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In this interview, Justina Kirvelaitytė, born in 1931 in Pilviškiai, describes a massacre of Jewish women and children she witnessed as a child in her hometown in August 1941. She lists several locals who participated in the execution and explains that they were generally cruel and uneducated people who were jealous of the Jews' wealth. She names the three **Štūrai** brothers, one of whom later murdered Jews in Paneriai, and names the local organizers of the massacre, noting that the chief of the village, **Ambrasas**, was one of them. She claims to have seen **Antanas Baltūsis**, a well known Lithuanian partisan, taking part in the execution. She gives names of people, **E. Liorytė** and **Kupčė**, who helped the Jews to hide. She also mentions **F. Kupčinskas**, who was taking part in the preparations and let a Jewish man named Kupčė escape on the way to the execution site. She references the executions of Jewish men of Pilviškiai, but admits that she hasn't heard much about it, except that men were made to dig their graves themselves and that a Dr. Dumbovskis, who refused, was hacked to death with a shovel. She talks about property looting and mentions that the only payment for the collaborators was the clothes of the Jews, who were made to undress before being massacred.

Box 1, Tape 1

[01:] 00:41:06 – [01:] 09:58:03  
00:00 – 10:31

The interviewee introduces herself as Justina Kirvelaitytė, born in 1931 in Pilviškiai; says that the executions of the Jews in Pilviškiai took place in mid-August 1941; recalls that on that day she was on her way to milk the cows at the **Lozoraitis'** farm and ran into a column of Jewish women, children and elderly people; states that she didn't know they were going to be executed; explains that the Jewish men had already been executed three or four days before that; adds that the men were taken to the site where the interview is taking place and ordered to dig graves for themselves and one big pit *[for the women and children]*; *[she motions to where the pit was located]*; states that nobody from the town saw the men being shot *[later she mentions that Lukošienė husband's brothers did]*; adds that the Jewish men themselves didn't know where they were being taken and that they thought they were going to work; describes how about a week before they were executed, the Jewish men were separated from their families and locked up in a barn; says that nobody heard the shots as the site is about two kilometers away from the town; explains that even on the day of the execution of the women and children, nobody knew that the men had already been killed; says that she had been herding their cows on the day that the men were executed nearby but that she did not hear a shot; indicates the site next to the Višakis River where the cattle-pond used to be and where the Jewish women and children were made to undress; says that they were beaten with sticks and driven naked to the river; recounts seeing **Jurgis Štūras [Štūra]** hit a woman with a child in her arms so hard that she fell and couldn't walk any further so she was thrown on a cart with the elderly in it; says that she and about ten

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others were watching the execution from the **Lozoraitis'** farm nearby when an armed Lithuanian man came over and warned them that if they continued watching, they would be executed as well so they moved inside; explains that she didn't know the man, since men from the surrounding villages were also participating in the execution; states that there was only one German who was behind the wheel in a car with a machine gun in it and who was wearing a German uniform [*later she states that Antanas Baltūsis was behind the wheel*]; remembers that **Kaminskas** and **Baltūsis** were also sitting in the same car; points out that the Lithuanians who participated in the executions were "people of low intellect," like shoemakers or people who would peel the skin off dead horses; says that she did not see any police or Lithuanian army uniforms and that the Lithuanian executioners were wearing dark civilian clothes, mostly suits; explains that all of them were arrested and sentenced for their participation in the execution after the war; notes that some of them received official calls from the chief of Pilviškiai district, **Ambrasas**; adds that she thinks he is still alive in the U.S. or Australia; remembers that there were only five Germans at the German headquarters and that Lithuanian collaborators brought in Jewish girls for them to "have fun"; specifically remembers that there were two sisters from Antanavas among them and that the Germans kept them alive after everybody else was executed and later let them free; states that her father helped them flee to Jankai village but was stopped on the way and the sisters were taken away to Vilkaviškis, where the executions had not yet taken place yet; mentions that **Lukošienė** and her sister also witnessed the execution; shows the site where the Jews were made to undress and retells what she witnessed [*the camera focuses on the site next to the river*]; says that as she came the next day to herd the cows, she found a red button with thirty Russian rubles sewn into it; states that at the site of the pit there was a small hill and that blood foam was seeping from underneath the ground [*the site of the pit is shown*]; recalls that **Lozoraitis** went to **Ambrasas** to complain and workers were sent to level the grave; indicates a place where she saw a child's arm lying on the ground [*the camera focuses on the site*].

[01:] 09:58:04 – [01:] 19:26:11  
10:32 – 20:23

She confirms that the execution took place on the land that belonged to **Lozoraitis** [*motions to a grave that is separate and has flowers growing on it*]; explains that **Kairiūkštis**, who worked at the dairy and was a Lithuanian, not a Jew, and **Dumbovskis** [**Dambovskis**], a Jewish doctor, were ordered to dig graves for themselves; states that **Dumbovskis** refused so he was hacked to death with a shovel; notes that the brothers of **Lukošienė's** husband witnessed it; mentions that her father told her that two men—one in a German uniform, another in civilian clothes—had come for him at the **Lozoraitis'** farm, but he managed to run away [*the camera is stopped, then resumes again; she shows where she sat and watched the execution; the camera moves in the direction she is pointing*]; remembers how she and her mother decided to walk home and as they passed they heard somebody shouting "faster, faster" in Lithuanian; recalls how the car lights illuminated the site of the execution and how they heard screaming and moaning; recounts again how the Jewish women and children were driven into the freezing river [*camera moves to the site next to the river; a discussion about technical issues may be heard in the background*]; describes how they undressed themselves and put their clothes into one pile and how they were driven from the river to the side of the pit; says that she and the other observers were told to leave after the execution had started but they continued watching through the kitchen window; [*camera moves to execution site; interviewee motions to where the car with the machine gun*

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*stood and where people, who were about to be executed, were made to wait*]; says she believes that there were 27 executioners, and that there are about a thousand Jews buried in this site, and another thousand in another site; confirms that there were around two thousand Jews in Pilviškiai before the war; states that five Jewish families had been deported to Siberia in 1940; recalls that a Jew named **Mejerkė**, for whom her father used to work as driver and who had returned from Siberia, came to her family asking about any relatives who survived; adds that he expressed regret that they were not all deported by the Russians; says that the Jews waiting to be executed could see clearly what was going on and speculates as to why they didn't try to escape; says that a Jew named **Fridmanas [Frydmanas]** came over to **Uleckienė** from Pilviškiai right after the execution of the Jewish men and informed her about it then asked if she could hide three Jewish women; states that **Uleckienė** hid them in the stables and later took two of them to Šakiai region, and one, **Egita Liorytė [E. Liorytė]** to a village near Pilviškiai; says that her own brother was guarding the bridge over the Šešupė River, and, upon recognizing **E. Liorytė**, let her through and she was taken in by a family of farmers in the village; adds that later **E. Liorytė** came back to Pilviškiai to work, then moved to Kaunas, then to Israel and finally to the U.S.

[01:] 19:26:12 – [01:] 29:12:25  
20:24 – 30:21

She claims that there were a lot of observers *[motions to where they were hiding]* but that now people are afraid to talk about it; says that the execution started around half-past four or five and ended at half-past seven or eight in the evening; states that later the executioners came back with carts full of clothes and that **Štūras'** whole barn was filled with clothes; adds that since she was friends with **Štūras'** daughter, she saw herself that his daughters wore Jewish clothes to school; comments that the other children recognized whose clothes they were wearing and pointed fingers at them; says she could not recognize the Jews at the execution site as they were walking with their heads down and she was watching from a distance; notes that the people who were in the carts were sitting, not lying down; names the executioners that she knew: **Juozas Vainulevičius**, a shoemaker who was their neighbor and was very cruel man who used to beat his wife for no reason; **Jurgis, Antanas, and Liudas Štūras** who were brothers; **Adomavičius**, a shoemaker; **Valentinas Kalinauskas**; and **Kaminskas**; also saw **Baltūsis**, although she didn't know him at the time; adds that her mother told her that **Baltūsis** was a former seminary student who was later kicked out and served in the Lithuanian army and was a "white stripper" after he came back, and later worked as a police chief; explains that none of the other executioners were "white strippers"; recounts that after the Germans came, the Jewish shops were left without owners and people went looting; states that she herself went looking for shoes but left with nothing *[laughs]*; says that the next day the "white strippers" went out to collect the items that people had taken from the shops; adds that her brother was also a "white stripper" and he also went to collect the items; describes how he and his partner first went to **Vangelevičius'** house where a German happened to be visiting and, not understanding who they were, shot her brother's partner; states that her brother then fled to a village *[laughs]* and didn't take part in the executions; explains that her brother was a real patriot and believed that the Germans would help Lithuania achieve independence; states that he later refused to be drafted into the Soviet army and was deported to Siberia; adds that even today he thinks that independence saved him from "everything"; states having heard that the day before the execution the Germans got the executioners drunk and locked them up in one of the Jewish houses; adds that only one managed

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to escape and tell the story; says that the executioners were not drunk on the day of the execution; recounts that **Jurgis Štūras** did not have a gun so he beat the Jews up with a stick; explains that the **Štūrai** brothers were very cruel people and that she and other children avoided their house; further adds that the brother's father's job was to peel skin off dead horses and that the brothers helped him out; speculates that their cruelty might have stemmed from this work experience.

[01:] 29:13:00 – [01:] 35:37:12  
30:22 – 37:15

She says that **Liudas Štūras** later was sent to participate in the Paneriai [**Ponary; Ponar**] killings; states that he took his wife with him and lived in a Jewish house and that later he went to participate in the executions in Belarus and then to Poland; says that he never came back from Poland but that his wife came back to Pilviškiai bearing treasures and looked for him after the war through the Red Cross but never found him; adds that the wife bragged about her husband's taking part in the Paneriai execution; says that **Jurgis Štūras**, after serving his sentence for participating in the execution, didn't come back to Pilviškiai but went to live in Gižai village; says that she was recently told by an acquaintance from Gižai that word had spread of his participation in the execution and that he fled to Kaliningrad; recounts that the day after the execution, when she came to herd the cows, she did not find any valuables; states that the executioners who had collected all the clothes of the Jews mocked the ones who refused to participate; says that the day after the execution the Germans threw a party for the executioners at a restaurant that belonged to a Jew named **Šenbergas [Šembergas]**; mentions that **Vainulevičius** and **Valentinas Kalinauskas** went there and when her mother asked them where they were going, they said "to the funeral"; explains that the Jews were made to stand on the brink of the pit; speculates that many fell into the pit alive, since the next day the ground was very uneven and it seemed like somebody had been moving underneath the ground; mentions that somebody had told her that one Jew, possibly named **Irškė**, managed to escape from the pit, *[the camera focuses on the site of the pit]*; states that she thinks that the executioners themselves filled in the pit; *[the camera focuses on the memorial stone]*; talks about her sister who worked at the school after the war and would take the students to the execution site every year; *[the interviewer presents the issues he wants to discuss further.]*

Box 1, Tape 2

[02:] 00:40:22 – [02:] 10:13:02  
00:00 - 10:37

She recounts that as the Jews were being taken to the execution, one mother, possibly named **Mejerkė**, pushed her two children, aged six or seven, to the side of the road and told them to go to a woman who used to work for them named **Pastarnokienė**; says that **Pastarnokienė** refused to let the children in as she was afraid; adds that people had been warned that they would also be executed if they were found hiding Jews; says that there were flyers which threatened the execution of the whole town if one German was killed but that she didn't see the flyers herself;

recounts that the Jews had to wear yellow stars and walk in the middle of the road; states that she saw Jewish women sitting in the square and praying on the morning of the execution; says that the Jews were not allowed to leave their houses but that people brought them water and bread; says that she didn't bring food herself but a **Kalinauskas** did as his mother used to work for the Jews; explains that the town was mostly populated by Jews before the war; states that the Lithuanian quarter was called the "negro" quarter, referring to their poverty; adds that the Lithuanians had big families and mostly worked for the Jews; states that even the executioners were "raised on the crumbs left over by the Jews"; remembers how her father would bring matzos and clothes; mentions an article from a 1907 newspaper about a theatre performance that was put together by Lithuanian and Jewish youth criticizing the fact that after the performance Lithuanian girls danced with Jewish men; says that the Jews were good people and let her family buy on credit; mentions **Rybokas [Rybakas]** from whom her family bought food saying that he would give discounts to worse-off families like hers; goes on to talk about the anti-Jewish prejudices and recalls that one man, who had been doing repair work at the Jewish school, told everybody that there were coffins in the basement; remembers that there were rumors about a Jewish tradition to cook matzos in Christian blood—the allegation was that they would abduct Christian children, wrap them in a white sheet, put them in a tub with nails in it, and roll them around until all their blood had soaked into the sheets; mentions that she also once ran away in horror from a Jewish woman, who just wanted to give her a roll; concludes that anti-Jewish propaganda prevailed in her childhood years.

[02:] 10:13:03 – [02:] 19:52:03  
10:38 – 20:40

She points out that the Christian Democrat newspaper urged Lithuanians not to buy from Jewish shops; explains that the Lithuanian and Jewish schools were separate but next to each other and that the children played together and that they had fights too; states that after the Germans came a German school was put in place of the Jewish one; says that many Germans who used to live in Suvalkija [*a region of Lithuania that had been made part of Germany in 1940*] returned with the army; says that the Germans didn't come back to their old homes but took the Jewish houses instead; says that her mother had told her about a priest, maybe named **Pėstininkas**, who had spoken out against the killings and later faced problems because of it; names the locals who took part in the execution again; mentions that **Kaminskas'** first name was **Juozas**; when asked why she thinks they participated in killings, she responds that they were people of "low intellect" who had no education; speculates that they were envious of Jewish money as most of their parents had worked for the Jews; adds that maybe the Germans promised them something; claims that only one person, **Antanas Baltūsis**, came from a well-off family; adds that he studied at gymnasium and then served in the Lithuanian army until 1938, and worked as a teacher later; reiterates that she had not known him herself; claims that he was behind the wheel of the car with the machine gun on it and speculates that he was the one who was shooting too, since he had served in the army and knew how to operate a machine gun; says that she heard that later he joined the SS and was taken to Oswiecim (Auschwitz); explains again where the machine gun stood, saying that the shooting took place from the car; remembers hearing single shots in addition to the machine gun series and speculates that somebody just wanted "to have fun".

[02:] 19:52:04 – [02:] 29:16:05

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20:41 – 30:28

She recalls again that the executioners, after they had taken all the clothes of the Jews, made fun of a man who had refused to participate in the killings; says that the man was **Stelnokas**, the father of her friend, **Regina Stelnokaitė**; goes on to talk about the execution, saying that she was sitting 500 or more meters away from the site; says that the machine gun stood about 30 meters away from the victims and that the Jews were ordered to stand on the brink of the pit; says she didn't see if the executioners were shooting into the pits later; adds that one of the executioners, **Vainulevičius**, lived next door to her family and that he was terrified of the Russians and would be covered in sweat every time a Russian soldier passed by; says that during the German occupation he made a business of turning gravestones from the Jewish cemetery into grindstones and selling them to farmers; says she thinks he made good money off it; explains that after the war he was arrested for his participation in the execution; further describes his cruelty, saying that he beat up his own infant children; remembers his wife **Uršulė** wearing a new green dress to the party after the execution and speculates that it used to belong to a Jewish woman; talks about the son-in-law of her neighbor **Kazlovas**, named **Vytautas Laurinaitis [Laurynaitis]**, who wore an SS uniform and took part in the executions but now is trying to defend himself in court; names the main organizers of the execution: **Baltūsis**, **Laurinaitis**, **Ambrasas**, and **Lietuvninkas (?)**; says that **Baltūsis** had occupied a Jewish house in the Vilnius Street in Pilvelišķiai and lived there with his wife before he joined the partisans in the forest and left his wife, who soon married a Soviet collaborator.

[02:] 29:16:06 – [02:] 35:59:12  
30:29 – 37:29

She says that the Germans bombed the whole town as they retreated, including the house occupied by **Baltūsis** and other Jewish homes; adds that now only two Jewish houses are left in the whole town; states that the **Baltūsis** family lived about a kilometer and a half away from town in the direction of Vilkaviškis; mentions that his sister still lives in Kaunas and comes to visit the graves of their parents; recounts that **Baltūsis**' involvement in the killings was very cruel and that she had learned from former NKVD agents in Pilviškiai that his sister turned him in because she was appalled by his crimes; talks about a Jew, whose last name was **Kuškė**, who managed to escape the execution and was taken in by a family of farmers from Bagotosios village; says that **Feliksas Kupčinskas**—who led the Jews to the execution site but did not take part in the killings and was not sentenced since everyone, including her brother, defended him—told **Kuškė** to go under the bridge over the Šešupė River and hide; how **Kuškė** successfully reached Bagotosios village but that later, he was found dead in the forest; speculates that he might have been killed by **Jurkšas [Juška]**, who was a partisan together with **Baltūsis** and who had also taken part in the execution and might have been afraid **Kuškė** would give him in; recalls how the farmers who had taken **Kuškė** in buried him in accordance with [their understanding of] Jewish traditions, lowering him in his grave in a sitting position with his face looking to the East; goes on to talk about how **Baltūsis** is portrayed in the Independent Lithuania.

Box 1, Tape 3

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[03:] 00:40:19 – [03:] 10:20:22  
00:00 – 10:47

She talks about **Uleckienė**, who hid three Jewish women; says that two searches were conducted at his house by **Ramanauskas**, **Kaminskas** and a third person whose name she cannot remember; stresses that there were no Germans with them; recalls that at the time of the second search **Uleckienė** was lying in bed with typhus so they didn't dare to come in; explains again that two of the women were taken to Šakiai district, while **E. Liorytė**—who was 15 or 16 at that time—went to Parausiai village where she was sheltered by the **Voverauskai** family for two or three years, when she was transferred to Karkliniai village for security reasons and stayed with the **Basikiai** family until the end of the war; says that she was baptized, given the Lithuanian name **Danutė**, and had her hair dyed; says that there were more Jews who managed to escape, but she doesn't know their stories; expresses indignation at the claims that the **Baltūsis** family saved **E. Liorytė**; complains that members of a commission sent to the town to inquire about **Baltūsis** refused to listen to details about his participation in the execution; further says that a project for a statue of him had been drafted but that she sent letters of protest signed by a number of witnesses to members of Parliament and that the statue was not built in the end; adds that the only place where his name is inscribed is by the house where he died on a statue made of stones; mentions that next to it, the name **Balsys** is inscribed on the statue; says that **Balsys** had been a prison guard under German rule; explains that the initiative to put up a statue for **Baltūsis** came from the Genocide Center (Genocide and Resistance Research Center in Lithuania); that the resolution to raise the statue is still pending, although it has not been carried out.

[03:] 10:20:23 – [03:] 19:13:18  
10:48 – 20:02

She says that after the execution she did not see **Baltūsis** anymore; says that he stayed for while but left soon after and that the newspapers say he went to teach, but rumors are that he went to Poland to shoot Jews; when asked if he profited from the executions, she starts talking about **Liuba Golubovaitė [Galubovaitė]** from Opštūrai village, where **Baltūsis** and his men *[allegedly]* killed 33 or 34 people in 1947, saying that **Golubovaitė** worked for a German Lithuanian named **Špėderis**; goes on to say that **Špėderis** and **Baltūsis** were friends and came back together after the execution with a cart full of clothes; retells a story about a neighbor, who was asked to hide some Jews and given a lot of gold in exchange, but after hiding them for a short period turned them in; says the Jews were shot and the neighbor was arrested after the war; says that **Baltūsis** had come back for vacation from Poland, but she didn't see him; says that in Poland he worked at the Majdanek camp *[earlier she said he went to Auschwitz]*; adds that she read in some books that he was the deputy to the superintendent and did not participate in the executions directly; says that upon coming back to the district around Pilviškiai, **Baltūsis** took part in massacres *[in Opštrūtai]*; describes his torture methods; mentions **Brazys** from Opštrūtai, who was a Lithuanian partisan together with **Baltūsis** and took part in the post-war killings; insists that there were no real partisans in the vicinity of Pilviškiai—only “criminals and murderers.”

[03:] 19:13:19 – [03:] 28:31:22

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20:03 – 29:44

She claims that **Brazys** did not take part in the execution of the Jews but that he was the leader of the First Natangai Detachment, “Pirmasis Natangų Būrys,” which was comprised of boys from the Pilviškiai high school; recounts an incident in which **Brazys** killed an entire family because one member of it made fun of the death of a Natangai member named **Jakštas**; says that of those who participated in the execution only **Baltūsis** and **Jurkšas** [*she cannot remember whether it was Jurkšas or Juška*] became partisans; tells once again where **Kuške** was hiding; describes the fate of **E. Liorytė**; speculates that **E. Liorytė** was not afraid of the partisans because there was a Russian battalion stationed in Pilviškiai; says that the same people who wanted to put up a statue for **Baltūsis** also wanted to rename Pilviškiai School into **Baltūsis** School, but people protested.