EA: That's right, to, deserve to live well.  
SS: To live as well as I can, yes, certainly, certainly.  
EA: Do you have difficulty treating yourself to things that you...  
SS: No, not any more.  
EA: Oh, that's good.  
SS: No, no longer do I give away things that are given to me because they're too good for me. No more. I now enjoy things that are given to me. I enjoy buying things for myself when I can. And, I like myself, whether or not...  
EA: That's great! My word, you've come a long way, baby!  
SS: Yes.  
EA: [laughs] You certainly have, and I wish you so well.  
SS: Yes. Thank you.  
EA: I'm delighted that...  
SS: Thank you for helping me with this. You've made it...  
EA: We've been, had a chance, I'm delighted that we met...  
SS: You made it possible for me.  
EA: In London...  
SS: So am I.  
EA: To make this possible.  
SS: Yes. Let me give you a hug, Eva.  
EA: All right.  
SS: O.K.  
EA: This is August the 8th, in Philadelphia, and Sylvia Schneider and Eva Abraham are sitting together having chatted, and I was delighted...  
SS: So was I.  
EA: To have the opportunity.  
SS: Yes, it's been wonderful for me.  
EA: Thank you, Sylvia.