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In this interview Justina Kirvelaitytė, born in 1931 in Pilviškiai, describes a massacre of Jewish women, children and the elderly which took place in Pilviškiai in August 1941 and which she witnessed as a child. She lists and describes in detail several locals who participated in the execution; names the local organizers of the massacre, and notes that the chief of the village, Ambrasas, was one of them. She claims having seen Antanas Baltūsis, a famous Lithuanian anti-Soviet partisan, taking part in the execution. She talks about Jews, who managed to escape and people who rescued them. She also mentions a man, who was among those, who were marching the Jews, but who let one Jew escape on the way to the execution site. She references the executions of Jewish men of Pilviškiai, but explains that she has not witnessed it herself and is only sharing stories she had heard from other people. She talks about looting and mentions that the only payment for the collaborators was the clothes of the Jews, who were made to undress before being massacred.

File 1 of 3

[01:] 00:41:22 - [01:] 02:33:00

00:00:53 – 00:02:48

[The setting is outside, at the place of the massacre of Pilviškiai Jews.]

Q: So now, Madam, first of all, please tell me your first name and surname.

A: Justina Kirvelaitytė.

Q: What year were you born in?

A: Thirty first.

Q: Thirty first. And where did you live?

A: In Pilviškiai.

Q: In Pilviškiai proper?

A: Yeah.

Q: So tell me now: when did the massacre take place at this location, where we are standing now?

A: Well, it was around the middle of August. I cannot remember the exact day. But we went to school right after. A week or two passed and we went to school. The school started on the first of September.

Q: And what did you see that day?

A: That day— There was a small pine forest that I showed to you when we passed it, so we went there with my mother to milk our cow at the farmer's—you can see those farms over there [*She points at the farm; camera focuses of the farm building*]. And our cow was at the farmer's. My father worked for him. The farmer's name was Lozoraitis. He was a real cousin the former foreign minister Lozoraitis. And as we were walking there, when we were in the pine forest, we saw them marching. We almost walked into them. An entire procession was marched.

Q: Did you know that they were going to be shot that day?

A: No. None of us knew anything. The men and the youth had already been killed.

Q: When had the men been killed?

A: They had been executed maybe three or four days earlier. They had been brought here and they dug the pits. They dug the pits for themselves and they also dug this one over here [*She points to a field behind her*]. A large one here.

Q: So they dug one for themselves and—

A: They dug for themselves, and then over here. Then they organized the whole—well, the roundup and everything. The roundup in the square.

Q: And what did you see on the day the men were shot?

A: None of us saw anything. Even the Jews themselves didn't know that they—that they had been brought here to be executed.

Q: And what had they been told?

A: That they were being taken somewhere to work. Since they had been separated—maybe a week or so earlier they had been separated from their families and locked up in a barn. Well, then they were brought here and they dug those pits. They dug for themselves, and then they dug for these [people]. And then they were shot here.

[01:] 02:33:01 - [01:] 04:35:24

00:02:49 – 00:04:56

Q: Did you hear the gunshots?

A: What?

Q: Did you hear the shooting?

A: Nothing could be heard at all. Nothing could be heard. You know, it was a couple of kilometers away, and the gunshots could not be heard.

Q: So, but on the day that [the women and the elderly] were brought to be executed, did you already know that the man had been killed? Or you still didn't know it?

A: No, we didn't know it yet. Maybe the older people, who live here, did. But no, they probably didn't know either. We would tend to our cattle—the pastures that belonged to the farmer were all right here [*She points to the pastures; camera moves in the direction she pointed to.*], and we would let our cows graze here. We did not see or feel anything. Well, and— and then me and my mother walked to—when the entire procession had passed, we walked further. Because we had to get to the estate Lozoraitis, that farmer [*She motions in the direction of the estate.*], and milk our cow. And as we were there, they [the Jews] were brought here. We could see them—over there, a little further, was Višakis (river). The river flows right nearby. And over there a little further was our cow pond, where we watered [our cows]. Our cattle had trampled the ground there. They were undressed there and beaten with sticks and rubber batons—with whatever was attainable. And they were marched naked to the river.

Q: Were they beaten for something specific, like disobeying or—?

A: No, not at all. Just to make them march. That Štūra, Štūra, Štūra, [*She tries to remember his first name.*] Jurgis. Jurgis Štūra was very brutal, and he was one of three brothers. So that Štūra—a woman was holding a child in her arms, so he hit the woman so hard that she fell down. After that she could not get up and walk anymore, so he took her and threw her with the child onto the cart. There were some [carts] at the end [of the procession], carrying the elderly.

Q: And the child was only months old?

A: The child was in her arms. Yeah, he was months old. Like that. [*Pause.*] So from there [*She motions with her head.*] they were all brought here. They were brought here. And we were all sitting at Lozoraitis' and watching. Because there were no bushes or anything. All this, the bushes have only grown recently [*Camera focuses on the bushes.*]. So then— we were all sitting and watching, maybe ten or so of us—an armed [man] approached us. He simply came up to us from across the field, and said, „If you watch, we will shoot you too, if you do not disperse“. So we got scared and went into his [the farmer's] kitchen. It was very large, like farmers have. So we all sat down and remained sitting there.

[01:] 04:35:25 - [01:] 06:20:16

00:04:57 – 00:06:45

Q: Who was the person who drove you away?

A: No, I did not know him. He was a Lithuanian, he spoke Lithuanian—there were some from the countryside. There were some—how to put it—who were not Pilviškiai locals. The ones, who were from the town proper – we knew all of them. But there were some from the countryside who also participated.

Q: Were there any Germans among them? Among the ones, who were marching [the Jews]?

A: There were none, no. Only the one who was going in the jeep with the machine gun, in an German military jeep. There were benches along the sides, and a machine gun. The one wearing a uniform was driving. Whether he was German or not, I can't—

Q: In a German uniform?

A: In a German uniform, and a machine gun inserted in the— And there also sat—I knew Kaminskas, and also Baltūsis—my mother pointed out Baltūsis to me. Since I—he was also from the countryside. Well, Baltūsis was seen by many people, as he was sitting in that jeep. And then the crackling started. Individual gunshots could be heard as well, but mostly „t-t-t“, coming from the machine gun probably. But there were many individual gunshots too.

Q: So of the Germans, as I understand, there was only one in uniform?

A: One. There were no other Germans, they did not go there. Maybe they appeared later. But there were none, none could be seen. Only that single one in uniform.

Q: Well, and what uniforms—were the Lithuanians wearing uniforms?

A: No, no. Who could have given them uniforms? They were, you know, people of lower intellect. There were horse-flayers and other kinds among them. Others were fixing shoes—in short, half-imbeciles.

Q: Well, were there any in police uniforms? Policemen in uniforms or in Lithuanian army uniforms?

A: No, no, we didn't see any. I'm telling you, as they were marching [the Jews]; there were many of them, surrounding the procession from one side – and then from the other. So those were mostly residents of Pilviškiai. I have all their last names. And all of them have been sentenced. After the war all of them were tried for their participation in the killing of the Jews. One could not prove whether they had been shooting or not—whether they had released a bullet here—only that they did participate.

[01:] 06:20:17 - [01:] 08:10:11

00:06:46 – 00:08:40

Q: In the end it doesn't matter whether they were shooting or not.

A: No difference whether one was shooting or not.

Q: If one was hustling and beating—

A: If one was hustling and beating, it could be said that one contributed to it all. And it was said that some of them received calls, while others simply went as volunteers. They didn't need any calls, [inviting them] „to bring order back to Pilviškiai,” or anything. Ambrasas was—Ambrasas was the headman or, rather, the chief of the rural district, he was—he was the chief of the town.

Q: What was the first name of Ambrasas?

A: I have it somewhere. I cannot tell you right now. He was—he is now in America, I think. In America, or in Australia – I don't know. Somebody has been receiving letters [from him] not that long ago.

Q: So he participated?

A: He participated. He was the chief of the rural district. He organized everything. Because there were only a few Germans at the German headquarters. Well, maybe five or six of them at the headquarters. They were busy with girls. These [the Lithuanians] would throw some Jewish girls to them. There were two beautiful sisters from Antanavas [town], and they were handed to them [the Germans]. And then, after the execution and everything, the Germans kept them for a while. And then they released them, and told them „go“. So my father took up to take them somewhere in Jankai village. I now don't know who, but somebody took those Jewish girls away from him and brought them to Vilkaviškis [town]. The Jews in Vilkaviškis had not been shot yet. So they were taken to Vilkaviškis to be shot there.

Q: And as they were passing here and you saw the machine gun, you saw Kaminskas and Baltūsis there, right?

A: Yeah, yeah. Kaminskas and Baltūsis.

Q: The two of them, and the driver, right?

A: There were more of them sitting there, but I cannot tell you more. Maybe **Lukošienė** will recall, since she also saw them. And my sister also saw; as they climbed to that—she saw them climbing into the car at the square next to the headquarters.

Q: Was Baltūsis wearing a uniform?

A: No. They were dressed in black; I can see them as if it was today. I think they were dressed in dark, black clothes. No uniform.

Q: In suits.

A: Yeah, yeah, in suits.

[01:] 08:10:12 - [01:] 09:57:07

00:08:41 – 00:10:31

Q: So you went there— Oh, describe to me now please, how they were undressed. Were they all undressed at once, or batch after batch, before they were taken to be executed?

A: No. They marched them here, and they came to a halt over there [She points.] The entire procession came to a halt and then undressed. Maybe all—then not all. Whether they could keep

the pace or not, but they were all driven into the water. Probably—as I see it—for their belongings maybe. To make sure that they undress and leave their clothes. The clothes and whatever else they had brought with them.

Q: Were they undressed completely?

A: Yeah, naked. If anybody wanted to unearth it, they would find that—they could see that they were all naked. And when—when we brought the cows here [*She motions to the field surrounding her.*] the next day—well, as I mentioned, those bushes were not here yet. Nothing was here at all. The pastures of that farmer were here. So I and my sister brought the cows, and— I already told you this—over here I found a red, well, a button. I open it up, open it up and see three Russian ten-ruble bills sown into it. I can remember it very well. There was so much blood was here! There was a heap [*She motions to the field behind her*], you know, there wasn't enough room. They were buried, thrown together like potatoes. Blood was seeping through. Foam of blood was oozing. Then later the farmer, Lozoraitis, drove to Pilviškiai and said, "It's not enough that they killed on my land," he said, "They left such a mess too." After that lime or something else was brought and poured on top. Then later workers were brought to do some additional burying. Over there, where the alder trees stand now [*She points to the trees; camera focuses on them.*]*—the trees were still very little then—there was a child's hand there—it had been torn off. Maybe with some bullets, maybe explosives they used could have torn the child's hand off. Those alder trees were still very little.*

[01:] 09:57:08 - [01:] 11:40:12

00:10:32 – 00:12:19

Q: So all of this land belonged to Lozoraitis?

A: It was all Lozoraitis' land, it was. And over there, where there is a separate grave [*She points to grave behind here; camera focuses on the grave.*], so when the Jews were brought here— There was a dairy farm in Baltrušiai [village] and there was a Kairiūkštis who worked there – Kairiūkštis, well, he was a Lithuanian. But somebody probably didn't like him or wanted to avenge him for something. So they took him and brought him here. And they also brought a doctor, **Dumbovskis** [**Dambovskis; Dembovskis**]. I told you about that doctor, he was very good. He was from Pilviškiai.

Q: What was his last name?

A: Dumbovskis, he was a Jew from Pilviškiai. Dumbovskis. So when they were brought here, they were ordered to dig a pit for themselves. So there is a separate grave now, you see, over there, at the very end [*She points to grave behind here; camera shows the grave.*].

Q: So when was this Dumbovskis brought here?

A: He was brought here when those—when all those Jews were being shot, they also brought anyone they wanted; those, whom any of them had a grievance against— They came over to Lozoraitis, that farmer, to take my dad away. But he somehow sensed it and recounted, "I left through the granary to the garden", and somehow he managed to flee. He said that one was wearing a German uniform, while the other was dressed in civilian clothes. So that

Dumbovskis—he was ordered to dig a pit for himself, but that Dumbovskis refused to take a spade. He refused to dig. So they slashed him to death with the spade. So then the entire town of Pilviškiai talked about it. Well, those [perpetrators] had boasted about it probably.

Q: And do you know who slashed him?

A: Well, I cannot know that. Since I was told by **Lukošienė** that, well, husband's brothers watched it from the bushes. Over here [*She motion with her hand in the direction of the river.*], as I mentioned, where the river flows, and one can—everything is visible from that direction. You could see through the bushes. So she said that they watched it.

Q: [*To the cameraman.*] Stop for a second.

[01:] 11:40:13 - [01:] 13:45:01

00:12:20 – 00:14:28

[*Filming resumes.*]

Q: Madam, so in the beginning, when you saw them being marched here and then undressed, where you sitting on this side of the road, or the other side of the road?

A: No, on the hill, over there [*She points in the direction of the farm.*]. Here, where the corner of that barrier—that fence—is, over there, through that bush [*Camera focuses on the bush.*], right through, over there.

Q: On the other side.

A: Yeah, on the other side of the road, that's where the farm is, on the hill [*Camera focuses on the farm.*]. And everything—it's not far at all, as you can see – everything can be seen with a naked eye. And over here we could see them being lined up; the jeep could be seen standing here. Then later we wanted to go home with my mother; we had to return, but we were also afraid. They were shooting and shooting, but we decided that we would have to go anyway, so we—there was a trench by the road. It was an old road, unpaved or anything. So we started walking bending forward in that trench, we moved forward and forward. And we heard them shouting, „Faster, faster, “they were shouting and giving orders “faster”. And then the shooting. And then they turned on the jeep's lights. Since it was already getting dark—it was dark—they illuminated everything.

Q: Could you hear any screaming?

A: Oh, terrible, terrible screaming. The screams of children and women were terrible; how terrible. Horrible.

Q: What language were they shouting „faster” in?

A: In Lithuanian. They were shouting „faster, faster” in Lithuanian. The road is over here, right behind those bushes [*She points to the road.*]. I'm telling you, in the silence of the evening everything can be heard.

Q: And could you make out any words that women and children were screaming when they were being shot?

A: No, just such, well, like a scream, like the most horrible moaning. You couldn't make out words, no distinct words.

Q: And you could hear children voices too?

A: Children voices too, and all. And over there, where they were driven into the water and beaten, you could hear children screaming as well.

Q: How were they driven into the water?

A: Well, they were undressed. Taken to that spot [*Points; the camera follows in that direction.*] and undressed. Disrobed and thrown into the water—not thrown, but they were made to—the water is very cold here, in the shade of fir trees and bushes, so even we, children, would not go to swim there.

Q: Stop, stop.

A: Oh! I did something to my gadget, I moved it.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: I moved it.

Q: I see. [*Crackling behind the screen.*]

Cameraman: Don't touch this gadget anymore.

[01:] 13:45:02 - [01:] 15:28:01
00:14:29 – 00:16:16

A: We passed, and there, behind the bridge, there was another one standing guard. Probably there were [guards] all around, making sure that nobody escapes or anything. So, in short, there was one standing guard, in civilian clothes.

Q: I want to ask something. How did the undressing process go? Well, I mean, were they all undressed at once and then driven into the water, or were they undressed in batches?

A: No, no, well, it was more spontaneous. Somebody came over, gave some orders probably, and that's it. "Undress," and—

Q: And everybody got undressed?

A: Well, I cannot tell you whether everybody did, but they were undressing. You could see them running naked.

Q: And did they put all the clothes in one pile, or everywhere around?

A: Into a pile. There was a pile of clothes thrown together.

Q: They made a pile?

A: Yeah, there was a pile thrown together.

Q: Well, and then later, how were they marched into the water?

A: Well, they were simply marched in. Those people were probably terrified and ran into the water themselves. I just cannot understand one thing: why couldn't they run away? Well, maybe they were expecting to be tortured and then released? There are bushes, and bigger trees have been here for long *[She points to the trees.]*, so they could have run through the fields. But since the men – the younger men – had been killed beforehand, and you know, there were only the women and the elderly left, so they couldn't resist and—

Q: Were they made to stay in the water, or just wade through it?

A: Just wade through, just wade through. They were hustled like this: one group wades in, gets out – then another group wades in. Then those women ran over here, in this direction *[She points in the direction.]*; and then here they were probably ordered to run to the pits right here *[She points to the field by her side.]*.

Q: How deep was the water there?

A: Oh, we would—it wasn't deep. We would water our cows, and then, as we were walking back home, having returned the farmer's cows [to the cowshed], we would wade across it. It would reach up to here *[She shows the level of water on her leg]*. And when it flooded, we wouldn't wade across it anymore, but cross over the bridge, which was right here. But after the men were killed—and then this massacre took place—we, children, were terrified of even passing that spot.

[01:] 15:28:02 - [01:] 17:13:20
00:16:17 – 00:18:06

Q: Well, so they would wade across the water, and what happened next?

A: What?

Q: What happened after they had waded across the water? Why?

A: No, they didn't wade across – they were simply marched into the water, then turned around and, one after the other; first one, then the others – alternating, you know. We could see them alternating and then after that hustling naked over here.

Q: At what point did that partisan send you away?

A: The shooting had already started when he sent us away. They were shooting already.

Q: So you saw how the first ones were shot?

A: Yeah, yeah. We saw how they were marched. But we could also observe all this hustling through the kitchen window too – and the jeep standing right here [*She points.*]. They were shooting from the machine gun placed in that jeep. I'm telling you, now it's overgrown with trees and bushes, but then there was nothing here. Everything, the entire landscape has changed so much here that—

Q: So when they were shooting, they didn't take the machine gun out of the jeep, and were shooting right from it?

A: They were shooting straight from the car. And then later they turned on the jeep's headlamps to provide light. They turned the lights on, when it got dark. That's when my mother and I started walking on the road. Right here, right behind those bushes [*Camera is focused on the bushes.*], there is a road. The road follows, and then there is a trench, so we tried to walk back home stooping along the rim of that trench.

Q: And where did all the ones, who still hadn't been shot, stand? Where did they wait for their turn?

A: Well, they were waiting right here [*She points.*], just like that. All this, the entire field was crowded, because, most probably, there were guards keeping them in. It was surrounded from all sides and— well, there quite a few of those, who participated, around 27 people participated. So how could those poor women with children and the elderly have escaped?

[01:] 17:13:21 - [01:] 19:25:16

00:18:07 – 00:20:23

Q: And how many Jews were there?

A: Well, there were many Jews. As the records claim, a thousand were shot here, and a thousand – over there [*She motions to her left, then her right side.*].

Q: Could it have been that many?

A: Well, yeah. There were around two thousand of them in Pilviškiai, maybe even more. Back in 1940, five or so families had been deported to Siberia. One of them, Mejerké returned— my father had worked for him, transporting the goods from Kaunas—and as he returned from Siberia, he came over to visit my father. Well, he came over to our family to ask about what had happened—he was hoping that any of his relatives had stayed alive—and what we saw. He was just crying and bemoaning that it would have been better if the Russians had deported all of them to Siberia, at least they all would have remained alive then.

Q: Of course, those who were deported to Siberia, survived.

A: Yeah, they survived.

Q: So all of those, who had been gathered here, the massacre took place right in front of their eyes?

A: In front of whose eyes?

Q: Well, the people here could also see the massacre very well?

A: Which people?

Q: Well, the ones, who had been brought here – the Jews. The women—

A: Oh, yeah. Yeah, how could they not see it?

Q: Everything took place right in front of their eyes.

A: Everything. Everything right in front of their eyes. Only when the men were [being shot], as I already told you, nobody saw. Nobody saw it, only Uleckienė—maybe we will go to here, maybe we will find her—Uleckienė had hidden three of them [Jews]. There was a **Frydmanukas** (diminutive for **Frydmanas [Fridmanas]**), **Frydmanas**, a Jew, he came over [to Uleckienė] and asked to be hidden, saying „the men have been taken to be killed“. They knew then that the men had been shot. And so she hid three of them at her home in the town proper. She put a partition in the stable and sheltered them, saved them, and then sent them away to the countryside. Two of the women were given to people in Šakiai district, while another one was sent to a village right beyond Pilviškiai. My brother let her cross the pond—because there was a power plant standing there, next to a passenger bridge over the Šešupė River. So my brother happened to be standing guard that night, and he knew Gita Liurytė and he let her cross over to the farmers, who rescued her. Then after the war she worked in Pilviškiai, and later – at a pawn shop in Kaunas. Now I think she is in America. I was told that she first left for Israel, and then later – to America.

[01:] 19:25:17 - [01:] 20:50:02

00:20:24 – 00:21:51

Q: And tell me please: when you left, was the shooting still going on, or had it ended?

A: No, it ended very soon, and we couldn't hear it anymore. We, when we came here; right here, behind the Višakis River, there is a farm [*She points in the direction of the river; camera turns in the direction indicated*], right on the bank of the river, and as we were passing through his yard, there was a hubbub of men: some were sitting on roofs of stables, while others were hiding in the bushes. But when you try to encourage them to say something now, they refuse to talk. They're afraid. I don't understand what kind of people they are and what they are afraid of. What should one be afraid of telling the truth? We—we couldn't hear the gunshots anymore; we were, well, a kilometer, maybe half a kilometer—maybe more—from that place [*She points, but is blocked by the back of the interviewer.*] until we reached here, where it was only about a

hundred meters away, but separated by the river, and neither the screaming nor anything else could be heard anymore.

Q: So now tell me when the shooting started and when it ended. Around what hour did it start approximately?

A: Well, let's say, maybe around five o'clock, maybe half past four – somewhere around that time. Well, it must have been in the afternoon, since we were on our way to milk the cow, and that's when they were marched here. But maybe it was a little earlier, because **Lukošienė** had mentioned that she was on her way to get lunch at that time. Well, maybe it took them some time to reach here from Pilviškiai, which is about two kilometers away from here – two and a half maybe, and [they were marching] on foot. She also saw everything, including the jeep. She said she saw it.

[01:] 20:50:03 - [01:] 22:56:12
00:21:52 – 00:24:03

Q: And when did it end?

A: Well, it ended—when we left it was already seven, maybe a little after seven o'clock. Well, let's say around eight, maybe half past seven, because it was already dark.

Q: So only two or three hours.

A: Well, the time was more or less the same as now, and then yeah, it must have been around half past seven or eight. It took them some time to collect all the valuables. [Some] Jews had been brought here in horse-drawn carts. And then later they [the perpetrators] returned to Pilviškiai with carts full of clothes and other valuables. At Štūra's home, where you visited—who did you find there? His daughter?

Q: No, it must have been his son-in-law.

A: Oh, the son-in-law, right. I went to school with one of their girls [*She motions in the direction where Štūra's home is supposed to be.*], and we would spend time together. So we went [to her home] [*She motions in the direction where Štūra's home is supposed to be again*], and the entire barn was piled with clothes – all kinds of clothes, all kinds of things.

Q: What other things were there? Clothes—

A: Clothes. Clothes. It's not clear what condition they were in, but their girls were very well dressed. Coats made of karakul and everything. They had everything.

Q: They wore the clothes?

A: We, children, would come to school, and we would know who used to own what and who owned it now.

Q: They were better dressed than you?

A: It's not even a question, they always had, they always had—

Q: And the children didn't laugh at them for wearing those clothes?

A: Of course! We would point fingers at each other and say „you are wearing the jacket – or the dress – of such and such Jewish child. “ Well, we all used to hang out together. We had grown up together, and we could see what belonged to whom. Yeah.

Q: Well, and what would they respond?

A: Nothing! What could they say? Their parents brought back [the clothes] and that's it. They were children and didn't know better.

Q: And when you saw the Jews being marched, which of them did you recognize? You must have known many Jews.

A: Well, you see, we didn't really come out too far from the grove; we stepped away from the grove maybe a little further that that [*She points to something in the distance.*]. These [the perpetrators] had them surrounded; they were walking on the sides; they were beating them, so their [the Jews'] heads were held down. You know, people were scared. There was a loud screaming as they were marching. They were scared; they must have known—must have been informed—that [the men] had been shot. So some people must have known that they were being taken to be shot.

[01:] 22:56:13 - [01:] 24:53:17

00:24:04 – 00:26:05

Q: One woman fell down. Was there anyone else who fell down?

A: No. During the interval that we were watching it there were none, but there might have been more later. Because really—somewhere in the town, I've heard, some old man had been beaten up and thrown onto the cart, because he couldn't walk. Those who couldn't walk were thrown onto horse-drawn cart.

Q: And in those carts, were they sitting or lying?

A: They were sitting; they were sitting there. They were all sitting. Some were holding their heads on others' knees [*She imitates the position of the heads.*], the older ones maybe, who couldn't [hold themselves] at all, you know.

Q: Well, and the ones, who were beating them, whom did you know of those „white stripers“?

A: Well, I saw Juozas Vainulevičius, yeah, Juozas Vainulevičius, our neighbor – he lived right next to us. He was a shoemaker. He was also very cruel. He would constantly beat his wife for no reason. He would beat her. She would come to us in tears. So him – he was marching

them. Then, I also knew Jurgis Štūra, since the entire Štūra family were our neighbors as well. Only Antanas, lived here [*She points in the direction behind her back*], as he was married. And the rest lived next to us. So Antanas and Liudas, both Štūra. Then there was Adomavičius, a shoemaker, – he also lived nearby. Then Valentinas Kalinauskas. So these I knew. Also, Kaminskas. Kaminskas was also sitting in the jeep.

Q: And Baltūsis too, you mentioned.

A: Yeah, Baltūsis too. My mother [knew] Baltūsis. I didn't know Baltūsis at all, but he had been a seminarian. [My mother] said, „Look, my child, our ex-seminarian“. He had studied at a seminary in Vilkaviškis, but was expelled in his third or so year of studies. He also had served in the Lithuanian army. And when he returned, he was first a „white striper“, and then the police chief.

Q: Was he from Pilviškiai by origin?

A: A kilometer away from Pilviškiai, maybe a kilometer, or a kilometer and a half in the direction of Vilkaviškis, is the Baltūsėnė [Baltūsis family's estate].

[01:] 24:53:18 - [01:] 27:08:21
00:26:06 – 00:28:26

Q: So Kaminskas and Baltūsis were in the car. What other „white stripers“ were there? Anyone else you knew?

A: Well, these were not „white stripers“. My brother was a „white striper“, but he— On the second day after the Jews had been shot—when the Jews were killed, they had to—well, all the shops had been looted and all the goods taken away after the Germans arrived. Oh, hold on, so they probably had not been killed yet, because the shops were looted when the Germans arrived and opened all the stores, and people could take whatever they wanted. I was also looking for one shoe; tried one on and it fit me, so I started looking for the other one. I could have taken who knows how many shoes, but I was looking for a specific one. People were climbing over my head and trampling me. I didn't find the shoe and left in tears [*She laughs*].

Q: So were they new shoes, or shoes that had belonged to the Jews?

A: New. They were at the store. At the store. Right here, when you make a turn driving to my home, there is that street, and the two-storied masonry house on the corner used to be store. There was a Jewish shoe store on the ground floor. Well, and—so first, when they [the Jews] had not been killed yet, they were sent to return whatever people had taken home with them.

Q: The „white stripers“ [were sent]?

A: Yeah, the „white stripers“. They were ordered in their organization to go around homes and urge [people to return looted items]. So they went to one man's home, **Vangelevičius** I think was his last name, so they came over to his home, and there happened to be a German there. So that German glanced through the window and said, „Who are these people? “ And they were

armed too. „Oh, “he [Vangelevičius] said, „some hooligans. “ So that German went outside and—pow!—shot down one of the three, so my brother dropped the gun and everything—he didn’t need anything anymore—and ran away [*She laughs*].

Q: So he did not participate in the massacre?

A: No, no, no. He wasn’t anywhere. He was not. The ones, who were shooting were all tried, but he was just a patriot. He was a “jaunalietuvis” (a member of a nationalist political organization that was active in Lithuania in late 90s).

Q: He believed that [the Germans] were here to liberate [Lithuania]?

A: That they were here to liberate us, yeah. Yeah [*She laughs*]. And even now he is very different from all of us. He is different; he is convinced that the independence of Lithuania saved him from—from everything. He was deported to Siberia, but only because he had been evading the army. They had been evading the army after the war, so both of my brothers were deported, but no cases could be presented against them, so they were brought back. They were brought back home; they returned. They had spent two years there.

[01:] 27:08:22 - [01:] 29:01:18

00:28:27 – 00:30:23

Q: So he saw neither the shooting of the men, nor this shooting – he wasn’t present at either of them?

A: No, no, he did not participate anywhere. He did not participate anywhere. He ran off to our relatives somewhere in the countryside, all frightened. He is a coward generally, and he was so scared [*She laughs*]. Those „white stripers “dispersed very quickly; they operated for a very short time only.

Q: So how do you call those, who were beating the Jews?

A: Oh, those, well, we cannot call them anything, they were all, how to put it, retarded. Well, they all had been called up to bring order. Somebody was also saying that they had been made drunk the night before; that they were given drinks, and then not allowed to leave after that. They were kept in a Jewish house, a huge house; so it was said that they were made drunk and not allowed to leave; that the doors were locked. The son of one of the men, who also had been there, recounted that when he [the father] noticed that they were about to be locked up, he darted through the doors and somehow escaped, while the rest were not allowed to leave.

Q: So was this before the shooting of the men, or before this one?

A: This one, before this one. These men were somehow [murdered] in secret. Nobody knows who took part at all, or who shot them.

Q: Well, and that day, when you saw them marching [the Jews], do you think they were drunk then?

A: Those men? No! No, no. I think that not. They were normal. They were walking normally, shouting and all. So as I said, one of the Štūra [brothers], Jurgis—I think it was Jurgis—didn't have a gun, so he was holding a huge stick, and was beating people with that stick while walking. They were very cruel. We, children, would walk to school past—we would make a detour around their home, because we were afraid of coming near; they were so vicious. Their father was a horse-flayer, you know; he would buy overworked horses and flay their skin off. The children also participated in this process, and that's how this cruelty was [ingrained] in them.

[01:] 29:01:19 - [01:] 30:57:21

00:30:24 – 00:32:24

Q: So Štūra had a stick and—

A: And the other, Antanas, had a gun. And I cannot remember exactly what Liudas had, but he was later drafted to be in Paneriai, he— He probably joined those—he probably joined the SS. He left for Paneriai, and took part in the massacre there, in Vilnius. He took his wife with him, and they probably moved into a Jewish house over there. And then later he left for Poland—people talked that he went to Belarus, and then later to Poland to participate in the massacre. And he never returned from Poland.

Q: And how did you know that they left for Paneriai?

A: Well, he took his wife with him—and they used to live nearby—and the wife returned later with all kinds of treasures, draped in all kinds of jewels. She lived right next to us. And after the war she was writing to the Red Cross looking for him everywhere, but couldn't find him anywhere. The Germans must have exterminated such killers as him, making sure that no witnesses are left behind.

Q: So she herself had told you that they were in Paneriai?

A: Yeah, yeah. Everybody knew that they had left for Paneriai.

Q: And she wasn't afraid to tell people that he had been shooting people in Paneriai?

A: Well, for people of their intellect, it was a heroic act. It was something to brag about, you know. I'm telling you, they had—then when he [was sent] to Poland—when he left for Poland—she returned to Pilviškiai. She spent a long time looking for him waiting for his return. And then Jurgis returned after he had served his sentence. But he didn't return to Pilviškiai, as he was afraid of people—well, he was simply ashamed—so he settle in a village called Gižų Rūda, which is situated maybe thirteen kilometers from here. So somebody told me last year—they said, „there is a Štūriukas [young Štūra], who lives in our village, Gižai, do you happened to know him? “ „I do know him, “I said. They said, „Everyone around started talking that he had been shooting the Jews of Pilviškiai“, they said, and „that he was a murderer.” So he fled to Kaliningrad region and stayed there. He left Lithuania for good. “It looks like some of them were at least a little tormented by their conscience.

[01:] 30:57:22 - [01:] 33:26:15

00:32:25 – 00:34:59

Q: Well, and the next day you came back [to the site of the massacre], and what did you see?

A: We came here in the morning.

Q: A hand that was torn off, the money—

A: Yeah, a child's hand.

Q: What other things could you see?

A: Well, there was blood. There were no possessions or anything; there were possessions for sure. Everything had been taken, as they had brought carts, and they loaded those carts full upon returning to Pilviškiai. My friend's father also had received the call, where it was written—well, in short, the headman was convening people to „bring a little bit of order” to Pilviškiai. It said, „Can you—? „, but he said, „no, no, I will not participate in anything, I will not go anywhere. “ Well, and then, the friend recounted, “they were passing by us on their way home late at night,” she [the friend] said, „As we were standing outside with my dad. And they showed us this sign [*She circles her finger around her temple – a sign that one shows to express an opinion about another person's stupidity.*]. And they told us that we were stupid. Because they were returning home with quite a booty.”

Q: They [the perpetrators] wanted to show that they were left [the friends father] with nothing?

A: Yeah, that they were left with nothing. They were going to stay poor.

Q: So now, when all those people were killed, their possessions remained on the other side of the river?

A: There were some that remained here. Some were piled here Maybe not all of them were—I cannot tell you if all of them were made to bathe, but we could see a pile of clothes. There was a pile, as they were marched naked.

Q: Were they beaten while in the water?

A: No, why would they wade into the water themselves? They were dressed. They marched them in, and then, I guess, they were called to go back—to wade back. But there is only one spot, only one spot, where there is an incline, and it wasn't deep at all there. As I said, we would cross there on our way home.

Q: So they were ordered to wade in, and then ordered to come out again?

A: Yeah, yeah. [Pause.] To bathe. And then the next day our neighbor, Vainulevičius, and then also another one, Valentinas Kalinauskas, whom I already have mentioned—well, quite a

few of them, in short—went all dressed up to the restaurant, which had belonged to a Jew named Šembergas. They were all dressed up. My mother asked them, „Where are you both going, Uršuliukė (diminutive of Uršulė, the wife of Vainulevičius)? “ They were passing right by our house; they lived right next to us. She (Uršulė) responded, „We are going to the funeral“. Well, a huge party was thrown over here in Pilviškiai for all of those, who had participated in the shooting. And they all partied there together.

[01:] 33:26:16 - [01:] 35:38:02
00:35:00 – 00:37:16

Q: So what could you hear coming from there?

A: What?

Q: Could you hear any voices?

A: I am not sure, maybe **Lukoševičienė** did. She worked at a store right nearby. She worked at a bakery there, so she might know.

Q: Describe to me now how the shooting was conducted: were they standing on the rim of the pit, or—

A: On the rim of the pit, like this [*She points in the direction of a field by her side.*]. There was such screaming; that it sounded like half of them had fallen in alive. You know, the gunshot is fired—the bullet misses—they remain alive. The sand was all stirred—and you know, when a person falls in [dead], it will stand still, if you pour [sand] over him. But there were uneven depressions, which means that many people had fallen into it still alive.

Q: They were moving in the pit?

A: Well, the pit was still moving. Somebody told me—but I don't know who told me this—that somebody had escaped from the pit [*Camera focuses on the field, where the pit is assumed to have been.*]. He had fallen in alive, and he dug his way through in the dark, and disappeared fast. Somebody told me that one person had escaped.

Q: And who was it?

A: **Irškė**—maybe not **Irškė**, but something like that. Was it his surname, or nickname—I don't know that **Irškė**.

Q: And who buried the pit after everything was over?

A: They did it themselves, I guess. The ones, who—because they had spades, as I said that dr. Dumbovskis was slashed to death into that pit. So you're saying that in other places are [the graves] are not taken care of, right? [*The cameraman walks toward the site of the pit; camera focuses on a memorial stone.*]

Q: *[Talking in the distance.]* I cannot remember anything.

A: I'm telling you, my sister worked at the Pilviškiai school for around forty years. So when you talk to her former students, they say, „your sister would take us to look after those graves. “
[Cut. Close view of the memorial stone.]

Q: You can talk a little about Baltūsis

A: Ok, I have some material, yeah.

Q: How did thing turn out in the end—

A: I have a response to my letter from the Genocide Center (Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania), in which they wrote to me that he was a great hero, and that's it. But I did not give up. I did not. You know, the witnesses are still alive and they [don't want to know] anything. They did not come to ask people what kind of person he was or anything. No. A hero [they call him].

Q: They need heroes.

A: They need to create heroes.

Q: Well, they do.

File 2 of 3

[02:] 00:41:02 - [02:] 02:40:05

00:00:43 – 00:02:46

[The setting is inside, at the interviewee's home.]

Q: Madam, now tell me

Cameraman: Stop.

Q: *[To the cameraman]* What? What's here?

A: Oh, it's just a tractor passing by.

Q: I see. So now tell me about those children that you mentioned were marched as well.

A: Oh, so there was a [woman] who had been working for Jews, and when they were marched, she knew—

Q: Which Jews did she work for? Do you know the surname of those Jews?

A: My sister will know the surname. Majerkė, I think. My sister must know; she will know for sure.

Q: And do you know the surname of the woman?

A: The woman's surname was [Pause. She tries to remember.] **Pastarnokienė**, I think, or something like **Pastarnokienė**. She lived with the Pastarnokas family—maybe she was the mother of **Pastarnokienė** or something like that. She worked for them, that old woman. So when the procession was marched, right by the road—well, maybe a hundred and fifty meters or less, she [the Jewish mother] pushed her children away from the procession onto the road—onto the side of the road that is—and told them to go to that—

Q: How old were the children?

A: Well, maybe around six or seven. Well, somewhere around that age, because they knew where to go. And when they came to her, she refused to let them in.

Q: **Pastarnokienė**?

A: Yeah, because she was afraid. She was afraid, because all the people had been warned that if they hid a Jew, they would be threatened with execution.

Q: Did you hear this as well?

A: What?

Q: Did you hear this yourself?

A: It was loud, everybody heard it. And Uleckienė, who was hiding those Jews, also knew what could happen to her for hiding the Jews.

Q: So where there any notices distributed, or were they only verbal threats?

A: No. There probably were—there used to be some kind of notices that would travel from village to village. In the past, those notices would be issued to be passed from hands to hands, and the children would carry them, and neighbors would read them and pass on to each other. There were such notices issued, saying that for each German soldier killed, the entire village would be executed. The entire town. There were pieces of paper travelling around.

[02:] 02:40:06 - [02:] 04:48:02

00:02:47 – 00:04:59

Q: Did you see such a notice that talked about Jews?

A: What?

Q: Did you see such any such notice that talked about Jews?

A: Well, no. My age was such that, you know; maybe my parents did. My sister Regina maybe knew, maybe she did. But such notices were issued and circulated. There were headmen—maybe not headmen, I don't know what to call them—on each street, and they would distribute these.

Q: Madam Justina, what can you remember from before the execution? How did the Jews—

A: Well, before the execution we, children, used to run in that square [*She motions with her head in the direction of the square.*] and in the streets. So they [the Jews] walked around wearing stars, but they could only walk on the middle of the road. There was a yellow star on their back, and one in front. Then later they were marched, and I saw them in that square, sitting on the sidewalk; they were sitting on the sidewalks surrounding the square. The square was full; and the women were sitting on the sidewalk with prayer books in their hands. They had huge books of the Jewish faith, you know. So they were reading from those books, and nodding like this [*She imitates the nodding.*] all the time.

Q: They were reading aloud.

A: Aloud, they were reading aloud, because there was a Jewish synagogue – their church—right there.

Q: So this happened on the day of the massacre?

A: What?

Q: Did this happen—did they pray—on the day of the massacre?

A: On the day of the massacre, right, yeah. It was in the morning – before noon they were all marched to the square. They were marched from their homes into the square. They were not allowed to leave anywhere. And we were also not allowed to hang out there. We would scream and be everywhere, you know, like children do. And I was very fair, almost white, and also had curls, so they could tell me apart easily.

Q: And those Jewish signs were worn by adults only or by children as well?

A: The children had them on as well; the children wore them too. Well I saw twelve-year-olds, or maybe ten-year-olds, wearing them on their backs.

Q: And what about a five-year-old, who barely walked?

A: Well that I cannot tell. I didn't see any. No, they probably didn't wear them. Probably not. But they were not allowed to leave their yards; they were strictly forbidden to leave. So some people would bring water and hand it over the fence, or buy bread and throw it over the fence into their yards. But in general they were not allowed to walk.

[02:] 04:48:03 - [02:] 07:12:21

00:05:00 – 00:07:30

Q: Have you ever brought water to anyone?

A: No. There was a man named Kalinauskas, so he and his mother would bring it, as they had worked for Jews, so they would carry water.

Q: But they were marched to the execution from their own homes?

A: They were taken to the square, lined up there, and then marched from the square. The town stretched maybe two hundred meters in the direction of Antanavas from here. It stretched beyond Pilvė River. After you crossed the river, there was a street there, which was lined with Jewish homes. Well, almost all of them were – there were not many Lithuanians in the town proper. They were mostly Jewish homes here, while we lived a little further—we passed it—where the school is, so a little beyond the school, that's where our [homes] start. That's where the Negro, or Lithuanian [*She laughs.*], neighborhoods start.

Q: That's the word that was used, "negro"?

A: Yeah [*She laughs.*].

Q: Why?

A: Well, because they were mostly poor. Everyone was poor and had many children. And they mostly worked for Jews. It would be fair to say that the ones, who participated in the execution, who were shooting, were raised on the bread-crumbs of the Jews. The Jews were good: when my father worked for one, he would bring matzos, worn clothes and shoes for the children before each New Year. He would bring all this to us children. They [Lithuanians and Jews] got on well. They would stage theatre plays, and Lithuanian youth would hang out with the Jews, with the Jewish youth. I have a newspaper, and if you have time later, [you can read] about a play they staged in 1907 called „America in the bathhouse“. Jews and Lithuanians played in it, all kinds. So then an article, a review, was printed, criticizing the play, which took place at a Jewish barn, and suggesting that it could have been staged during the day, when it was light, and not at night. Well, and then it describes what was going on there, it says, “you cannot imagine, what was going on there,” it says, “Lithuanian girls were dancing with Jewish guys, and Jewish guys – with Lithuanian girls.” It says, “What kind of parents did these children have? They must be some kind of heathens.” In short, it was a piece of propaganda against Jews. So this youth grew up and went on to retaliate.

[02:] 07:12:22 - [02:] 09:02:01

00:07:31 – 00:09:24

Q: And when you were growing up, what do you remember? You were a ten-year-old child then, right?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you hear any anti-Jewish propaganda or threats that Jews were going to do something?

A: Well, yeah. We were warned against going inside, if Jews invite us inside or anywhere. We had our regular stores. There was a **Rybakas** right here, around the corner, where the square is, and we would buy goods on credit from **Rybakas** all the time. He knew that we had no money, that we were poor, so he would write it down on his notebook, and give us everything, just puts it down in his notebook. Once I came over, and even though he was not supposed to give anything to children, he gave me chocolates anyway. There used to be chocolate eggs that open up and you can find a small ring or a button inside. So he would put it down in his notebook too, and then my mother scolded us a little, saying "Children, don't go there anymore, I will take what we need."

Q: [She didn't like] that you were wasting money?

A: That we were spending too much money, yeah [*She laughs.*]. It was like that all the time. We had our stores that we visited frequently, and we knew that they would make a discount, give us a cheaper price, because they knew our family.

Q: You were regular customers.

A: Regular, yeah, a lasting customer.

Q: And you were warned that Jews were dangerous?

A: Yeah, that Jews were dangerous. We were told not to go. Because there was a man, who had been repairing the synagogue, and he claimed that there were caskets in the basement. Well, and that there were barrels with nails hammered into them; that they would catch someone and—and although there were no cases of anyone, any child, disappearing, we were still frightened. It was said that they wrap a person in a sheet, put him or her in a barrel, and then start rolling [the barrel], because they desperately needed Christian blood to put in their matzos on their holiday, probably the one before the New Year. It was said that the barrels were rolled until the sheet is soaked with blood, and then it is wrung and poured into the matzo dough and baked. But it was said that they didn't give these [matzos] to us—our dad would bring home matzos to us, but not these. It was said that only they can eat [the blood-soaked] matzos, while we, Lithuanians, were made special matzos instead.

[02:] 09:02:02 - [02:] 11:26:23

00:09:25 – 00:11:55

Q: So you could eat them with no worries.

A: Eat with no worries, yeah, yeah. We were told not to enter their houses, if they invited us. Once there was soccer game in the stadium across the Šešupė River, where horses' races were also held; and I ran over there as well. As I was walking back, a Jewish woman was sitting on her stairs with the door open, and said to me, "Come here, little girl, you are so pretty, come over to me, and I will give you a pastry." I said, "No, no," I said, "I will not come over, because you will slaughter me if I do." [*She laughs.*] The children had been intimidated.

Q: Was that Jewish woman offended? Was she upset?

A: No, no, not at all. Nothing. She just sat there, and I started running, because I was afraid that she would pull me in [*She laughs.*].

Q: And who had told you this, your parents?

A: What?

Q: Did your parents try to intimidate you?

A: Yeah, parents, and everybody else talked about it, there was such propaganda being disseminated. For example, it was discussed that in Kaunas a huge box from Leningrad had been brought and opened up with a girl's corpse in it, with all her blood sapped. So nonsense like this was passed around.

Q: And the teachers would also say such things?

A: No, the teachers would not say such things. Not the teachers. It was just propaganda. In general, it was all about faith. In today's world there are wars waged and people slaughtering each other over faith. And those—oh, there is a Christian Democrat newspaper with a religious program, in which the Jews are abused, and something like this is written there: „Don't go to the Jews, don't buy anything from them. “ Why? „Lithuanians have stores and everything, so don't buy from them and we will bankrupt them. “ So this kind of envy for their hard work existed. Nobody could admit that the Jews were simply more intelligent. In raising their children, they did not let them run around in the streets like we did – we were running around wherever we wanted – but they knew how to educate them.

Q: But did you play with the Jewish children, or separately?

A: We played, we did. The schools were separate. Over here, across the road [*She motions to where the road is supposed to be.*]; here, where the new bridge over the Šešupė River has been built, there was our **Kazlerinė** School. And the Jewish school was across the road from it. So sometimes we would have fights against each other on the highway [*She laughs.*]. And then later, when the Germans arrived, they established a German school there, because many Germans had lived here in Suvalkija (a region in the Southwest of Lithuania). So then, when they returned, they did not return to their own farms, but they went on to live in Jewish homes mostly; they occupied them upon their return. So these Germans children—we would fight the German kids as well [*She laughs.*].

Q: The enemy had changed?

A: The enemy had changed [*She laughs.*].

[02:] 11:26:24 - [02:] 13:42:10

00:11:56 – 00:14:16

Q: Well, and tell me now, Mrs. Justina, did the priests at the church say anything after the massacre had taken place, or before the massacre?

A: Well, I don't know. I have heard something from my mother and someone else too—I cannot remember now, maybe my sister will remember—that there was some priest –Pėstininkas was his surname or something like that, I cannot remember—and he supposedly gave a sermon or something, condemning [the massacre]. And later he supposedly had some kind of trouble. But there was such a priest, although only one.

Q: Was he the pastor of Pilviškiai?

A: There were a few priests here in Pilviškiai, not just one. There was a pastor and several others. Several of them. But that one was very good: when he would go around collecting alms, but he never took money from us. We were seven children and we were poor. So he even left money for my mother. He never took a single penny. He said, „You better buy bread for the children or something. “ I'm telling you, maybe my sister Regina will remember the priest; there were rumors that he had trouble after he had protested against something.

Q: So we visited the site of the massacre, and we inspected the spot that you witnessed the massacre from. Now tell me please, which killers do you remember? You named the Štūra [brothers]—

A: Juozas Vainulevičius, our neighbor [lived] right here, over the fence [*She motions with her head in the direction of his house.*]; then Kaminskas – also Juozas; Valentinas Kalinauskas; Adomavičius – I cannot tell you his first name, but I think it was Juozas as well. I had a list somewhere here. Then—I have forgotten some, but I have a list [*She points to the location of the list.*].

Q: Oh, ok, we will look at it later.

A: Yeah, yeah, we will look at it later.

[02:] 13:42:11 - [02:] 15:36:23

00:14:17 – 00:16:15

Q: Well, just whomever you can remember; just the people, who stand out in your mind somehow.

A: Well, yeah. Adomavičius, Kalinauskas, Vainulevičius, Kaminskas. [*Pause.*] Oh, and all three of Štūra family.

Q: Three of the Štūra family, ok.

A: Three Štūra brothers: Jurgis, Liudas and Antanas.

Q: What do you think, why all three of them—or did they all have different motives—why did they all go to the massacre, why did they participate in that massacre?

A: As far as I understand, they were not thinking people. Maybe they had been made drunk the night before. But they had already been participating before that, in marching them [the Jews] around. They had a sort of—well, since they were, so to speak, living off the back of the Jews—their parents had worked for them or something—and the Jews were better off than them, so they probably were chasing their assets.

Q: maybe the Jews had somehow mistreated them, when they were working for them?

A: No, I have not heard of any instances that the Jews would be mistreating anyone. No. No. I'm telling you, they helped out a lot. They really helped our family out. My father worked, and he did honest work. As I said, he would transport goods from Kaunas; he would transport the goods on horses to the shop back here. And there were more people, who— They were purely chasing their assets. Maybe they had been promised something, maybe they knew that—they must have known—they would have fled, when they were brought to shoot them, had they not agreed to take part in it. They could see that they were brought to the pits and everything, so they could have dropped everything and fled, if they knew what they were going to be used in. They must have known.

Q: It is really hard to—

A: They were people of really low intellect. They had not finished school—had not even gone to school. So what can you tell such a person? He was told [to do something], and that's it. Maybe they were promised something, what do you know. Maybe they were given promises.

[02:] 15:36:24 - [02:] 17:35:16
00:16:16 – 00:18:19

Q: Well, and what about children from rich and educated families?

A: Well, there was Baltūsis – his parents were farmers, and well-off, and wanted him to be a priest—you know, how parents wanted their children to pursue priesthood. So they sent one son to study to be a priest, but he didn't finish and ran away; then they sent the second, this one, Antanas was his name, but he also didn't finish for some reason. They were well-off and intelligent people; he studied at the Pilviškiai gymnasium – over here [*She points.*], where my house is, so over there there was a school, the Pilviškiai gymnasium. So he studied there; he was a very good student and everything. And then later he served in the Lithuanian army, when he was finished with his attempts at priesthood studies. But that's what he was like.

Q: So what was he doing before the Germans came?

A: Before the Germans arrived, he had served in the army until 1938 or 1939. And after that, as they write now, he worked for a while as a teacher somewhere.

Q: But not in Pilviškiai?

A: No, not here.

Q: You did not see him around?

A: No, no. He did not work as a teacher in Pilviškiai, since he had not graduated from anywhere, so maybe somewhere in the countryside.

Q: When did you see him—when did he appear in Pilviškiai?

A: He appeared in Pilviškiai when—well I only [saw him] when my mother said to me, „Look, my child, the ex-seminarian of Pilviškiai. “ Maybe he had been sent for an assistantship or something here. Maybe he had been ordained as a seminary student or something; and they would be sent here to teach the children. Lukoševičienė even has a photograph of him preparing children for the Communion. She [mother] said, „Here goes the ex-seminarian of Pilviškiai, Baltūsis, in that car. “

Q: So that's when you saw him for the first time?

A: That's when I saw him for the first time. They were dressed in black clothes; both of them were dressed in dark civilian clothes, while one was wearing a German uniform and was steering the wheel. It was an open car—it was probably a military car.

[02:] 17:35:17 - [02:] 19:53:02

00:18:20 – 00:20:42

Q: Which one of them could have operated the machine gun?

A: Well, I thought—

Q: Could those dark-clad men have done it?

A: Not the dark-clad ones, it could have— Baltūsis had served in the army, so he could have been shooting, I think. He must have distinguished himself, if the Germans took him later and didn't let him go. They did not let him go; he joined the SS, and was taken to Osvencim [Auschwitz; Oświęcim]. I don't know, Osvencim, or Madanek (Majdanek) – one of the camps. The Jews have found some evidence of him having served there.

Q: The entire biography?

A: Yeah, yeah. After I described everything, they helped finding it. So then they shut up, they shut up, all of those—and informed the authorities that the monument should not be built.

Q: So when you were watching in the beginning, when you still had not been sent inside the house, could you see the machine gun from there?

A: What?

Q: Well, when you were watching.

A: No, we simply stood there. Nobody sent us anywhere, we had come out of the grove, and we remained standing there. We could see the machine gun. The machine gun was like—it's legs were like this [*She imitates the form of the machine gun stand with her hands.*] Like your [*She points in the direction of the camera.*]

Q: What distance were they shooting from?

A: What?

Q: What distance were they shooting the machine gun from?

A: Oh, we saw the car as it was passing only, and the same car turned after the procession. We were walking, and they had turned behind the dairy farm into the _____. And the procession marched behind the bridge that we passed earlier today. We saw the procession, and we slowly started moving in the direction of [the farm of] Lozoraitis, the farmer. They were already standing over there [*She motions.*]. We could not see the car anymore; it must have been moved to its planned place in preparation. And they were standing here, undressing and hustling them [the Jews].

Q: Were they shooting the machine gun from the car, or was it put on the ground?

A: From the car. From the car. The shooting was conducted from the car. It was somehow raised rather high; it was raised. Well, maybe they wanted to— They later turned the headlights on and directed the light at [the Jews], who were standing lined up at the pit. They were illuminated, but we could not see [the perpetrators], as they had their backs turned [to us]. [We just heard] “tra-ta-ta”, but there were also individual gunshots too, so maybe some were shooting just so, because they all had guns. Maybe they just wanted to have fun.

[02:] 19:53:03 - [02:] 21:51:08

00:20:43 – 00:22:45

Q: So—

A: And then it ended soon. It grew dark, and soon it ended. Because, as Regina **Stelnokaitė** [**Stalnokaitė**] (**Stelnokas**' daughter)—the one whose father had been summoned and refused to go—told me that after they returned after nightfall. She said that they had their legs up on the piles of clothes in the cart; that the carts had been loaded full with clothes; and that they were sitting there half drunk. She said that they made a sign, which meant “you are stupid for not coming out with us,” and pointed to all those items, “[Look], how much stuff we're bringing back.”

Q: Could you see the machine gun from where you were watching the shooting—at least in the beginning, when you started watching? Could you see the machine gun itself being fired?

A: Well, not really. The car was standing there, so they probably didn't take it out, because they were shooting right out of the car.

Q: From what distance, approximately?

A: Well, the distance was, well, let's say roughly 500 meters, maybe a little more.

Q: The machine gun was 500 meters away from the people?

A: Oh, no! No, not from the people, but from us.

Q: From you, yes.

A: From us it was maybe a little more than 500 meters.

Q: And the machine gun? What distance was it firing at people from?

A: From the people it was, well, around 30, maybe 20 meters. Around 30 meters probably. I showed to you earlier, where three new trees have grown tall now – so they were standing somewhere around that spot. Because from that angle—you can see the trees through that angle, where they were shot and where the graves are, from that angle we could see the car. And later, as we were started walking when it started getting dark, they were firing with the bright lights on, so we could see everything pretty clearly. And there was screaming at the pit, a terrible screaming. And the gunshots. And they were shouting “faster”; they were shouting and giving out orders “faster, faster”.

[02:] 21:51:09 - [02:] 24:05:01

00:22:46 – 00:25:05

Q: So you saw how the people were lined up at pit, how they—

A: Yeah, they were marched to the pit. They were marched to the pit from Višakis River, all bathed. They were bathed, marched to the pit and then barraged, and then – a new party again. Maybe there wasn't one, but two lined up [one in front of the other]. And at the end, they probably dumped them all together. I'm telling you, the next day when we came to look at it; there were depressions in the sand, crumbling. So people had been moving -- they probably had fallen in alive. How could one successfully aim at a child on his mother's hands? Others were falling out of fear, not—

Q: Were they lined up on the rim of the pit, or were they ordered to go inside the pit?

A: No, they were on the rim of the pit, lined up on the rim of the pit.

Q: And everybody fell directly into the pit?

A: Into the pit, into the pit.

Q: Did somebody then shoot inside the pit to finish them off?

A: No, this I cannot tell you. No. I cannot tell you, I couldn't see it. Well, they fell in themselves, so they didn't even have to finish them off. The ones, who were shooting, were such smartasses that it didn't even occur to them to do such a thing.

Q: And tell me please, after the massacre, would you meet these killers around the town? Would you see them?

A: We would meet them, and not just around the town. They lived right next to our home. Normal. Only Vainulevičius got really frightened, when the Russians arrived. Our entire house was taken away, and the Russian army's dentist office was established there; doctors moved into our house, while we were moved into Vainulevičius'— the one who had been shooting the Jews — house. So whenever Russian soldiers came by, he started dripping with sweat and shaking, fretting. He probably felt that maybe—so he tried to say something in Russian to them: that he had worked somewhere or something, but he didn't know Russian, so he would say “**da pozd**”, “**da sklad**”, “**da karaul**” [RUSSIAN] – throwing out words [*She laughs.*] like these all frightened. And if, upon leaving his room, he saw Russian soldiers approaching, he would go to the cattle shed, straight to the cattle shed all frightened. Soon they were all assembled and arrested.

[02:] 24:05:02 - [02:] 26:08:22

00:25:06 – 00:27:14

Q: And how did they live in the German years, when the Germans were still here?

A: Well, they lived. [For some] those rags were enough, [for the others] they were not. I'm telling you, he was mostly preoccupied with dismantling tombstones – the tombstones from Pilviškiai Jewish cemetery. He must have known, since not all of them were suitable for making grindstones, so he would take them in a wheelbarrow with two handles and one wheel, and would come back panting from the cemetery with a tombstone in his wheelbarrow. They had inscriptions on them – Jewish inscriptions; we could not understand their language. So he would make them: he would chisel and chisel and would make grindstones of about this size [*She shows the size with her hands.*], then punch a hole in the middle to make the grindstone, and then attach the legs. And the farmers would come to him; there was a waitlist for those grindstones. So he would bring new ones all the time. He made a lot of money from those grindstones, because not everybody could make them. And then they were all arrested. Taken.

Q: Have you ever heard them talking about the massacre: how it was, what they did, what the Jews—?

A: Well, as I told you, when they were walking to this—to that—[party], and my mother asked, “Uršuliukė, where are you going all dressed up?”, they [replied] with pride. She had a very beautiful dress on, a green one, whereas normally they had nothing and dressed poorly. Where else could she have gotten it – he must have brought it back for her. She responded, “we are going to a funeral”, and, holding hands, they both hurried to the funeral.

Q: So the dress was [taken] from the Jews?

A: It must have been [taken from] the Jews, because they didn't have anything. We lived right nearby, and they [lived] very poorly. He was very brutal, even with his children. His girl was raised by her grandmother since she was little. He would beat his newborn children, so [they] couldn't [stay] with him. He was so brutal, that he would take her outside into the potato fields, and beat her so hard. He would beat her for no reason.

Q: So he was a sadist.

A: He was a sadist. I'm telling you, that's the kind of people, who participated – sadists. The Štūra [brothers] were also sadists. So that's the kind that went there. Pilviškiai administration probably knew whom to invite.

[02:] 26:08:23 - [02:] 28:28:20
00:27:15 – 00:29:39

Q: Did they discuss any details of how everything happened?

A: Well, maybe not. Maybe among themselves. Maybe they discussed something among themselves. You should ask around older people, they might know something.

Q: And what did Baltūsis do during the rest of the German years, after the massacre?

A: After the massacre, he soon disappeared from Pilviškiai. He took over a very good Jewish house together with all their belongings.

Q: Which one?

A: What? Over there, near the Jewish cemetery, there is Vilniaus Street there, a very short street, so he took over a Jewish house there. That's how I discredited them.

Q: Whose house was it?

A: What?

Q: Whose house was it? Can you tell the surname?

A: I cannot tell you, maybe my sister Regina will remember if it was theirs. We should ask if it was theirs. Maybe my brother will know. **Kazlovas** would know, because he took over the house opposite it, but he will not say, because his son-in-law participated in the shooting of the Jews, and now he wants to rehabilitate himself. He is searching for justice. He is hiring witnessed, so that they testify that in the German years he did not participate in anything. He was walking around in SS uniform – how could he have not participated in anything?

Q: What is his surname, the son-in-law of Kazlovas?

A: **Laurinaitis [Laurynaitis]**.

Q: Laurinaitis. And the first name?

A: Vytautas. So they want to prove now that he had no uniform; in short, that he did not participate in anything. But people know. As soon as the Russians arrived, he went to the front immediately, joined the Russian army. He took Berlin and returned to Pilviškiai decorated with medals for the taking of Berlin. And then all of a sudden—there were witnesses, and that Jewish girl, **Liurytė** (**Liurija**'s daughter) lived here as well, so she said that her parents were taken from their homes and marched to the square by him, that he took her parents away. So she informed on him, so he was arrested and sentenced. And now he is bragging to everybody that he was a partisan with Baltūsis [*She laughs.*]. [People] make up all kinds of things, when so many years have passed.

Q: He was his comrade.

A: A comrade, yeah. I'm telling you, it's true they were comrades, because they both participated in it. So that Laurinaitis was pretty well-off – they lived pretty well. And Baltūsis too. Also **Lietuvninkas**, Ambrasas, the former chief of the rural district. So these were the leaders. The gang had to be—

[02:] 28:28:21 - [02:] 30:06:08
00:29:40 – 00:31:21

Q: How did Baltūsis take over that Jewish house?

A: He lived in that Jewish house with his family. He was married. And then later—what a paradox: when he left to be a partisan when upon his return, when he went into hiding, he left a wife with two children. And that wife—he was pretending to be single, among the partisans he pretended to be a bachelor. He didn't care for the children nor the wife. And the wife married a Soviet collaborator, who lived in Barzdai village. They were called “sribai” (Soviet collaborators, hit men, who fought the Lithuanian partisans), or “defenders of the nation”, so his wife married one of such “defenders of the nation”. Baltūsis' wife would have been sent to Siberia, if he was such— Nothing. She did not stay in touch with him. He left her.

Q: But she lived in the same house?

A: Well, she lived there under the Germans, they had taken it over.

Q: And after the Germans had been expelled?

A: What?

Q: And after the Germans had been expelled?

A: When the Germans left, the entire town was bombed and nothing remained. All of it was burned by the Germans.

Q: So that Jewish house also burned down?

A: Everything burned down, nothing remained, everything.

Q: And that Jewish house burned down too? The house of Baltūsis?

A: Yeah, yeah. You see, there is one Jewish house remaining here [*She points through the window.*], in front. Then there is another, a wooden one, at the foot of the hill [*She points to the other side.*], and everything else has been bombed and burnt down by the Germans. All those who were chasing the riches, remained with nothing.

Q: And where did Baltūsis live before the massacre? What did he own?

A: He lived in a village here [*She motions with her head in the direction of his village.*]; right across the Šešupė River, close to here, maybe a kilometer and a half from here in the direction of Vilkaviškis. He lived there with his family. His sister is still alive in Kaunas. His parents are buried here, so she is sometimes seen visiting their parents' graves.

[02:] 30:06:09 - [02:] 32:18:20

00:31:22 – 00:33:39

Q: And the parents' surname is the same, Baltūsis, right?

A: Baltūsis, yeah, yeah. They had—one brother was deported, because he was retarded, he was mentally ill. So as he was leaving—you know, when [people] were being deported to Siberia, everybody took something—he took out shoulder pads—hangers—from the closet and filled up a bag with them. That's how he was. He died in Siberia. Nobody looked after him, he was all alone, and he froze, he froze his feet off, and then he died. That's what I've been told. And about his betrayal—it has been written in newspapers that a maid who had worked for them informed on him. I have talked to her, that maid. She came over to me. She said, "Nothing like that [happened], I did not. Not even close," she said. "I could have informed on him long time ago, if I wanted to inform on him." I learned from some reliable [sources] – the former NKVD employees, who worked here in Pilviškiai – that Baltūsis' own sister came over and said "I am done with all of his panhandling and his killings." He started killing everybody in mass numbers. If you read his program, [it says], in short, "if someone signs to join the collective farm, two should be hanged. Also their heads must be cut off" That's what his program looked like. So what kind of struggle is that? Who are you fighting? Your own people?

Q: And you also talked about that Jew, who survived the war, what happened to him?

A: Yeah, yeah, that Jew. Maybe one day I should go to Bagotoji village, and maybe any of those farmers will still be alive, so I can learn who he had been staying with. There must be some old people who survived [from those times]. They tried discouraged him, they said, "don't go or something will happen to you. Don't you see that these are still turbulent times?" "No, I will go," he said, "maybe something remained—maybe somebody survived." He had fled, and that's it, you know. And he didn't show himself during the German years, those people hid him.

Q: Do you know the first and the last name of that Jew?

A: Kuškė. Kuškė was his surname, but I cannot tell you his first name now. There still one alive—

Q: So the same people were hiding Kuškė?

A: The person, who let him go, when he was marching [the Jews], is still alive. He marched them, but he also wasn't tried or anything. [People] defended him. He played soccer and was a sportsman—

[02:] 32:18:21 - [02:] 34:07:07

00:33:40 – 00:35:32

Q: What is his surname?

A: **Kupčinskas**. But—

Q: And the first name?

A: What?

Q: And his first name?

A: Kupčinskas, Kupčinskas, Kupčinskas [*She tries to remember.*]. Feliksas, I think. But when I wanted to get back in touch with him—we hung out together, as we were both into sports and everything, but somehow— My brother was the one who defended him. My brother together with somebody else. He said, „we persisted, we said that he did not participate in anything. “ But he was there at the marching. So he said that he let that **Kuškė** go. When they were being marched across Pilvė River into the square, he told him, „get under the bridge. “ And he stayed there hiding under the Šešupė bridge, and when the night came, he darted into the woods, and in the direction of Bagotoji village. Well, and—well, and then, when the war—when the front passed, he [came] here. And he was found somewhere here [*She motions with her head in one direction.*]. He was found dead. He was found shot. And he was buried in Pilviškiai. So he was the last Jew to be buried in that cemetery. In this Jewish cemetery [*She points with her finger in the direction of the cemetery.*]. When you go down in the direction of the station. I remember that he was brought wrapped in a sheet, without a casket. That's how they were buried. We, children, always watched funerals. They would be wrapped in a sheet and sat down facing the East – supposedly, that if they resurrect, they would be ready to be the first ones to run to the reawakening of the world. That was a Jewish tradition.

Q: So Jews buried like that?

A: Jews buried like that.

Q: So there were more Jews, who survived?

A: What?

Q: There were more Jews who survived the war?

A: No. They would bury like that before [the war] as well. After the war only the last one, who had been shot and brought here. We, children, ran from the school to watch how he was sat down into the grave. He had been wrapped into a sheet and [brought] in a cart. A white sheet. No casket.

Q: So what Jews buried him?

A: Not Jews. Lithuanians. The farmers brought him.

Q: The farmers brought him and buried him in accordance with the Jewish tradition?!

A: The farmers buried him. Yes, in accordance with the Jewish tradition.

[02:] 34:07:08 - [02:] 35:59:23

00:35:33 – 00:37:29

A: We should, we should—but the roads have changed, overgrown with bushes, so you cannot reach anywhere with a car. I should check who is still alive. They should know. But he was surely killed by the forest people. The forest people killed him. Since one of them was—and Baltūsis too, but he maybe was half leader, so he did not interfere, but there was a **Jurkšas**, or **Jurkša**. Or maybe **Juška**. He had also participated in shooting the Jews, so he was probably afraid that he could be recognized. You see, those **Šivajoniukai** (**Šivajonis**‘children) both had their heads cut off in the forest. They were very young children. They had been picking mushroom there around Bagotoji village and were killed.

Q: What was the children’s surname?

A: They were called **Šivajoniukai**, but but the real we should also ask my sister Regina. But we, children, called them **Šivajoniukai**. **Šivajoniukai**. But I cannot really tell their real surname.

Q: But it still hasn’t been found out who shot those **Šivajoniukai** or **Kušké**?

A: No. No, nobody tries to find out. Very many people had been killed, and nobody occupied themselves with it. No compensation, nothing. They were killed and that’s it.

[Long pause.]

Q: And what happened with Baltūsis after Lithuania’s independence in 1990? How did the whole story start?

A: It started—it started, when I read in the newspaper— my sister had brought it to me, as she always goes to the kiosk and they give her newspapers that have already been read—about these— She said, “Look,” she said, bringing it to me: “Baltūsis, that Jew killer—,,

File 3 of 3

[03:] 00:40:22 - [03:] 02:42:23

00:00:44 – 00:02:51

A: They saw the paper, and they went inside—

Q: That was at Uleckienė's?

A: At Uleckienė's.

Q: Let's talk about this from the beginning. So who was hiding at Uleckienė's?

A: Three. Three Jews. Jewish women were hiding. Because **Frydmanas** had ran over to her the night before and said, „Uleckienė, maybe you could take in, “he said, „and hide these women? “ „Because, “he said, „the men were shot last night. “ He said, „The man had been shot. “ So he, that **Frydmanukas (Frydmanas)**, knew they had been shot. Well, she said „ok“. Then he brought them, and they started hiding at her home. I'm telling you, a search was performed there twice. During the second search she had typhus, so they took fright when they came.

Q: Who performed the search? Who looked for the Jews?

A: I have the names [of those, who were] at Uleckienė's here, so it's written, who was there: Kaminskas, then Ramanauskas, Kaminskas, and someone else. There were three of them, who came.

Q: And that's it?

A: What?

Q: There were no German soldiers?

A: No, no, no. Not a single German, not a single German. And they didn't find anything. They took fright of her lying in bed with typhus; they took fright and did not finish their search. And they ran away. And then she sensed that it could be bad, so she arranged their departure from her home. So two of the women were taken to a village in Šakiai district, while Gita Liurytė, who was around 15-16 years old, was taken to Parausiai village. A **Voverauskas** family lived there. So she stayed with that **Voverauskas** family for two or three years, and then, you know, she stands out, [people] started noticing that she was Jewish, so for safety reasons they also gave her away to their relatives in Karkliniai village – in the direction of Marijampolė – the **Basikys [Basikis]** family. So that **Basikys** family later baptized her, gave her a new name, Danutė. They would also dye her hair blond all the time, so that— So she remained there until the end, and after the war ended and the front passed, she returned to Pilviškiai and worked at a store in Pilviškiai for a long time.

[03:] 02:42:25 - [03:] 04:36:22

00:02:53 – 00:04:49

Q: So those three escaped—

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A: Yeah.

Q: And then this **Kuškis** escaped—

A: That **Kuškis** escaped—

Q: So only these four escaped? Nobody else did?

A: There were a few more, who escaped.

Q: How did the other escape?

A: Well, I cannot—they probably had left for somewhere, or something, and—

Q: Were there any Jews, who were caught – who had been hiding, but were caught by those, who were searching for them?

A: Well, only those—only those two girls, who had been released, were captured. And when they started writing about Baltūsis—I don't know how it's possible to make up such lies—that Baltūsis family rescued this Jewish girl, **Gita Liurytė**—they didn't say—they didn't know her real surname, as she was called—so everybody—they had a shop here—so all the locals of Pilviškiai [would say], „at Lipkė's“, „at Lipkė's“. Nobody enunciated his surname. So they wrote that Baltūsis family had rescued „Lipkutė“(Lipkė's daughter); that they baptized her; that they would go to the church in Pilviškiai every day and pray. They made all this up. So when I read it, I was so agitated that I got into the car, all the witnesses—I knew who had rescued her, and called them—and everything. So I collected everything and wrote it down, so when I published the article, I knocked them out, and their all—all their lies ended [*She laughs*]. I'm telling you, they are not looking for witnesses; they don't go to people, who are still alive. I wrote to them, “Come over, many Pilviškiai residents know about that Baltūsis and all the others. About the shooting of the Jews and everything”. And now, when they came—I don't know with what purpose, but they invited to Militsiya (police in the Soviet Union)—now it is called police, of course—for questioning anyone, who knew about the Jews. So that **Lukoševičienė** went there. Then my sister—my sister went to Vilkauskis. So they said, “No, no, we don't want details, don't tell us, we don't need anything” – it's not clear what was their purpose and what they wanted here. To defend somebody again, I guess.

Q: Just to conduct ceremonious interviews: nobody knows or recalls anything and that's it, right?

A: Yeah, yeah, that nobody recalls anything, yeah.

Q: And there is no news.

A: As if nothing had happened, no news.

[03:] 04:36:24 - [03:] 06:46:14

00:04:51 – 00:07:04

A: But there were 15 of us, who signed, 15 witnesses. And: “No! That’s it, nothing will change. The Marijampolė’s—what are they called now?—head of the Marijampolė county’s resolution cannot be reversed, the resolution in Vilkaviškis cannot be reversed either, whether we seek to, or not.” They took us for fools. And I thought to myself, „You are dealing with the wrong person. “ And I then began—when I saw that justice was not to be found—I wrote one letter to Zingeris (Jewish member of the Lithuanian Parliament) in Seimas (the Lithuanian Parliament), another letter – to Vagnorius (former Lithuanian Prime Minister), and I didn’t send them through the postal service, because there are some people, who would be intrigued to read the contents upon seeing the address. Instead, there is a man named Greimas—he had been elected in Vilkaviškis district to serve as the member of the Parliament during, I think, the Parliament’s second term—so I called him and asked, „Maybe you can take [the letters], since you have access there?“ So he went there, and handed [the letters] in person to Zingeris and to Vagnorius. Two copies, with signatures and everything. And then one evening on the Radio Europe we hear that “a monument is planned to be built for a former SS member” *[She laughs.]*.

Q: So there was an actual project for the monument to be built?

A: The entire project was prepared! That’s what they told us, „The project is prepared, the money invested – we cannot back away now, we will build it. The location is chosen and everything. “ So now at that location they built—the location is right next to my sister’s house, at the end of the street, part of the designated spot overlaps with the corner of their garden, and they wanted to build it there. So my sister got so mad, and said, „I will not let this happen. We will tear the monument down. “*[She laughs.]*

Q: Which one – Regina or Emilija?

A: Regina, Regina. Emilija is very peaceful. So then they didn’t know what to do, so they built the coat of arms of Pilviškiai – it stands now in the spot where [a monument] for Baltūsis was to be [built], wooden, maybe you saw it when you entered. And recently, sometime in the summer, they built a cross on top of the church—in the churchyard that is—I haven’t gone there, but I should go sometime—and it’s written „To the partisans of the Tauras District“ on it. They didn’t dare to put Baltūsis name on it—they can see that they have completely lost, and everything has been exposed.

[03:] 06:46:16 - [03:] 08:59:04

00:07:06 – 00:09:23

Q: So now Baltūsis’ name is not inscribed anywhere?

A: No, no, there isn’t. There isn’t. There is only—only where he was shot—well, he shot himself, when they were denounced and the house was surrounded—they were in the stable—so he shot himself and set fire so that the documents and everything else would burn in it. So at that place, in the farmhouse of Baltrušaitis—they were cousins with the Baltrušaitis family—a small monument was built from stones laid on top of each other with the inscription that [partisans] of Tauras District died there: Baltūsis, Brazys—not Brazys, Balsys, I think, who had been a prison

guard in the Balsiai rural district at that time, under the Germans—people like that had come together. And these didn't have to show anything more, so they—

Q: So the prison guard also [participated in killing] the Jews and—

A: Well, yes, and he transported the Jews and everything. And he also chased those, and guarded them. Nothing else—

Q: Do you know how much money was designated for the monument for Baltūsis?

A: Oh, it was a lot of money. I could find it out. That Greimas is now the Vilkaviškis mayor's deputy.

Q: What was the monument supposed to look like?

A: What?

Q: What was the monument supposed to look like?

A: Oh, the monument [was supposed to be] big. I'll have to look it up, I think I still have the newspapers, but not—

Q: With an effigy or without?

A: What? *[She laughs.]*

Q: With an effigy or without?

A: With—with an effigy.

Q: It was supposed to have an effigy, right?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But a lot [of money]. In my opinion all those monuments are just for money laundering. So many monuments being built! I am lying here alone and thinking, "Who benefits from the building of these monuments?" Because everybody tries to defend, to stonewall—all those leaders. And in Vilkaviškis now – Kudirka (the author of the Lithuanian anthem) might not have even been there. Everything related to him is in Kudirkos Naumiestis: a monument and a museum too. And here, right next to Pilviškiai, was his parents' home, so [they should have built it] at least here: the granary is still there on the farm. No! Mačys, the mayor of Vilkaviškis, built the monument right next to his window at the mayor's office. It's all about money.

[03:] 08:59:05 - [03:] 11:04:06

00:09:24 – 00:11:33

Q: Of course, it's a scam: they—they designate thousands toward it, and then give the tender to their own, and divide [the money] among themselves, yeah.

A: There is no accounting these days. It used to be that nobody could receive cash, but now: you prepare a project – and you get allotted a number of thousands right away. And maybe they divided it in half, who knows. Who knows how deep underground the monument extends, or how much of it is on the surface? It's all money laundering conducted through the [building of] crosses and monuments.

Q: Was the Baltūsis project initiated in Vilnius, or was initiated by the local government?

A: It was—everything was arranged by the Genocide Center. But all of it was [done] by the [authorities] of the Marijampolė region. That's how it is written in the newspapers—I have them somewhere—that “it is too late, that the designs and everything are ready”*[She laughs.]*

Q: What does “too late” mean, right?

A: What does “too late” mean! *[She laughs.]*

Q: You know, such is the nature of a sports[wo]man – to fight to the end. *[She laughs.]*

A: We will have to— have you seen that project?

Q: What?

A: Have you seen that project?

Q: No, I have not seen the project. I will ask Greimas, because he said that—when we go—well, because the resolution is still valid, it has not been repealed – the resolution to build a monument to Baltūsis.

A: It has not been repealed?!

Q: It hasn't been repealed!

A: So I talked to Greimas, and he said, “When we go next, I will raise the issue of repealing all that—that resolution.” Otherwise, after some time passes, they will say again, “let's build, because there is such a—we haven't built it yet.”

Q: Yeah, “the resolution is still valid, and that's it”.

A: It's valid, yeah, yeah, just “there was no funding” or something.

Q: It may begin at any time.

A: Yeah. So he said—

Q: Well, tell me more about that Baltūsis. Did you see him in Pilviškiai after the massacre? What did he do here?

A: Very rapidly he—Well, I did not—I only saw him there and then, when he was riding, and after that, you know, he was close to the authorities—he was the police chief, I think—people say he was the chief of the police.

Q: How much time did he work here as the police chief?

A: Well, when the Jews were shot, he disappeared from here. And here they write that he left to work as a teacher. But that he actually went to work in Poland—they try to conceal all this. And when all was revealed, all his biography exposed, they don't know where to hide once more. Just lies, lies, and pure lies – just to defend him by any means, just to have a hero.

[03:] 11:04:07 - [03:] 13:44:09

00:11:34 – 00:14:20

Q: Did he, Baltūsis, profit off the massacre of the Jews?

A: Well, there is a woman, who now lives in Jonava—I know her, she was planning to come visit me—**Galubovskaitė (Galubovkis' daughter)**. She used to live in Opšrūtai village, and the Opšrūtai village was exterminated by Baltūsis. 33 or 34 people were massacred, including small children. It was horrible, everything was burned down.

Q: What year was it?

A: It was 1947. In 1947—in March, I think.. It was 1947, I think.

Q: And it has really been determined that it was Baltūsis work?

A: Baltūsis'! They're proud of it. If you don't mind—or will you take a look at it later?

Q: Later.

A: The Genocide Center has replied to me; provided me with a response about what a great hero he was for exterminating them, as they were Russians. What kind of Russians were they? They were—the Germans occupied Poland in 1939, and they drew the demarcation line in Seinai [Sejny]—they were all from Seinai. But they had lived for 300 years – they could not even recall how long they had lived there [in Seinai], the so-called Russian Old Believers. They had been persecuted in Russia, because they were Old Believers, and their beliefs somehow disagreed with the Orthodox beliefs. So after they were deported from Russia, they came roaming to Seinai. There were Lithuanians, who had been brought there: Molis family still lives here, then—

Q: Well, yes, Seinai was a Lithuanian land.

A: It was a Lithuanian land! They all lived there! **Galubovskis** family's grandfather had left for America, earned money and built a church for those—since old times, you know.

Q: And Opšrūtai was their village?

A: Opšrūtai was their village. When the Germans were deported—they left on their own, they were not deported, but they left on their own in 1940 to Germany—very many were repatriated from Suvalkija, while their farms remained here. And in Opšrūtai used to be purely German. So they were brought here [from Seinai], and there was an agreement— since their farms were being destroyed and their lands taken by the Germans, they were all moved here. To Lithuania. Two trains came.

Q: Instead of the Germans, who had been repatriated?

A: Yeah. Two trains came to Pilviškiai: one sometime in December 1940, and the second one – in January [1941]. Two trains came to the Pilviškiai station. They were brought with horses and other animals – with everything. In short, they were settled here. So there. And they were given those lands. And if even today it is recognized—the **Galubovskis** family and others had their land returned, because it was legalized that their previous land [in Seinai] was replaced with land here. So what kind of— And now it is written in newspapers, and [shown] in that movie, which has been recently directed, in which she comments shamelessly that—I don't even know her name, she pretends to be some kind of historian.

[03:] 13:44:10 - [03:] 15:52:06

00:14:21 – 00:16:33

Q: (Dalia) Kuodytė?

A: Not Kuodytė, some other woman. I would have recalled Kuodytė.

Q: You are talking about a TV film, right?

A: I have a response written and signed by Kuodytė. So that movie is called *War after the War*, “*Karas po karo*”. So this—

Q: So [it was considered part of the] struggle for Lithuania's independence?

A: Yeah, it was an incredible [act of] heroism – the shooting of people, including children and the elderly, in the Opšrūtai village.

Q: And it was done by Baltūsis, right?

A: By Baltūsis, yeah. I have lists with the people's [names and] years of birth and everything. Nothing was—only one of them worked for NKVD in Pilviškiai – of the entire village, of all those Russians. A big number of them lived there.

Q: Yeah, so we started talking about— I was asking whether Baltūsis profited from the massacres of the Jews—

A: Oh yes, right. So that **Galubovskaitė**, she had worked for a German named **Špėderis**, and that **Špėderis** participated in the shooting of the Jews. She told me this, because we couldn't have known everyone.

Q: Here, in Pilviškiai?

A: Yeah. Because Opšrūtai is maybe six or seven kilometers away. Opšrūtai, yeah. So that **Špėderis**—he lived there, apparently he had not been repatriated with everyone else—was friends with Baltūsis. And both of them, Baltūsis and **Špėderis** came back after the shooting of the Jews in a cart full of possessions. A fully loaded cart, or “brička” as it was called then. So they returned—she **[Galubovskaitė]** said that she was helping out **Špėderis'** mother clean and wash, and that she had to bring food to the table and everything. So it was **Liuba Galubovskaitė**—she lives in Jonava now—she told me all this. She knew Baltūsis rather well.

Q: So what kind of possessions did she see Baltūsis bring?

A: Well, rags, you know –clothes. Clothes.

Q: Well, and what about gold – did those murderers appear to have gold or money?

A: So yeah, she told me about gold as well—I have it written down somewhere in a notebook—she said that two Jews had escaped, and they were brought from Pilviškiai to them—well, when you mentioned it, it came back to me—to a neighbor [of **Špėderis**]
—I have his surname somewhere, I haven't mentioned it anywhere in a while, so—so they were brought to be hidden, and gave him a lot of gold in return for him letting them hide. So he kept them for a while, and then went to the Germans and denounced them.

[03:] 15:52:07 - [03:] 17:36:20

00:16:34 – 00:18:22

Q: Do you have the name of that person?

A: I have it written somewhere here.

Q: So there is. Well, and what did he do? He denounced them to the Germans?

A: He denounced them to the Germans, and then they were arrested and executed.

Q: But by the Germans, right?

A: And then later he was deported to Siberia. He served a sentence for this thing. There was a trial under the Russians. So these are pure facts. And Baltūsis was friends with that **Špėderis**, and they returned [together]. She knew him, and she recognized him when the entire village was being massacred.

Q: So he disappeared. And how did people know that he disappeared to Poland? How did this fact come to the surface? [I am talking about] Baltūsis—that after the massacre of the Jews in Pilviškiai, he left for Poland?

A: Well, everybody talked about it then. He returned for vacation or something. Right, he came back for vacation!

Q: And would you see him?

A: No, no. I told you, I didn't pay any attention to him; we were children and didn't—only when my mother said to me, "My child, this is Baltūsis, the priest, the former seminarian Baltūsis is riding there—is sitting in that car."

Q: So after the massacre you did not see him anymore?

A: No, no. There were some walking around in uniforms, but I was a child, and I cannot tell you if it was him or not. But he was seen here. He was seen when he had returned for vacation here from Poland. Everybody knew. Everybody knows who was where. He probably was boasting about it.

Q: Where in Poland was he?

A: Majdanek camp, I think. It has been written somewhere that he had worked as an assistant to the head of the Majdanek camp. They confess themselves in their books, and describe him as a hero for having participated there. Assistant to the head – meaning he wasn't shooting himself, he did not participate at the shootings [*She laughs.*].

[03:] 17:36:21 - [03:] 19:14:05

00:18:23 – 00:20:03

Q: Well, and then later, after the war, when he reappeared here again, did people know that it was Baltūsis—

A: No, they didn't know anything yet. They didn't know, until the massacres did not start. Then he was identified.

Q: After he had been shot?

A: No, no, before that [people] knew that it was him raging. Because he was present when the Opšrūtai village was massacred, then they also killed one, also from Opšrūtai village—Baltūsis and two others came to take him. Not only Baltūsis, but also farmers from the countryside were going around and killing [people] in disguise. So they took the father to a lake in Paežeriai village—where Kudirka father's home is—and his corpse was found surfaced only three months or so later. A stone had been tied to his—

Q: Whose father?

A: Well, I forgot the surname.

Q: It's ok, if you forgot, it doesn't matter.

A: It's here, it's here. I have the surname and everything. So somebody was fishing, and noticed a corpse come up. So they took him [out of the water], and [saw that] his toe nails had been ripped off, the skin on the soles of his feet burnt—he had been tortured, tortured and then thrown in [the water]. It was purely his [Baltūsis'] method. The country lads could not have come up with it by themselves. He was also friend with a Brazys—also from Opšrūtai—who was extremely brutal, one of the so-called partisans. He's also considered almost a hero. So all these, who have distinguished themselves during the massacres—here around Pilviškiai there were no real partisans, only criminals and murderers like these.

[03:] 19:14:06 - [03:] 21:14:00

00:20:04 - 00:22:08

Q: And was Brazys also present in the massacre of Jews in Pilviškiai?

A: No. No, no he was not. He was just a teenager, you know. He had shot—I have a picture here—he had shot my sister's—only the father of my sister's daughter-in-law survived, while his two sisters—one was 11, the other – 13 years old— his brother, and both of his parents were killed by shooting in the heads. So it was Brazys together with a gang from Pilviškiai School, who called themselves Natangas Platoon, or First Platoon of Natangas – that's how they called themselves, and Brazys was their leader. And what were they shot for? There was a dance at the Alksnynas School, a New Year's party, and one man named Kudirka said that he went outside before twelve o'clock to watch the fireworks, and then suddenly he heard an order "First platoon!" So from this I assume that it was their job, because the First Platoon of Natangas has been described in books now. They threw in three grenades into the dance hall –there were teachers and children inside, you know, the New Year's Eve. They didn't care who they were going to kill. Well, and none of the grenades exploded. So one youngster grabbed one of the grenades, opened the door of the hall, and hurled it outside. And killed one of them—of the partisans.

Q: And the grenade exploded outside?

A: It exploded, yeah. Next to the fence, next to the bushes, where he had thrown it. And killed one – Jakštas was his surname, and he was from Navikai village. So they acted fast: took Kudirka's horse, harnessed it, and left with the corpse – they didn't fight or anything anymore. And then NKVD found them rapidly: [tracing] their footsteps through the snow, they saw where they had gone, and they were found.

Q: Was anyone of that Natangas [Platoon] present at the massacre of the Jews?

A: What?

Q: Was anyone of that Natangas [Platoon] present at the massacre of the Jews?

A: No, they were young. No, no. They were young, students from our school.

[03:] 21:14:01 - [03:] 23:03:05

00:22:09 - 00:24:02

Q: They were still teenagers at that time?

A: Teenagers: 16, 17, 18 years old. After the war everybody started studying, so big lads were going to that school. The education was free. So then—so then that Astrauskas, whose family had been murdered, went to the blacksmith's to talk to the men and said, "So they must have killed the last bandit," he said, "now the youth can dance as much as you like," he joked. A few days later they came, barraged his entire family and left a note, "The last bandit has not been killed yet." They said it was in a very poor writing. They examined [and found] that it was Brazys' writing – he was the leader.

Q: Because of one word?

A: Because of one word the entire family was killed. And now they are heroes, described in books and everything. I have collected all the books on them.

Q: So now tell me which ones of the murderers left for the forest – of the ones, whom you saw marching or killing?

A: Only Baltūsis, and this—and that—**Jurkšas—Juška** or **Jurkšas**, I will take a look, I have it noted. **Jurkšas**, I think—no, I think it was **Juška**. Later he was punished by his own. It was said that the partisans themselves annihilated him for cutting off the heads of the children.

Q: Whose heads did he cut off?

A: Well, those children's that I talked about, the so-called **Šivajoniukai**. So probably, he must have been so brutal that—

Q: Aha. And what happened to that **Kuškis**? Maybe we haven't recorded it. Where was **Kuškis**, that Jew, hiding?

A: Also somewhere around Bagotoji village. At a farmer's. At a farmer's, but I'm telling you, I cannot say—you know, people talked, people talked that he was staying at a farmer's, and—

[03:] 23:03:06 - [03:] 24:38:12

00:24:03 – 00:25:41

A: That Liurytė left sometime in—maybe in 1962, or maybe even later – she worked at a pawn shop on Ožėškienės Street in Kaunas. She left for Israel, and then later, people say, she left for America. Then her son, who was in Lithuania – he had married a Lithuanian girl in Kaunas and worked as a goldsmith—also left. She bought him—people say that she bought him a very expensive sports car, and he got into an accident and died, that son of hers.

Q: And **Kuškis** was at the farmer's, he stayed there throughout the entire war—

A: He stayed there throughout the entire war, hid there for four –almost five – years.

Q: And he stayed living there? The war ended and he remained living there?

A: All the time. He didn't leave. They didn't let him, that farmer said, "Stay a little, stay," he said, "don't go, and let it calm down a little." Oh. He said, "It's still not quiet there." But he left. I'm telling you, the farmer was the one who brought him. But the children, you know—we were going to the old school over there on the corner, and all of us, children, ran over to take a look at [the scene] at the grave – we saw how he was sat down, how he was buried.

Q: So what had happened to that **Kuškis**?

A: He was shot. He was shot.

Q: After he left that farm?

A: After he left, he went to Pilviškiai to take a look what's there, [hoping] to find any acquaintances, [hoping] there were any Jews who survived. He wanted to know after the war, because he had been hiding all the time and didn't know anything.

Q: And was shot?

A: Yeah.

[03:] 24:38:13 - [03:] 26:22:21
00:25:42 – 00:27:30

Q: Well, and Liurytė, where did she—after the war she lived and worked in Pilviškiai?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Wasn't she afraid to be shot? Wasn't it dangerous for her to be here?

A: No. No, she lived in the town proper, you know, they did not come close here. There was a Russian garrison stationed here. They did not—in the town proper they did not do anything. A little further, next to the railway station, they attacked one—they entered planning to loot a store, and a money collector from Griškabūdis happened to be there to hand the secret mail to be transported by train to Vilnius. So a shooting ensued, and he was shot. So that was it – the incident, when the collector was shot. And in this book it is written that they found all kinds of secret documents, but later, probably while drunk, they lost them— as it is written that they lost them somewhere in the forest.

Q: So they wanted to build a monument for Baltūsis, and how else were they planning to honor him?

A: They wanted to name the school after Baltūsis. I called the headmaster, and he said, “Nobody will do anything without my permission.” Had they wanted, they would have done it, nobody would have asked him.

Q: How did you learn that the school was going to be renamed?

A: Yeah.

Q: How did this matter come up?

A: What?

Q: How—how did it all start?

A: It was written in a newspaper. In a newspaper. All kinds of wishes, when they started to name all their wishes—oh Jesus. And that was it; I called the headmaster, and I said—I said, “if you want to rename it, there are more famous people: there is Kalėdienė, with whom we studied together – Zalaigaitė, the former world champion, I said—

[03:] 26:22:22 - [03:] 28:33:09

00:27:31 – 00:29:46

Q: So was it before the monument [incident], or after it that the idea to rename the school after Baltūsis was raised?

A: No, no, at the same time: the [ideas of] monument and renaming of the school were raised together. To give it Baltūsis' name.

Q: So what did people think of it?

A: Oh Jesus! There was a real uprising. I'm telling you, there was such tumult, such a horrible thing; everybody was talking, fretting, but nobody did nothing. Like my sister, she will not write anything if there is a need; she can talk, but if a thought needs to be formulated, created— I first started collecting all those newspapers, then visited all the witnesses, who were still alive.

Q: What newspapers did you collect?

A: Well, where they write about Baltūsis.

Q: Where he is glorified?

A: Yeah, I have collected all of those that glorified everything.

Q: And then you visited the witnesses and showed all that material to them?

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A: So yeah, everybody read it. One after another, it travels fast in the village, you know, everybody talks to each other. Well, and I collected everybody's signatures and sent it.

Q: How many signatures were there?

A: I didn't collect more, only 15.

Q: But you could have collected more?

A: Oh, I could have collected more. There was one man, who lived in Gižai village, and he had said, „I will come over, if you need me to sign anything, “he said. But he meant the post-war killings by Baltūsis.

Q: So the [building of] the monument was stopped. And what happened with the school?

A: The same – it ended. It must have been in the same decision. Everything was stopped. So now maybe three years have passed, no wait, maybe four. Whenever I walk past someone they ask me, „So you are still alive, are you still alive? Nobody has blown you up yet? “[*She laughs.*] I respond, „When they blow me up, I will definitely have a monument built for me. “ [*She laughs.*]

Q: Stop.

[03:] 28:33:09

00:29:46

Conclusion of interview.