

Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 1

SWB: Tell me where you were at the time of liberation and what liberation was like, what you remember.

BUD BRODECKI: We were in Terezienstadt, and we were woken up somewhere in the middle of the night, by people screaming you know the, those Czechoslovakia. We didn't understand everything they said, but they were saying like, long live our president, I don't know, which banish[?] or something and it was a lot of going on you know. So we all went to the windows, but it was dark you couldn't see much. But the day break was still trains coming through with prisoners, now the communication wasn't like nowadays, you hear everything you see everything. There's a lot of people didn't know that the war came to a, to a end, and their were freight trains coming through with German guards standing on the, in on the steps, and we hollered to the prisoners, the war is over, you're free, but they were so numb that there was not, not even a reaction from those people. And eventually some people start coming in, men with their colored arm bands, you have it around your arm you know, it was saying police or something, they just came up overnight, and they were taking off the German guards out of the trains and taking their weapons away. And I think they became prisoners, and then they were marching through. But that, for a while, that just didn't make any difference, because we still didn't have any food, people were kept dying from

dysentery, from sicknesses, there was, I wouldn't, you didn't know if you have to feel joy or what, you were just more or less so dehumanized that some people were happy, some people were just staring, I mean there was no, no-no feeling like you get hijacked or something and so, and then you get liberate [laughs] after six years, there was, you didn't know what happened to your family or, why you're here

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Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 2

and they had to die, I mean there was different mixed feelings at the time.

SWB: Was it disorganized, was it, right after the liberation, what was it like. Did anyone come and take care of you?

BUD BRODECKI: Ther-there was some if I can't remember, some people from Red Cross and-and uh, th- see where liberated by the Russians. So, little-by-little people were coming, but uh there was a lot of depatriation. You know like they ask you if you're from Russia, they let you go back to Russia other countries, uh, you know it can go on now 50 years

back, it's hard coming to all the details really unless you ask me specific questions.

SWB: Do you remember getting toothbrushes, do you remember getting...

BUD BRODECKI: No, we-we don- we didn't get that. Uh, I think we were getting some food and with the initially we were in prison clothes you know with stripes and most of us were dirty and some people got things crawling around you know. So we were taken to the uh-uh-uh-uh they call it bath houses, you know in ancient time[?] they had big place where people had you know like steam baths and all that of course that was for, private people but at that time they will confiscate those big places, and they were running the prisoners in and they- and they told us to disrobe, take all your clothes off and you had to walk through something like, now if you hear that everybody might have a different story, because there was not standard like-like you go to McDonald and here or and somewhere else, you know everything was

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Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 3

different. So we were walking through something, you know they had kerosene, which you, you walking through that. Then they totally examined you if you got uh I really don't even have the American name for it, there's something like you were loused there some of them go in your skin, so they were examining all over if you had those things and uh. And they were disinfecting you and then you had to take a- a shower. After the shower, well that was the interesting thing. After the shower, you, so, I don't know where they get all the clothes and all, nobody got the right size but you had, they were supplying clothes from a laundry or something. So they ran us like in a room about the size of this or bigger, 100 at a time and they told us to go against the wall you know. All of a sudden we see screams, they were running women and nude on the other side of the room. But it wasn't like today, people were not interested in, everybody was looking like a skeleton. Only thing that would happen, some little boy recognize some relative you know, I don't know sister, mother, neighbor. He got screaming so everybody turned around and see if he can see somebody he knows. If you did, you say when, when did they take you out to the, did you know what happened to my mother, to my father, if my house is there. All of a sudden. Everybody got mixed up and nobody was wearing clothes but people were trying looking up relatives, those nurses came up, said oh my God, you better get back in your places. Then they were giving us some soup I remember and some clothes. They didn't care what size you wear and they

s- handed out, it looked like the stooges you know, and uh, and uh they send us some different uh places you know, temporarily, like uh, like we soldiers were staying you know cousins[?] or whatever you call it. And everybody, they were registering who is from where, who wants to go home. I

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Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 4

registered I am going to Russia, you know. And I-I-I- somebody called me, I-I left for a minute I came back and a truck took off without me so. There was some heartbreaking, I didn't know where I was going, I was so... You come out from something naked without no belongings and you really don't, it doesn't matter where you go you have no family, no place. We didn't really want to go back to Poland we heard some bad stories about Poland what was going on in there.

SWB: So tell me how you ended up coming to Lansdberg.

BUD BRODECKI: Well there was also something like, we decide to go at the time to Palestine which is now Israel, but it wasn't legal because the English intelligence wouldn't let us do it. So we were getting false papers, you know. Like

we are Greeks or Italians which justified the directions we were going you see. And we were in Austria on a train, I forget at the time we were Greeks or Italians or something. And we ran out of food and I don't know, people were trying to get some food somehow, the sickest came out of where we were going, for some we got surrounded by English jeeps and some American soldiers and they turned the train around and we went to Landsberg which we never been over there. You know in Landsberg where Hitler wrote Mein Kampf. His book. And uh, my son, where my wife I mentioned that my son right there. And uh, he was one of the first babies born and we were uh one of the first people got married after the war. We had like 300 guests at the wedding, I didn't know 90 percent of them, you just, celebration, you know, after the war, people getting married, so, we didn't have any food, everybody brought apples and food and bread and we even have a band playing which didn't sound too good, ... they just were playing and uh... I think I can drift away from your

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Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 5

question, you should get me back on track.

SWB: Yeah, I'm gonna get you back on track but we're just about to run out of film, and we need to put a fresh roll up.

[CAMERA RELOAD]

[CR#2]

SWB: Tell me about life in Landsberg, what it was like.

BUD BRODECKI: Well we were put in rooms that was ex military camp, in Landsberg. That's one thing it was, there was every sign of it, you know, like there was military establishment, so we put, we put in our rooms and bunk beds you know and uh so you start up police department an employment office, everything was kind of temporarily, and a hospital, of course was a hospital there because it was a military establishment previous to when we arrived. And a lot of people didn't work and a lot of people worked, of course, the pay wasn't much, there was like a, you were more on the rations they were giving out food or clothes and things like that. And uh I was trying to get, you know, to work or do something. I went to an employment office. It so happened that the chief of police and the chief of the employment office had the same name. So I went right in the police station, some of my friends have been in camp who were there, come out join us, and I say I never want to be a police officer, because you know from the war the police you know that... Well he says that's not like it was before the

war, we just watch warehouses and stuff like that he says,
you get a sewage and you can eat in the cantina, you get a

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Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 6

carton cigarettes every week and all those goodies. So they
talked me into it and that's where I happened to be for the
next four, four and a half years.

SWB: When you were first at Landsberg, were the conditions
good or...

BUD BRODECKI: Well, we can compare the conditions before we
got there, s- comparing to that was fine, I mean, like if we
go now it would be terrible but, you know, uh it's just you
were at least free to a point, a lot of times they wouldn't
let us out of the camp but I was different. Some, after the
camp all overflowed they got some places outside the camp
like on the next street so I managed to move in and out of
the house we _____ everybody got a room in
there you know, and so of course it was not like being in
the concentration camp. You could go in the city and some
people were tailors and some people got entrepreneurs they

were selling stuff and you know and like a little town developed. And some people went traveling. And finally we had a little dance hall and of course there was a hospital and you know you kind of you were kind of getting kind of into a better future [laughs]

SWB: So tell me how it happened that you met your wife, tell me the story of that evening.

BUD BRODECKI: Well uh my wife arrived with a girlfriend of hers, both of them were like between sixteen and seventeen, and they went to a, there was a dance, and the band was playing and the one of the guys in the orchestra was a Greek, and he just tried to follow them home. When they got home he kind of forced them _____ in their room. And-and he s- I don't know what he was saying but he was saying to my

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Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 7

wife like you're gonna have to marry me tonight whatever it was he put a big knife on the table. The neighbors heard some screams because there was tin walls so they called police, I was one of the police officers came to the scene you know. So we arrested them, and we were men and they

were right cute so, [laughs] we came next day see how they were doing and that's the way it started you know and uh. Of course later on I got attacked by this Greek and several others were trying to beat me off and uh well that's a, we were all kind of young people and...

SWB: Tell me about dating your wife, what kinds of things did you do after that.

BUD BRODECKI: Well we, we only knew each other for three months till we got married so, dating, we went to _____ together we walked and uh you know hugged and things like that, just like everybody else is doing. We didn't have cars we just walk you know.

SWB: Did you write her a poem?

BUD BRODECKI: Yes.

SWB: Do you remember it?

BUD BRODECKI: Well they was in Polish, she got it written down somewhere I couldn't translate it you know we didn't have, it was her birthday so I just wrote it I got no money for gifts I'll write you a poem and tell her what I thought of her and things like that and she saved it somewhere.

SWB: What did you think of her?

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Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 8

BUD BRODECKI: Well you can, uh you know, that was _____
and I told her she got beautiful teeth and eyes and this and
all that. [laughs] mess and somehow must appeal to her
because...

SWB: And then tell me how you decided to get married.

BUD BRODECKI: I went decide to get married uh it's hard to
tell you know some that would do something I mean you forgot
where now we-we were like in lot[?] there was no any
relatives anybody around I mean just me and her and she and
me and there was only thing to do was to get married. And.

SWB: Tell me about the wedding.

BUD BRODECKI: Well the wedding uh the word got around that
we were getting married and you know nobody had any money
and anything and there was a lot of people which do a black
market and stuff like that. There were no weddings though
there was one place two stories you know like a, over there

was a cafeteria you know just like a couple ballrooms whatever we made it into and, we decide to get married in that building and people start calling from all over ____ ____ was like 300 or more people and people brought apples and food and like I mentioned before there was a bunch of guys brought instruments and they were playing and didn't harmonize too good but they were playing for me a tunes and everybody had a good time. We had a picture [laughs] ...

SWB: Did you have a rabbi?

BUD BRODECKI: Yeah.

Working transcript: not spell checked or verified for accuracy.

Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 9

SWB: Tell me how did you find a rabbi.

BUD BRODECKI: Who knows, he show up from somewhere, I tell you it's hard to come to details. We even have, we met my wife cousin and we got the wedding rings and stuff like that. Everything we not like it's supposed to be and then uh we were actually I missed something, before the wedding

in January, in December we went to visit a friend in a different city, a friend I been in the war with. And he was real small quarters so he says you two gonna sleep on the couch and I say hey, we're not married or anything, well he says, I put a straw between you and we go to the city hall you get married tomorrow. And a funny thing happened at night, somebody knock on the door, there was American military police. They were looking for G.I.'s sleeping off in different places with girls, so I identify myself I'm not the American G.I. you know, and I say we get married tomorrow, he says I believe you, you know. So next day went to city hall, so they say my wife is not of age, somebody has to adopt her. So the couple we were with they were older than us so they adopt my wife to give her permission to get married. And we had to wait a few days because like today when they, people get married they say, I forget the exact words but they say if anybody against it, speak up now or stuff like that, over there they put advertisement on the board if anybody knows something that we shouldn't get married to come forward and stuff like that, of course nobody knew us, so we got this uh marriage license over there it was another city it was Landswood Germany where my friend was. When I came back to Landsberg oh the religious people say that's not right we can't recognize, you got to get married in a religious way. So then when I took place

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Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 10

where I tells you before that religious wedding. And the funny part of it was like four and a half years later we had a boy two years old and we were going to United States and they didn't recognize either marriage. We had to get married by the military personnel to make it legal. So you know, here is a, over there was a little different, you know, if you had a baby you should get married, so this guy look you're not married and you got a two year old son you know it was terrible. Today it's a different world we're living in. So we got married three times actually.

SWB: We just ran out, we have to put up one more roll.

[CAMERA RELOAD]

[CR#3]

SWB: Tell me how your wife looked that day that you got married in Landsberg, with the rabbi. Did she manage to come up with a wedding dress and a veil?

BUD BRODECKI: Uh, you got a picture here, I think she was dressed all right, not as you know _____ stuff like you go here to you know in the shops and they dress you up.

[laughs] And they tell you they got dresses for 500 dollars to 10,000, I mean she was dressed okay. We even had that uh, what do you call it in English, _____ with the

SWB: Oh yeah, the thing over the wedding... the hoopa[?]

BUD BRODECKI: The hoopa[?], yeah. And uh...

SWB: Tell me about that, just describe to me what you did

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Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 11

have that day...

BUD BRODECKI: Oh what we had, what part would you like to know, the hoopa[?]

SWB: Just describe to me the day and the things you had and then the people who came

BUD BRODECKI: Well there was a, I don't think we sent any invitations out the word got around, matter of fact I forgot something, another people came around they said they want to

get married if they can join us. They actually live in Canada so we said why not [laughs] so they got included in the wedding ceremony and they got married too. But we originate the whole thing, and uh, they was real nice because people show up from all over, you know, like there was a camp, and there was like the only only thing going on that night is a wedding, and everybody came in, th- it was like, here they call it a covered dish, we didn't cook, everybody brought some food and fruit and people bottles whiskey and drinks and all was, unsolicited, that was real like a community project and then the music _____
_____ would play on a trumpet a little bit off tune [laughs] but it, we had a good time really. It's a, it was a event to remember.

SWB: Um, tell me about the visit of David Ben-Gurion. Do you remember that?

BUD BRODECKI: Yeah, Ben-Gurion, the word got around that Ben-Gurion is showing up in Landsberg where we were in the camp, so we want to give him the proper welcome, the welcome I said a few policemen he got some motorcycles and bicycles

Working transcript: not spell checked or verified for accuracy.

Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 12

and it was a funny parade, we went and met him at the, wherever he arrived, and we were riding like we were a couple guys who were riding on a motorcycle backwards and the Germans used to big parades they were looking and I think they were comical but they didn't laugh. When he came in the podium was uh uh, you know like you got a horse and wagon, we just got a wagon, he got up on that and he spoke you know and his hair was flying in the air he _____ one too clear and goes to, he spoke I forgot what he was saying and that was a, everybody came to listen, and so I remember it.

SWB: What did it mean, was it very important to how everyone felt?

BUD BRODECKI: Well it was important because a lot of us didn't really have a desire to go back from the countries we come from because it was a lot of anti-Semitism, it was bad memories. So everybody was kind of looking toward Palestine which was Israel. And a lot of people uh uh took off illegally, mostly immigrants at the time going to Israel were illegal, you might have maybe exodus, some of my friends were on it. I was so sure I made a second attempt to leave. But my wife was expecting a baby, and we went to Munich and we had to also play Greeks or Italians because that's the only people were allowed to go in that direction

you see so they give a false documents to justify where you're going you know we should keep a march _____. And due to the conditions at the time, nothing ever went off on schedule, like I went over there and they postponed it so I, Munich wasn't too far from Landsberg so I came back, so finally my neighbors attacked me, he said enough single boys you're gonna leave your wife here, pregnant wife and you're

Working transcript: not spell checked or verified for accuracy.

Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 13

gonna wander off somewhere, you can go together later. So, I was left behind my friends went to Israel. Matter of fact, we visit Israel in 78 and they made us a party the same group which I was going to live with toured Israel. So then I was left behind in Landsberg and to finish that story we went to Munich and we register everywhere to immigrate to Australia to Canada United States different places so we got a letter from Richmond that we were accepted in the Richmond community and that's how we came about [laughs] wind up in Richmond.

SWB: Was the camp decorated for Ben-Gurion?

BUD BRODECKI: I don't think so.

SWB: Do you remember Colonel Heymont, the commander?

BUD BRODECKI: Well, yes and no. What happened with Colonel Heymont, I wasn't aware of his existence, I think he was really short time in Landsberg, but what happened, you know what my son did last few years, he was the national campaign director for the Holocaust museum, and he met him. He even wrote a book, and that's where I find out about his existence because in those days,

SWB: You didn't know.

BUD BRODECKI: I didn't know, I had no idea.

SWB: Tell me again the story of when you were in the public baths after the liberation and when everyone sort of forgot they were naked and started looking for people who knew where their families were.

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Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 14

BUD BRODECKI: Well you know the uh, the demand was greater than the supply, so we had to wait for soup, wait for clothes, like we went to that process of getting washed and shaved or whatever and disinfected, and I think they was in groups of 100 they took us upstairs to a big room to wait till the supplies arrived to give us soup in the meantime. All of a sudden a couple of women I guess they were nurses or volunteers came and told us to, they were from Czechoslovakia, they were not ex-prisoners, and they told us to everybody turn their faces to the wall. We didn't know why, but we were used to take orders [laughs] so we turned to the wall. All of a sudden we heard voices and a bunch of women came in, of course most of them had their heads shaved and nobody was looking human in those days you know like you look at a man he got like a triangle just _____ going down to the camp, walking skeleton. And somehow somewhere some boy recognized someone, you know, from which town I couldn't tell you the detail. But then everybody start turning around and looking, if you, you see all of us were separated, from families, from sisters, from mothers, from brothers, so we didn't know what was going on, I didn't know what's on the other side of the wall during the war. All I knew is we were getting some, some places the Germans had big loudspeakers and they were playing military music and I noticing that they just sunk another American submarine somewhere in the Pacific or Atlantic. So, suddenly we all start turning around from curiosity looking for familiar faces. And some couples even recognize each other. Not

that they were related, or maybe they were neighbors and they were hugging, and nobody gave it even a thought of being naked, I mean there was, [laughs] you know today they would make a X-rated movie here. But there was nobody uh,

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Wentworth Films LIBERATION/DP PROJ. 2/10/95 Int. BUD BRODECKI
Page 15

there was absolutely, nakedness didn't have nothing to do with it. You were looking for familiar faces, you were trying to find out what happened to your relatives. And you know, after we were in DP camp, a lot of guys was playing tricks on the women, you know, we see a nice looking girl you come in and say, hi baby, oh I thought that was my sister you know [laughs] You know, making jokes like that. At that time it was absolutely serious. People... people have worms and sick and all kind of mess, there wasn't a pleasant picture at all.

SWB: I think we're just about out of film... Thank you.

BUD BRODECKI: I want to tell you one thing which is off record. When the Russians came to Treressenstadt, they were raping a lot of women, nobody talked about it, there was a

lot of rapes by soldiers. The liberators, okay, in case you didn't know about it.

SWB: No I've heard about it a lot.

BUD BRODECKI: Oh there was a lot of things happening, but oh, the embarrassing things people just don't talk about. And if you put it publicly the Russian embassy gonna make a protest...

[END]

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