

STATEMENT OF ESTELLE KIEFER

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INTERVIEW WITH ESTELLE KEIFER

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Holocaust Oral History Project

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Place: San Francisco, Ca.

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Transcriber: Patricia Ulrey

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1 Q. Today is Tuesday, March 26th, 1991.

2 Could you tell also your full name and
3 maiden name? Have you had any other names that maybe
4 you've used during your life? Can you tell us those
5 names also, and spell the names?

6 A. Yeah. My name has been Estella Goldberg.
7 My name is now Estelle Kiefer; and I use the name during
8 the war, Stefana Porkofska.

9 Q. And in what year were you born, what's your
10 birthdate?

11 A. I was born 1920.

12 Q. And what city?

13 A. I was born in (Brieg) on a train. I
14 haven't stopped traveling since.

15 Q. So you told us that you would like to make
16 an introductory remark as to your reasons for giving
17 this interview. So why don't you tell us what those are
18 are.

19 A. I was never going to give my -- talk about
20 my story ever, ever.

21 When I came to America, I was told don't
22 talk about it, don't think of it, nobody wants to hear
23 about it, people aren't interested, and some will even
24 tell you it isn't true.

25 It was a great shock to me, and I had a

1 slight nervous breakdown. After that, I was taken, I
2 think, (joined to highest) for recuperating on beautiful
3 estate in Asbury Park, very close to the Rockefellers
4 who lived in Tarreytown, invited me because I was a
5 novelty, and when I arrived at the station, the
6 chauffeur picked me up from that estate, and he was a
7 German, he spoke German. He was delighted I could
8 understand something, and about two days early in the
9 morning I went into the laundry room to wash, do some
10 washing, and I never forget. I was washing some red
11 socks, and he came in and he said: "How do you like it
12 here?" And so on and then he says: "Best thing ever
13 happened that Hitler eliminated 6 million Jews." I took
14 the red socks -- I have a very bad temper, across his
15 face the wet socks, and I started to cry hysterically.
16 I didn't leave the room for two days.

17 At that time I knew that these people who
18 told me that nobody cares, nobody wants to hear it, and
19 I was never never going to talk about it ever,
20 occasionally when I went -- when identify some friends
21 in New York, I realized there are two kinds of people.
22 Some who never stop talking about it, and some who never
23 talk about it. I was never going to talk about it.

24 I met my husband and he told me -- he's a
25 very sensitive man -- and he said to me, I do not want

1 to know where you came from, what you did. You only
2 existed -- don't ever tell me -- you only existed from
3 the day I met you; that was wasn't very long, because on
4 the third day that we was going, that old 41 confirmed
5 bachelor was going to marry me.

6 So I never talked about it. We never,
7 never, never talk about it, and about ten years ago, we
8 were in a resort in Austria in a hotel, and I had a
9 wonderful time. I met a young lady there. She had
10 never heard of (Hasbrees,) which is, taboo, which --
11 anyhow -- and all of a sudden she said to me "I am from
12 (Priceco.)" (Priceco) is a town in Germany; and all of
13 a sudden I remembered -- I remembered, and I said,
14 "there were two people there, two men, one was an SS
15 Hautstempfuehrer and his friends, do you know Obert
16 Mautzcuper?"

17 She said "no." "Do you know Fritz
18 Ruslerbsky?" She said "yes. A very, very fine
19 gentleman. You should call him. If you knew him, he
20 would be have interested in seeing you."

21 I said "no, I'm not calling him. I don't
22 want to see nobody." "But if you see him," she says, "I
23 work in a bank and I see him quite frequently. He comes
24 in" -- and I -- I said "yes, you give him regards from
25 Stefana Pirofska, now living in San Francisco."

1 She kept -- I was -- I don't what to see
2 nobody. So we left, and the convention people asked me
3 where were we going. My husband said, "we are going to
4 Freinstatz. We've never been there. It's in the Black
5 Forest." We went there, and my husband found a hotel.

6 My husband and I have very, very, very
7 different interests; people think we absolutely not
8 compatible, but I would marry him again. So he went his
9 way, and I went my way.

10 And I came back to the hotel, and the
11 manager of the hotel says, "Mrs. Kiefer, there is a
12 telephone call for you." I said "that's impossible";
13 because three days ago we had no idea where we were
14 going. I don't know anybody, it's impossible for me.

15 She says "a gentleman called, he must talk
16 with you. He gives -- here's his phone number, it is
17 absolutely urgent, he's from (Priceco.) Well, I sat
18 down on the steps, and my whole life came back.

19 I was not going to have anything to do with
20 what happened before, but there was somebody involved
21 who has helped me a great, great deal, and it was -- I
22 was very eager to know what happened to that person.
23 After I calmed down, I went on the phone and I called,
24 and the man said "Stefanie, I got to see you. I never
25 forget the Easter I spent with you, the walk in the

1 park."

2 I said, "I want to thank you in the way you
3 helped me, saving my life. I'm not really Stephanie
4 Pirofski." He said "I knew you were Jewish; Robert and
5 I knew you were Jewish, but we did not give you away."
6 I said, "no, I'm not coming -- I'm not coming to your
7 place, I don't want to see you."

8 He said, "never mind, I come to hotel at
9 11, we see you." "By the way, how in the world did you
10 find out where I am?" You know, nobody knew.

11 He said, "well, I called the police. I
12 called -- the girl called me, said you are from Gstaad.
13 So I called the police "--" and they are not supposed to
14 give -- you see, you have to register in the hotels in
15 Europe -- they're not supposed to give your name -- "but
16 I called the chief of the police, and he gave me your
17 address."

18 So next day he came with his wife. The
19 wife was very, very young; and I remember he -- the wife
20 must have been much, much, older; she was blind. She
21 got blind in childbirth, what I understand. She -- she
22 was killed with the last bomb during the war, and he
23 married his best friend's daughter.

24 And also I was curious to know, and I asked
25 where is Robert Mossgrabber and -- Evvie was a famous

1 movie actor. She'd taken me off the street and into her
2 house, and that's the reason I came to see him; and the
3 wife said "Oh, Robert and Evvie were here two years
4 ago." I said: "What does she look like?" And she said
5 "she has black hair, it's dyed." I said, "it's not,
6 because her father was old and had jet black hair. They
7 had an argument and they have left. And were they
8 married?" "No, no. He had married somebody else, and
9 she had married somebody in Czechoslovakia. She lives
10 in Prague." I said, "do you know the name?" "No."

11 After an hour or so, I said, "isn't that
12 name, the man she married, Hugo Hoffman?" She said,
13 "yes." And my husband was listening and listening and
14 listening. His eyes went then big (indicating).

15 I said to my husband, "you fly home direct,
16 I'm flying home over New York, I have to get in contact
17 with these people." I got -- now they had no consulate
18 you see, there were no diplomatic relation between
19 Czechoslovakia and America, there were none, but they
20 all had business offices there, all of them, China and
21 all had them in New York; and so I went up and I got the
22 telephone book and I got the address, and soon Hugo
23 Hoffman comes in later in the picture; and she was very,
24 very, instrumental of my survival, and I still wasn't
25 going to talk about, yeah.

1 I went home and I wrote her a letter. Now
2 it was -- Eva was a very brilliant girl, she was trained
3 as a spy, I mean not just by the and chairman (this was
4 unintelligible), very, very brilliant, and I wrote a
5 letter. I knew how she was thinking. She must have
6 gone with that man who used to be her lover during the
7 war to Germany to meet him, and she must have told her
8 parents -- she must have told her husband that she was
9 going to Warsaw to see her parents.

10 Now in this letter, I did not want to
11 destroy her life, you know, that I found out she was
12 with her lover in Germany. I wrote a very beautiful
13 letter, I have a copy at home, and anybody I wrote, if
14 they are the people or not, they should answer me;
15 anybody would have answered me that letter, anybody.

16 I never heard from her, because she was
17 fearful the story would come out that she had seen her
18 former lover. As time went on, I forgot the whole
19 thing, and I went to Washington D.C., which was to the
20 Holocaust meeting, was the highlight of my life in
21 America. I must say there was nothing bigger for me.
22 When I think of whatever I have experienced here, that
23 was the highlight, and then I went to Philadelphia; and
24 people who knew me said people were recording their
25 story on the tape, and they pushed me really, so I

1 started to tell my story very quick, and everyone was
2 listening. I went home and I give the tape to my
3 nephew, and my nephew called the library, I mean the
4 Holocaust, and they called me, you see, several times,
5 and then I decided, I really -- he had told me how
6 important it is, how unique the story is, and how
7 important it is; and because of him, I'm here to tell
8 the story; but I was never going to tell, I was too
9 hurt.

10 Now if you want to start with my life, it's
11 fine.

12 Q. I have two questions.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Why did you go to the Holocaust meeting?
15 And then why did you go to --

16 A. Actually, that was a coincidence of going
17 to the Holocaust, you see. We were in Boston for Bar
18 Mitzvah, at Temple El Shalom, and a friend's -- didn't
19 even know about it, I had no idea about it, and a friend
20 of mine mentioned that, and she said "I'm going, I'm
21 giving a speech. Why don't you come, too?"

22 So I came; so my husband and I went. My
23 husband refused to go inside at all, he stayed at the
24 hotel, but one night I came home at 2 a.m. and he could
25 see I had such a good time, so he decided the next day

1 to go with me, but in Philadelphia, there were too many
2 people from -- from the Ghetto who pushed me, you know,
3 I got excited.

4 It was a certain feeling came up, and I
5 started to tell -- you know, the person I told the
6 story, she also kept on writing and calling me. She
7 said that the story is not done well, and you must redo
8 it, you must redo it. As matter of fact, she's going to
9 be my house guest now. So one thing lead to another,
10 you see.

11 Q. Why did you go to Philadelphia, was it
12 right after?

13 A. No, no, it was a few years later, because
14 it was a most exciting experience in my life in
15 Washington, D.C., and I didn't want to miss the next
16 one.

17 Q. That was the next meeting?

18 A. Yeah. My husband didn't go with me. I
19 took a friend of mine who was in Auschwitz. I took her
20 with me, that's the reason; and there's also -- you want
21 to see your people. It's actually one of the main
22 reasons, you want to see, you want to meet them, you
23 want to share; that's the reason I went.

24 Q. The meeting in Washington is the first time
25 that you told your story to anyone?

1 A. No, I didn't tell to nobody, no, no.

2 Q. When was the first time?

3 A. In Philadelphia, when my friends said come
4 on, come on. My friends knew part of -- they knew my
5 story, you know, also, all thought I was dead a long
6 time ago.

7 Q. Getting back to the beginning of the
8 introduction, talking about when you were in Europe on
9 occasion you had the intensive meeting of someone you
10 knew in Germany during the war or before the war, that's
11 what got you interested, put you in the mind set so that
12 you were going to Washington?

13 A. No, no, no, no. I was only interested to
14 find that girl who helped me during the war, what has
15 happened to her; that's the reason I went to see the
16 man, that was it.

17 Q. So that did not have a direct bearing on
18 your wanting to go in New York City?

19 A. No, no.

20 Q. Can we start the meeting?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. When you gave your names, Estelle, you did
23 not spell them, and most of them were pretty easy to
24 spell, but the name --

25 A. The Polish name?

1 Q. Yes, that you used in Vienna, in Warsaw, is
2 very tough. Could you just spell -- give us your names
3 again, and spell them for the record?

4 A. Yeah, sure. Estelle, I mean they called me
5 me Estella at home, E-s-t-e-l-l-a, Goldberg
6 G-o-l-d-b-e-r-g; and then my name was Stefania
7 Porkofska; S-t-e-f-a-n-i-a, Porkofska,
8 P-o-r-k-o-f-s-k-a.

9 Q. And Stefania, what was spelled S-t-e-p-h --

10 A. No, f.

11 Q. S-t-e --

12 A. E-f, is spelled.

13 Q. A-f?

14 A. A-n-i-a, Stefania. Now my name is Estelle
15 Kiefer, K-i-e-f-e-r.

16 Q. And Estelle is E-s-t-e --

17 A. E-s-t-e-l-l-e, yeah.

18 Q. Let's start from the beginning and go back
19 to your childhood?

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. You were born on a train?

22 A. Brieg.

23 Q. In Brieg?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And can you tell us anything about your

1 immediate family, your father and mother and sisters?

2 A. Yeah. I didn't see my father till I was 5
3 years old. He was in France, learning the wine
4 business. I did see him once, I just have a dream about
5 it. I was maybe two years old at the most, not even
6 that I seen him, because my sister was born, it must
7 have been that, you see.

8 My -- my mother went back to Poland to --
9 Ava was born, she went back to her family, you know.
10 And I see my father very -- I -- he was -- I see him
11 eating and I wouldn't go near him that I recall. I
12 didn't see him again until I was five years old in
13 Germany in Frankfurt.

14 Q. Your parents were originally both from
15 Poland?

16 A. Yeah, um-hmm.

17 Q. And you were born in Germany just by
18 happenstance?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Your mother was traveling -- where was your
21 mother traveling, and was your father with your mother
22 when you were born, do you remember?

23 A. No, no, no he wasn't there. He was either
24 in France or in Germany, I don't remember. We were
25 traveling to be with him, and then I seen him again when

1 I was 5 years old.

2 Q. You lived away from your father at least
3 the first 5 years?

4 A. Yeah, yeah.

5 Q. Do you know the reason for that?

6 A. Well, he had to establish himself, which he
7 did; and don't forget, this was pretty much after the
8 war, apartments were hard to come by at that time.

9 Q. World War I?

10 A. World War I, yeah. So he did establish,
11 and we came, and I started school there and I had one
12 more sister, later -- there were two of us, and then
13 later my younger sister was born later.

14 There were three girls. I was the oldest.
15 As a child I was quite ill. I spent maybe two years in
16 and out of hospitals.

17 Q. About how old were you at that time?

18 A. Oh, I was okay, maybe from 16 to 14.

19 Q. Can what we backtrack a little to the first
20 five years of your life. Do you remember anything at
21 all?

22 A. Yes. I remember it was great.

23 Q. This is in Poland?

24 A. Yeah, in (Tomashov.) It was beautiful,
25 beautiful little town, and I had lots of aunts and

1 uncles, and I had fabulous, fabulous grandfather who
2 loved me to pieces, so -- there was nothing negative
3 there.

4 Q. Do you remember anything else of life
5 there?

6 A. During first 5 years?

7 Q. Yes?

8 A. No, no.

9 Q. Did you live in that town till what age?

10 A. Till 5, about 4 and a half.

11 Q. And that's when you left?

12 A. I would say, yeah.

13 Q. Then you moved to?

14 A. Germany, to Frankfurt, yeah.

15 Q. Did you join your father then?

16 A. Um-hmm, yeah.

17 Q. The family lived together after that?

18 A. Yeah. It was a good family life, you know.

19 You respected your parents, and lots of friends, and
20 being the oldest, I was very, very, spoiled, very
21 spoiled. It wasn't fair, and it wasn't right, my
22 sisters think, so I didn't think it was at all. It was
23 okay with me, and lived there till September 19 -- 1938,
24 not '39, just before.

25 Q. Just before --

1 A. Yeah, just before, that's right. (Can't
2 understand.) Just before, yeah, my father came, I see
3 my father coming down -- he's coming to watch the house
4 we lived in, and he had aged in minutes 30 years. He
5 looked awful; two men were behind him.

6 Q. Was this Christmas?

7 A. No, I wasn't there Christmas.

8 Q. When did your father reach there?

9 A. During one hour time, because the police
10 was after him.

11 Q. When was this?

12 A. In the beginning of September 1938. You
13 see, he came up and said "we have to pack, we are
14 leaving. We're to leave everything behind us. We only
15 have to take things with us which we can carry."

16 Q. You were 18 when that happened?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. If we just go back to the period from when
19 you arrived in Frankfurt until that incident happened,
20 then you'll describe if you would that incident, and
21 we'll go forward; but you moved to Frankfurt when you
22 were about 5 years old?

23 A. Um-hmm.

24 Q. You started to describe how you felt about
25 living there. It's a little bit important, especially

1 at what point in time if at any, you started to feel
2 antisemitism?

3 A. Anti-semitism? I tell you how it was in
4 Frankfurt. Frankfurt is a very famous, very wealthy
5 city, and there was a very large Jewish population. You
6 did not associate with anybody who was not Jewish.

7 I knew there was antisemitism, but it
8 didn't affect me personally at all, because I had my
9 friends, I went to my synagogue, I belonged to some
10 Jewish organization. It didn't affect me very much. We
11 had applied to get visa for the States, you know; and I
12 traveled a lot, even as a youngster.

13 My father used to say -- people used to
14 say: "How can you let a young pretty girl travel around
15 the way she does?" And he used to say: "If she wants
16 to do bad things, she can do it in the backyard, so I
17 wanted to give her anything I can give her: Education,
18 travel, because I do not know what life has in store for
19 them, and that nobody can take away."

20 And he taught me that I'm a very, very
21 important person, very important, the most important, he
22 says, "but there is nobody less important than you are,
23 remember that."

24 He taught me many things, which were very
25 valuable to me later on; and he said "always remember

1 the other party is just as smart as you are, and ten
2 percent smarter. If you ever have to come into a
3 situation, figure it out from that point."

4 He was quite a -- very much advanced, and
5 he believed -- I could read when I was 7, because he
6 took me to the library always, always. There was not
7 -- when I -- I started to go to the museum when I was
8 maybe -- you couldn't to the museum before you were 5
9 years old, and I went -- he took me all the time. He
10 exposed me to the arts.

11 Until this day, I believe you can only
12 learn and love art if you are exposed to it, and not so
13 -- not with slides and books, he says, only when you see
14 it.

15 And I spent many Sundays going to the
16 museum by myself, because this is what I loved most is
17 art, so -- and Saturdays, Shabbah was, I would spend
18 with friends and I had two sisters, you know, and I had
19 two very, very good friends. I didn't need any more.

20 Q. So how would you describe then your family
21 life, especially with your parents?

22 A. I wasn't crazy about my father, because he
23 had a bad temper, and I took a bottle of wine and threw
24 it through the window, and naturally he would plenty
25 beat me up or other things.

1 I would -- other things he would do, one
2 day he went out and bought what you hit the dogs with, a
3 whip, and I got hit plenty. I kept thinking back maybe
4 I deserved it. I didn't like him because of that, and
5 then one day I took the whip and put it -- there was an
6 oven, put it in the fire and let it burn, you know,
7 things like that.

8 And he said, "she is no good. When you be
9 16 you will be engaged, and 18 you get married, out of
10 the house." He would be very proud of me today, but I
11 loved my mother.

12 Q. How would you describe that relationship?

13 A. Oh, I loved her. I meant everything to
14 her. Now there was nothing good enough I couldn't have.
15 When I wanted something, I want it now, and she was
16 fighting for it, and I got it now, which was wrong, and
17 my sister, one of my middle sisters, was very envious of
18 me.

19 My friend said "you got all the boys." I
20 had a lot of boyfriends, yes, but she said "you got them
21 all because you have the best clothes," you know. I
22 think it takes a little bit more than good clothes, so I
23 -- I enjoyed my youth very, very much, it was great.

24 Q. Your youth until when, until what age when
25 you said youth?

1 A. Till September.

2 Q. Until September 1938?

3 A. 1938 people left, you know, people
4 emigrated then, and the circle of friends got narrower
5 and narrower, but it also got closer and closer.

6 Q. This is over the years, before 1938?

7 A. Yeah, and until --

8 Q. Until people left?

9 A. -- people left --

10 Q. Could you describe the relationship you had
11 with your sisters then?

12 A. Well, my father used to say "you take your
13 sisters with you," wherever I went, "you're the oldest,
14 you take your sisters with you." I said, "why don't you
15 give me the job of dishes too, to take along?" You
16 know, so I bribed my little sister, and she remembers.
17 She said -- and if she wanted something from me, she
18 said, "I will tell father what you did," so.

19 Q. What about your family, what sort of --
20 were they just like -- did you observe the holidays?

21 A. Yes, yes, yes. We were -- we also had
22 kosher wine. My father was -- he was a specialist in
23 kosher wine. You had to have a (hacksha) from the
24 rabbi, whatever it was; you had to observe the holidays,
25 but deep in their heart, I don't think they were so

1 religious. They were not orthodox, really not, more
2 conservative.

3 Q. Did you keep kosher in the house?

4 A. Yes, we kept kosher, yeah. The first time
5 I ate pork I thought I was going die, but I didn't die,
6 I kept eating it.

7 Q. Anything else you could tell us about
8 Frankfurt, what sort of city it was like? For instance,
9 did most of the Jews live together in the same area of
10 town, or were they spread out? How did the people treat
11 you in just every day or business dealings?

12 A. Well, there were two parts of the city.
13 One where the -- there was lower class and a middle
14 class, and upper class. They lived in different parts
15 of the city. It was a very intellectual city.

16 My father took me to (Mielmartinbuper.) I
17 met a lot of fascinating people. (Pinko Jantiski) came
18 one day -- you know who Jantiski was -- and he took me
19 along, and when I went to (Martinbuper,) I didn't know
20 what he was talking about, but anyhow, I made sure that
21 I met interesting people, and a lot of reading. It was
22 a good life.

23 Q. Did most of the Jews live together, though?

24 A. Yes, yes. We had one circle. Nobody -- I
25 don't know anybody went -- I know one girl, she dated a

1 gentile boy, you know, and when I grow up later on, I
2 also met a gentile boy, but I only dated him once, I
3 didn't dare. I told him who I was, he didn't mind, but
4 I was afraid my father would kill me.

5 Q. How were you treated by the gentiles when
6 you did deal with them?

7 A. I personally -- as a person, I've always
8 been very fortunate with people, I have never been
9 treated badly by anybody in all my life, I must say.
10 Maybe it's my attitude. I don't know what it is, but
11 I've never been treated badly. I can't think of
12 anybody.

13 Q. Did you notice any antisemitism before
14 1938?

15 A. Sure, sure, and the benches it was written
16 down Shabbath afternoon, people would take a walk and
17 they would sit on the benches in the park, and the park
18 used to state Jewish students (unintelligible) or Jewish
19 verboten. Yes, I did see it, but everybody hopes it
20 will go away; that was the attitude, you know.

21 Q. Do you remember your feeling or family's
22 feelings when Hitler first came to power in the early
23 30's?

24 A. Yeah, '32, I remember, and they thought
25 also that wouldn't last.

1 Q. That was the belief?

2 A. That was the belief, and then the real
3 Germans thought nothing would happen to them, you know.

4 Q. The German Jews?

5 A. Yeah, and the one who -- who served in
6 First -- at the First World War, nothing happened to
7 them, but things changed.

8 Q. What sort of school did you go to,
9 elementary and high school?

10 A. Yeah, elementary and high school.

11 Q. Were they public schools, were they Jewish?

12 A. No. They were private schools, religious
13 schools.

14 Q. Only Jews?

15 A. Only Jewish, yeah, um-hmm.

16 Q. So you did not have any gentile friends as
17 a child?

18 A. No, hmm-umm. No. We had some -- father, a
19 friend, and every Christmas we went to their house for
20 Christmas, see the tree, and get hot chocolate and cakes
21 and things like this; and we had -- he had some gentile
22 friends, yes, but they were very close with us, and they
23 stayed with us for many, many years, till after '34, I
24 don't know; but they were very good people, they were
25 Germans.

1 We did this business with one company. As
2 matter of fact, after the war, she was a witness when I
3 tried to get some things back, they were witnesses and
4 spoke about my parents, and we got it back, the
5 business.

6 Q. Did your father do business mainly with
7 gentiles?

8 A. He did some business with gentiles, but not
9 much, not much. He was mostly a wholesaler in wine, you
10 know. He would give -- the wine would -- the big
11 grocery stores and the institutions would buy the wine,
12 and old age homes, and the orphanage house and so on;
13 had lots of private people. The worse it got in
14 Germany, the better our business went, because we lost a
15 lot of competition who moved away.

16 Q. The groceries, were they owned by Jews?

17 A. Yeah, yeah.

18 Q. Did they sell just Jewish food or --

19 A. No.

20 Q. Jewish, variety of food?

21 A. I don't recall. I don't recall.

22 Q. Now you mentioned that until 1938, leading
23 up to 1938, a lot of Jews in Germany left?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Do you have any recollection as to when

1 that started, and if it accelerated at all before 1938,
2 to a time when it got worse and --

3 A. Well, anybody who could get a visa left,
4 anybody. We were on the list to get a visa for the
5 United States, but you had to have a quota. There was a
6 quota system, and my father was stateless, and we would
7 not have gotten our visa till 1941.

8 Q. So your parents did apply for visas?

9 A. Oh, yeah.

10 Q. Do you remember how early they did, what
11 year?

12 A. I don't recall; maybe '36, '37.

13 Q. So after Hitler was in power a few years?

14 A. Yeah, nobody did before; some people may
15 have left before we did, I don't know anybody.

16 Q. Do you remember, or did you know why at
17 that point in time your parents decided it
18 was time to leave?

19 A. Well, we all knew -- we all knew that we
20 have to leave, even we hoped it will break down before
21 we leave, but everybody knew they had to leave.

22 Q. When you say knew they had to leave, it was
23 becoming obvious that there was --

24 A. Yeah, the business was taken away, sure
25 sure.

1 Q. -- persecuting the Jews?

2 A. Well, they took them to concentration camps
3 already then.

4 Q. What was known about the concentration
5 camps before 1938?

6 A. It was known there was a concentration
7 camp. I don't know. They said it was very bad, but
8 that's all I remember from before the war, and everybody
9 was very fearful.

10 Q. Did people know that people were actually
11 dying in concentration camps? Were there a lot of
12 rumors going?

13 A. At that time -- no, not at that time.

14 Q. No rumors going around?

15 A. Not to my knowledge.

16 Q. Just fear of the unknown?

17 A. Yeah, fear of the unknown, yeah.

18 Q. Now, your parents came from Poland. You
19 just said your father was stateless, so you were
20 stateless?

21 A. Um-hmm.

22 Q. Do you know whether they still had Polish
23 citizenship?

24 A. No. My father was stateless. My mother
25 had her Polish citizenship, yeah, umm-umm.

1 Q. And is it your recollection and your
2 understanding is that is what puts you on the bottom of
3 the visa list to get out of Germany?

4 A. Yeah, that's what it was.

5 Q. And so your father did want to leave the
6 country?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Even though he would be giving up his
9 business?

10 A. Everybody -- nobody cared about the
11 business any more, nobody.

12 Q. Is that your impression of what was going
13 on?

14 A. Yeah; everybody wanted to leave, everybody.
15 People who just met 5 minutes ago would get married, so
16 that they could save the other life.

17 Q. How would that work? How would --

18 A. Well, as I remember, very simple. You
19 belong to an organization. I belonged to (Misharmee),
20 and if there was somebody who got a visa to Palestine
21 and wanted to take somebody else with him, it had to be
22 a woman, so he married her and they went to Palestine,
23 or they came to the United States.

24 Q. Whose requirement was it that you had to
25 take someone else, was that the German government?

1 A. No, it was nobody; that was -- you get
2 another person out, you would help another person out.

3 Q. The visa would allow you to get somebody
4 out?

5 A. To take a partner; so most of them married
6 somebody, and what happened then, they most likely
7 separated, divorced, or whatever.

8 Q. Before September 1938, do you remember any
9 major incidents that stick out in your mind of
10 anti-semitism?

11 A. Yeah. I did not like to go to the
12 synagogue, because -- and I still don't go, because when
13 I came out, there were a lot of Germans standing there
14 and calling us names, you know.

15 Until this day, I get worried. I belong to
16 no temple, no nothing. We go to -- the high holidays we
17 go to synagogue, because my husband wants to go, I don't
18 want to go.

19 We now live in Oregon, and I joined a
20 temple there and I just love it. I feel free; but here
21 you don't get me into no place, because I always have
22 that feeling, that I think it's only thing which really
23 remains with me.

24 Q. You recall when you started to feel that
25 happening, Germans standing outside the services?

1 A. What year?

2 Q. Approximately, do you have any -- was it
3 before Hitler came to power?

4 A. No, no, no. It was maybe after, quite
5 sometime after Hitler came to power, yeah. Well, these
6 Jews lived in Frankfurt, you know, the (Roshad) came
7 from Frankfurt, and at that time some of them still
8 lived in Frankfurt.

9 Q. When Hitler came to power, most of the Jews
10 did not take him seriously, is that it?

11 A. Nobody took him seriously.

12 Q. When did that attitude change?

13 A. Listen, I was -- a little bit hard to
14 remember when the concentration camps came up.

15 Q. So sometime between 1933 and '38?

16 A. Yeah, and then there -- damage the Jewish
17 peoples' businesses, throwing stones and all of that;
18 and then they would have us sign, so Jews would sell
19 out.

20 There was a shoe store, they were selling
21 out, they were leaving the country, and the outside
22 -- there were a lot of help -- there was a large group
23 of Germans that wouldn't let anybody go in to buy, you
24 know, and I went in. I said I'm an (Auslander) I'm a
25 foreigner, I could go. I bought all the shoes.

1 Q. When the Jewish families left, those that
2 owned businesses, do you know whether they were able to
3 sell their business to Germans for any substantive
4 price, or did they basically have to abandon their
5 businesses without compensation at all?

6 A. Lots of them just abandon the businesses;
7 some of them sold for very little money, and then
8 Germans put in a toy handler -- how do you call it in
9 English, you know, you had nothing to do with the
10 business any more, they were handling the business for
11 you, Germans toy handler they called it, and the people
12 -- then they knew the people were leaving, so they kept
13 the homes, houses, the businesses.

14 Q. This was when the families left or --

15 A. No, when the families were still there.

16 Q. So the Germans did not say they were taking
17 over the business, they were just --

18 A. Yeah, they would send in a manager
19 appointed by the state.

20 Q. Like a trustee?

21 A. Yeah, something like this.

22 Q. Then where did all the money go, to the
23 state?

24 A. I have no idea.

25 Q. Do you have any idea of about when that

1 started?

2 A. (Negative nod) Oh, maybe '34, '35, think
3 so.

4 Q. So before you started to describe what had
5 happened September 1938, would you tell us that now?

6 A. 1938 in September, my father had gone out
7 to get the mail and came back. He had aged 30 years,
8 and I knew something was wrong. He came up with two
9 men. They were in civilian, and they said "you pack up
10 whatever you can carry and you go to the train station."

11 Well, I had to pack a bag, I didn't care.
12 I opened it up and took all the money out, which wasn't
13 too much, and I took my -- 1 or 2 pieces of jewelry,
14 didn't have much. I didn't care what they taught me,
15 and we went to the train station, and there were maybe
16 10,000 people already there, they had them all lined up.

17 There was a large Jewish community in
18 Frankfurt, so we all got into the trains. I was
19 together with my father, my mother, my two sisters and
20 some other people; and they had sent police with us,
21 when we got to Breslow, the train stopped.

22 In the meantime, the Jewish organization
23 had organized themselves. They came to the station,
24 they brought food, blankets, clothes. They couldn't do
25 much for us, but I went out of the train to get a glass

1 of water, to get some water, and I didn't understand at
2 that time that my life, all things would always happen
3 like in Breslow. I got off the train, got a glass of
4 water and the train started to roll, going without me.
5 I run very, very fast, I'm not a good runner, somebody
6 picked me up and put me on the train. If I would have
7 not gotten that train, I would have stayed in Breslow,
8 and I would have ended up in England, you know. They
9 would send -- they sent a lot of people at that time,
10 made it to England, but I went on the train and we all
11 got to the border of Germany and Poland. We all got out
12 of the train.

13 There were 10,000 people standing with
14 suitcase, with coats, and they stand and stand and stand
15 and stand for hours; and they opened up the border, and
16 some people trickled over, very few, and then SS -- no,
17 not an SS man, an SR man, he walked up and down; and he
18 seen me, and he said "you, you don't belong here, what
19 are you doing here?" I said "I don't know." He said,
20 "you don't belong here. You come with me." I remember
21 I wore a beautiful terra cotta knit suit -- "you come
22 with me." And he took me, and he said, "you go over the
23 border, because this is only the beginning," he says,
24 "you don't know what lies ahead."

25 So he took me to the border, and I start to

1 cry, and he says, "why do you cry?" I said "I want my
2 mother, my father, my two sisters." He went back, and
3 got my mother, my father, my two sisters; so we go over
4 the border, think they're safe, and at that moment a
5 telegram came, stop, all the people can go home to their
6 homes and their businesses. The Polish government has
7 started to line up -- there were a lot of Germans living
8 in Poland, now it's a border town and all of that, they
9 were going to be lined up and shipped to Germany, you
10 know.

11 The food was rationed at that time already.
12 You got only so much butter a week and -- it was a
13 regulation before the war, yeah, long time before the
14 war; and here we were in Poland and the people went
15 back, and I went to look where they were supposed to be,
16 some cousins, and my mother went to (Mashad,) my other
17 sister went to Warsaw. We went -- my father went to
18 Warsaw, and my mother started to curse me, because I --
19 everybody went back home, and she was in a strange
20 country, no money, no nothing, and everybody was on a
21 different place. She cursed me, you have no idea. It
22 hurt, but you know, and then came September 1st, 1939 --

23 Q. Before we get to that part, can we
24 backtrack a little bit just again?

25 When you were taken to the train station,

1 were you in the first group --

2 A. No, no, no.

3 Q. -- of Jews? Had that happened before that
4 day, had just been --

5 A. No, no, no.

6 Q. -- before that day?

7 A. No, no.

8 Q. It was a complete surprise?

9 A. It was, yeah.

10 Q. And you say there were about 10,000 people?

11 A. Maybe 8; lots of people.

12 Q. You have any idea what the total Jewish
13 population was in Frankfurt?

14 A. Yes, I know, 30,000.

15 Q. So about one third?

16 A. 600,000 population, 5 percent. There was a
17 lot of Jews.

18 Q. And all these people were at the train
19 station?

20 A. No, no, no, no. They took only people who
21 were stateless, different nationalities, Germans.

22 Q. I mean regardless of whether or not you
23 were Jewish?

24 A. No, only Jews.

25 Q. Stateless Jews?

1 A. Stateless ones in Poland, yeah, something
2 like this.

3 Q. In other words, 10,000 stateless Jews in
4 Frankfurt at that time?

5 A. About, I don't know, about I would say. I
6 wouldn't be surprised, maybe they took some other ones,
7 too. They just walked in, took them out.

8 Q. What was the scene like at the station?
9 How crowded was it, how were people --

10 A. It was very crowded. People were fearful.
11 They were just waiting, waiting, waiting, and he picked
12 me from all these people.

13 Q. Had the train station at Frankfurt --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. -- the people were just waiting?

16 A. No, no. They put us right into trains.

17 Q. There wasn't much milling around there?

18 A. I don't recall, I don't recall that at all;
19 that's completely blank.

20 Q. What are your feelings at that time? What
21 do you recall you're feeling at that time when you were
22 getting on to the train?

23 A. There was only fear. There was nothing
24 else but holding on your mother, your father and your
25 family, not to get separate.

1 Q. Then after you were in Poland, you said
2 your family split up?

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. You recall the reason for that, why you did
5 not travel together?

6 A. Nobody could take five people in a house,
7 it's very simple.

8 Q. Could you describe that a little bit more,
9 though? What rule was that, was that the Polish
10 government, prohibiting anybody one from taking --

11 A. No, it was -- no, it was strange. All of a
12 sudden they're invaded by 5 people, you have to feed
13 them, you have to have beds to sleep; so we all split
14 up, that was the reason.

15 But during that one year I got to know the
16 Poles. I learned a little bit Polish. I could --
17 started to read Polish, and my mother had a friend in
18 (Topashof) where her father lived. They were very, very
19 -- I went to her friend's, and my mother met me there,
20 and my younger sister, and the war broke out, and --

21 Q. September 1939?

22 A. Yeah; and people came in that stayed with
23 them. She had a huge, huge villa, and then when things
24 settled down, she had another friend that had a 15 room
25 apartment, (Steepman,) and they gave us a room. There

1 were 10, maybe 12 rooms on this side, and then the
2 servant quarter on the other side, and they gave us a
3 room, small room, so my mother and my younger sister and
4 I got together into this one room.

5 My other sister remained in Warsaw; and the
6 war broke -- the war -- the bombing had started -- had
7 stopped, and we we were in that room and the Germans
8 were approaching. They were coming into Poland and they
9 were coming by tanks to Toposhof, so -- and everybody
10 was leaving the town, they were all running to Warsaw,
11 because the Polish army they wouldn't get Warsaw, you
12 know, and I said I'm not going anywhere.

13 A man next door came and knocked at the
14 door and he says, "Frau Goldberg, you're alone in this
15 city, with two young girls, Germans are coming. You
16 better come with us." My mother says, "my daughter
17 doesn't want to get even out of bed. She doesn't want
18 to go." I said, "I'm not going. I have a bed, I have a
19 room, and I'm not afraid of the Germans."

20 A woman came, and she said -- a neighbor
21 -- she said "I'm running, I take the children, you come
22 with us." I say "I'm not going." The man came back and
23 with a leg, he had no leg left, and shrapnel -- and the
24 woman, her little boy was 6 years old -- shrapnel hit
25 his head. The head is (indicating) here and the body is

1 (indicating) there, and she takes her little boy and
2 runs. Now she was a good mother, but this is the
3 instinct.

4 We stayed and the Germans came in, and they
5 tried to put all the Jews in one area; and downstairs a
6 man was living, tall, blond man. He looked more like a
7 German. He wore riding boots. He dressed like a
8 German; and things were not good, you know, but we all
9 figured I wish the Americans would come in and the war
10 would be over. You always had hope. There was so much
11 politicking going on.

12 Meantime things got worse and worse, and my
13 mother got up at 4 o'clock in the morning -- they felt
14 sorry for us -- a baker gave us some rolls, and she went
15 around and sold the rolls. There were maybe two rolls
16 left for us.

17 And there was a man living downstairs. His
18 wife was a tall blond. I think she must have been a
19 dancer or something, and he had his sister-in-law was
20 absolutely knock-out, and he said -- and I knew him, but
21 that was the only people you socialize with were the
22 people around you, and he said to me, "you know, I'm
23 leaving the Ghetto. I will give you a chance. I will
24 make a connection for you. There is a man here, he's a
25 German, he works for the Organization Tort."

1 Organization Tort was an organization who
2 built the whole railroad, rebuilt the railroad to
3 Russia. They have different spars in Germany and
4 different spars in Russia, so they had to be changed so
5 the trains could go to Russia; that was the
6 organization, and the man was (stylemeister.) He was
7 the head, he handled all the money.

8 So I got to know him; and what I did, I
9 went every evening out and I gave him (schlotte) which
10 is Polish money, and he gave me German marks which I
11 sold, because the farmers only want the German marks.

12 So I went there every night and came back,
13 and we had money that winter. We had -- I bought coal,
14 some potatoes, whatever, and --

15 Q. This is the year of 1939-1940?

16 A. Yeah. And one day he said -- anyhow, he
17 got interested in me, and I told him who I was and where
18 I lived. He said "I don't believe it." So I invited
19 him, and he came over, and he seen that little home we
20 lived in, no light, just a candle.

21 Now I always must live nice, how poor I am,
22 and whatever happens, I -- to me a home, there's nothing
23 more appreciation in my life than my home, so that was
24 -- at one room we got sheets. I dyed the sheets light
25 blue, made curtains out of them, a bedspread out of

1 them, and I painted the floor red. It looked very nice,
2 and the young people liked to come to us.

3 He was in shock when he seen the place, but
4 we deal with money and -- I went on, and one day there
5 was a (ratsure) -- they were lining up the men, they
6 went in the whole Ghetto there, lined up the men and
7 took them away.

8 Q. Germans?

9 A. Yeah. We could see them -- now there was
10 that room, and next to our room was where the water
11 faucet was, sink and the water faucet, and I swear they
12 went into all the rooms. They didn't touch our door,
13 they never came into our home ever.

14 Q. Were you there at the time?

15 A. Yeah, yeah always there, always is there,
16 all packed to go. They did not knock on my door, and
17 they never came in. Time went on, and it was a
18 beautiful winter.

19 One day it was very, very cold, terrible
20 cold winters, and I seen the -- the roses on the window
21 frozen from the frost, and then the sunset, beautiful
22 sunset, and I said "I'm not going stay here. I'm not
23 going stay here. I want to leave"; and there was a
24 Polish man who came in to visit some people, and he was
25 selling papers; and I got the papers from him, forged

1 papers.

2 Q. What sort of papers were they?

3 A. That I'm Polish, you know, identification
4 paper, under Stefana Pirofska.

5 Q. Supposedly issued by the Polish government?

6 A. Actually more like combination of birth
7 certificate, identification. Like you would get here.
8 I got the paper, and one fine morning I left.

9 Now you could say I abandoned them. I
10 wanted to live. I got out. And 5 o'clock in the
11 morning, I went to the train, dark. I wore a medium
12 blue coat, more light, which was lined with black seal
13 inside.

14 Later on you were not supposed to wear
15 furs; and I have a hood which was lined in black seal,
16 and I had taken a black veil and wrapped it around me so
17 I was in mourning with the black (indicating). It was 5
18 o'clock in the morning, and the soldier saw me with my
19 suitcases and this soldier stopped me, and I
20 -- naturally when they heard a girl speak in German,
21 they were elated, somebody they can talk to.

22 "Get me to the train, I got to Warsaw." I
23 had to look for a place to live, wherever I went to.
24 People looked at me very strange; something about me was
25 strange, because I spoke German. My Polish was

1 terrible.

2 I ended up in a hotel; and I had made
3 contact with that man who was transferred to Warsaw, the
4 German, where I was; and he came and gave me some money,
5 you know, to exchange -- because he made money on that
6 lodging.

7 Q. On what?

8 A. The (vol) lieutenant was called (schlotte)
9 in Poland, he made money.

10 Q. This is the same man that built the
11 railroads?

12 A. Yeah, from the Organization Tort; but after
13 5 days in the hotel there was no way, there was nothing
14 I could do. I didn't know anybody, anything. I was
15 very homesick. I went home; because to live outside of
16 the Ghetto was much more difficult than living in the
17 Ghetto.

18 Q. The town that you went back to, about what
19 size was it, roughly?

20 A. 40,000. It was a very, very wealthy town.

21 Q. And it had a Jewish Ghetto, the Jews lived
22 in a separate --

23 A. They did not live before, no, but later
24 they took all the Jews and put them in one area.

25 Q. The Germans did this?

1 A. Yeah, um-hmm.

2 Q. And you went back?

3 A. I went back; and then I had a dream. I
4 dreamt that three little pigs were running ahead of me,
5 on a certain road. I would be up in the morning. I
6 said "I'm leaving again." I left. I left. I went over
7 to Organization Tort, if I could have a ride to Warsaw.
8 They didn't go. I had to go back to the train.

9 I went to Warsaw, back; no place to sleep,
10 nothing to do. I walk around, and my mind was -- and I
11 love architecture, it was (Mudunfall.)

12 I stand in front of a beautiful, beautiful
13 building, like this, like a chalet, like a palais. I
14 stood there and stood there, and looked and looked, and
15 a beautiful girl came out, absolutely gorgeous, gorgeous
16 girl; and she looked at me, and she said "why do you
17 look so sad?"

18 And I had my story ready. I said "I came
19 here, I don't know anybody. I have no place to sleep,
20 nothing." She says "wait." She walked in and this --
21 there were German soldiers standing there, they knew
22 her. She walked in and she came back, and she said "I
23 spoke with the duchess. You can sleep here. Come with
24 me."

25 So that was the palais of the Duke of

1 Poland, the (Potoski) you know, and there was a tall,
2 skinny man. There were two brothers, they were the
3 butlers.

4 You see, they all have left, the
5 (Ratsvilless) and (Pototskis), they all have left. Some
6 went to London some went to Switzerland, but the old
7 lady remained. She remained, she wouldn't leave, and
8 the two butlers and maid; so I slept in a room -- don't
9 ask me -- silk, red silk walls, white and pink
10 embroidery, two steps going up to the tremendous bed,
11 beautiful linens.

12 I was so excited, I didn't sleep all night.
13 I was cold; and the next morning I went down and the
14 girl was there, and she said, "Do you speak German?"
15 "Yeah." "Do you want a job?" I said "yes."

16 So we went in to the office, and she
17 introduced me, and she said "do you know we need a new
18 secretary, and she speaks German fluently"; and the boss
19 said "can you type?"

20 Well, you see in the wine business, during
21 the holidays before (This doesn't make sense) poor women
22 in Russia, nights pass a -- they're very busy, and I had
23 to help type bills; so I knew little bit, I said "yes."

24 He said "I have to go to conference, you
25 type this," and he gave me something. Believe it or

1 not, I managed somehow. When he came back, he said
2 "you're hired."

3 Q. Which office was --

4 A. Organization Tort, all those the same.

5 Q. The girl worked --

6 A. For Organization.

7 Q. She lived in the palace?

8 A. She didn't live in the palace.

9 Q. Oh, she didn't?

10 A. No, she was a Polish girl, she worked
11 there.

12 Q. She worked?

13 A. Yeah, but she talked with the duchess,
14 somebody has no place to sleep. And they were all these
15 miniatures from all these famous kings and princes and
16 princesses. I should have taken some, but I wasn't
17 ready for stealing yet.

18 So I worked; and she said "you come home
19 with me." I went home with her. They were very poor
20 people. Her father on the site repaired shoes. Her
21 mother had only one eye with -- glass eye, and she has a
22 sister and a brother.

23 She says "you can stay here until you find
24 something"; and on the third evening, I heard a terrible
25 argument going on in the kitchen about me. I had to

1 leave; and she had brought home somebody else in the
2 house who stayed there for 6 weeks and cleaned them out,
3 and I knew I had to leave that night.

4 I cried. I cried terrible. I don't think
5 I cried ever since; and the mother came in, she said
6 "I've never heard anybody crying the way you do, you
7 know. You can stay with us." Now Eva was a well known
8 movie actress, very beautiful.

9 Q. Who was this?

10 A. That girl who picked me up on the street,
11 yeah, I was now in her house. She was trained as a spy.
12 The war doesn't start just like this, people know
13 beforehand that there is a war coming, and they have
14 spies all over. She was trained about 6 months before
15 that as a spy.

16 Q. By who?

17 A. By the Poles. She did -- the Germans put
18 her into jail, she got out. She was very unusual. She
19 got out. Now we were working there, and we used to go
20 for lunch some place.

21 They could never understand how anybody
22 could eat so much. I was so hungry, you know, after so
23 many years, and on the way -- there were two other girls
24 there, Polish girl, and one of them told me, I mean, she
25 said "they are going --" now there was already the

1 Warsaw Ghetto, they had already enclosed it -- she said
2 "they are going to take all the Jews out of the Ghetto
3 and they take them far away, and they going do something
4 with them." I said "what?" She says "I don't know.
5 I'm not supposed to know."

6 I mean that was a long time before it
7 happened. I couldn't say nothing. One day in the
8 office there was -- there was two Germans, one was
9 -- may have been major or something, I don't recall, and
10 the other one was a lieutenant, and he was very
11 interested in Eva, you know, Evvie, and he tried to get
12 ahold of her and touched her. And I got so angry, I
13 said take -- ("adricevivique) swine," that means hands
14 off. I "-- German pig," everybody falls quiet. They
15 just stood, and I realized what I said.

16 She was -- she was prone to epileptics.
17 She fell, you know, came unconscious. I run outside,
18 and I see a gentleman civil, and I grab him by the hand.
19 I said "please, please, I need help, please come with
20 me."

21 And he comes inside and he sees that beauty
22 on the floor, and his face changed. He fell -- his
23 whole life changed from that second on. He fell in love
24 with her very much, you know; and he arranged, the man
25 who was interested was sent away. He was -- I didn't

1 know at that that time -- he was SS (Hauptsternfuhrer)
2 Herbert Mossgrabber. Now --

3 Q. The name?

4 A. But you see, he was not a Gestappo man, he
5 was head of the (Polcheck) of the railroad. He was in
6 uniform -- no, when I met him, he was in uniform.

7 Q. Do you know him?

8 A. I had no idea who he was. He fell madly in
9 love with her, and he was the man with whom she went
10 -- later I found out, 10 years ago, that she went with
11 him to Germany.

12 Q. What was his title again, what was --

13 A. He was SS (Hauptsturnfuhrer.)

14 Q. Was?

15 A. He belonged to the SS, but not to the
16 Gestappo, a different branch of the SS. I worked there;
17 and he went after her and she went out with him, but I
18 understood she was engaged to somebody else, to another
19 German.

20 And she always said to me, you know, at
21 that time men shaved with knives, she said "I have a
22 knife, you see; I'm going cut his throat one day when
23 the time comes; meantime I need him."

24 Q. She --

25 A. "I would cut his throat."

1 Q. She would say?

2 A. The one who saved her and later on became
3 her lover, "some day I cut his throat, but meantime I
4 need him, he is very important to me" which I
5 understood.

6 They closed the office or something. I had
7 to look for another job. Now when you work -- oh, I was
8 lucky, I got that job; and they arranged for me to get a
9 book of labor from the employment agency, which is a
10 book where you work, and what kind of work you do.

11 I have that book and I had to turn it in;
12 and I went back to the employment agency and they said
13 you go there and there and there, okay? I went there,
14 and that was was the University of Warsaw. It was not
15 far away from the film studios. The Germans took it
16 over.

17 Now the Russians had declared already war
18 on Germany, and they were trying to get to Russia, and
19 they made a (lotterette) out of it. They were just
20 starting to make a (lotterette.)

21 You know what a (lotterette)? During the
22 war a hospital is called a (lotterette); and I walk in.
23 There were two other girls there and there was a man
24 standing there, a very important man, and some --

25 Q. Estelle, you were talking about how you

1 were starting a job at the hospital that is being set up
2 at the University of Warsaw?

3 A. Yes, I had to -- yeah. I had an
4 appointment maybe 3 p.m., and I was -- this very high
5 ranked officer and some man around him, and it was 3
6 o'clock, and it was 5 past 3, and 10 past 3 and 15 past
7 3.

8 I took my -- I had a note, you know, I took
9 it, tore it up in pieces, throw it down; because I was
10 not used to be treated like this, not me; 3 o'clock and
11 I start to walk away, and then officer came, "you're
12 hired."

13 Q. And had he spoken with you before then?

14 A. Never, never. They knew what I was
15 throwing on the floor, but I didn't care. I -- "you're
16 hired." Well, I was hired. At that time, he was
17 (oberfelthaus). He later on became general arts, a
18 general medicine.

19 I was hired. I was his secretary; and he
20 said -- I was told "you better learn shorthand or
21 anything." There wasn't too much to do, because they
22 were just organizing a lot of time.

23 He got to know me. He -- I got to know
24 him, but you know, the emotional stress of all of that,
25 I was -- I would sleep, you could carry me, I don't know

1 where to, and my lunchtime I would fall asleep on my
2 desk, and she would say then "watch me"; and he said
3 "such a young girl, what do you do at night?" I said "I
4 sleep, too."

5 My birthday came, and there were some
6 soldiers already there, some officers, and the two other
7 girls, and myself. My birthday came, and they made a
8 big -- a boiler it's called, which is champagne and
9 strawberries, and all the good things, and they were
10 drinking to my birthday, and do you know what happened?

11 I have not touched liquor since, all of a
12 sudden I see in front of my eyes (Yudda), in burning
13 letters, and I wanted to scream, I wanted to scream, but
14 I didn't; and that was the end of my ever, ever having
15 anything to drink. Well, it got organized, the
16 (lotterette), the hospital, and the Germans sent over
17 women. They called (stopspelvarine) to be secretaries
18 and so on.

19 Q. Are these Polish women?

20 A. No, all Germans.

21 Q. They mostly come from Germany?

22 A. They all came from Germany, to be sent over
23 to help out, like the women here in the Army.

24 Q. Were you the only one who was not German?

25 A. No. The two girls were not, were Polish

1 girls, and myself, we were; and I had again a bad dream,
2 a terrible terrible dream, and I was going home. I just
3 had to go home.

4 And I said "I'm going away for a week," and
5 I had some liquor, I took some money, I -- whatever I
6 could, and I went back to (Tomshoff). The dream was
7 bothering me too much.

8 When I got there, at that time they have
9 horse and carriages. At the train station I took a
10 horse and carriage. I wanted to go to this and this
11 address, and he said to me "What? What are you going to
12 do there, that's a Ghetto, the Jews are there. What are
13 you going to do there?" I said "I didn't know. They
14 used to live, somebody I knew."

15 I said bring me to this and this house at
16 the address, and in this house I knew Germans lived. A
17 lot of Poles suddenly became Germans. They had German
18 names and they became Germans.

19 So he let me out and I was sitting on the
20 steps, it was very early in the morning, and I had to
21 go, you know, they have the Ghetto and -- and the
22 streets, and they had gates here and gates here, and the
23 center was open, and they had two policemen.

24 There were never a lot of Jewish policemen;
25 and they seen me coming, they knew me. They let me in.

1 My sister was dying of typhus. She was dying of typhus;
2 and I got the medicine, I went out, made connections. I
3 got the medicine, she got well, and off I went again to
4 Warsaw.

5 Q. Now you say you made the connections.
6 Could you describe that a little bit, do you remember?

7 A. Yes, yes. There was a woman, she was a
8 governness to my mother's friend's children. She was a
9 French lady, Malan (LaMer). Her husband was an
10 ambassador years ago in Poland or something. She
11 remained. I don't know what happened; and my mother was
12 friendly with her, and she was a connection between
13 Polish people and us, so I had the connection.

14 I went back to Warsaw and my job. I didn't
15 want to be anyone on the front. They took me to
16 meetings, you know, I was presentable. I had beautiful
17 long hair. I was always very groomed, very slender. He
18 took me to meetings.

19 Now the Governor Frank -- if you think
20 Hitler was bad, Governor Frank, Governor, German
21 governor, they put in, he was -- he had a whip, and
22 anybody he could he would -- me making translations, and
23 he was picking up the whip, and I look him into the eye,
24 you know, he put down the whip, never hit me.

25 It was -- I think my -- my picture was in

1 the papers when there were conferences, and I said, "you
2 know that the girls are coming and they are better
3 secretaries." He said "where would you like to work?"
4 I said "in the (aupstetsrie)." It was far away, quiet,
5 nobody would see me.

6 Q. In the where?

7 A. In the (aupstetsrie). It's -- like a
8 pharmacy.

9 Q. In the hospital?

10 A. In the building, yes. It was far away in
11 the upper (aupstetsrie). He was a very, very nice man.
12 He was very homesick. So I worked there, and I stole
13 alcohol. I didn't steal. I said "you get half of it";
14 and Evvie and I went down to the black market and we
15 sold -- they had good alcohol. They made -- I sold it
16 and went down like this.

17 I got the money, gave him some. He kept
18 some money. I had no alcohol, so Evvie, we went down,
19 there's a bottle of water, and we sold it, and the next
20 time they were trying to get us, so we never went back.

21 I was working there, and the Warsaw Ghetto
22 came up, you know. I was so homesick, that many times I
23 took a streetcar. Whenever I passed the church, you
24 know, you had to do this and this (indicating), the
25 whole streetcar, you can imagine everybody doing that

1 (indicating sign of the cross), so I went there.

2 When the streetcar came, that closed the
3 gates of the Ghetto, and all the people were looking at
4 us, you know, and they look, my heart was breaking; and
5 one day the conductor said to me, "why do you come here
6 all the time looking at them? Does it make you feel
7 good? Makes you feel bad, you look awful." So I never
8 went back. I always had hoped to see somebody.

9 I went back. I worked in the
10 (aupstetsrie); then this girl, she brought her sister
11 later on, her sister later on; and then the Ghetto
12 burned, and now here he became a general, then he
13 screamed on the top of his voice. He said "if any of my
14 men will go near the Ghetto and loot, I will send them
15 immediately to the front."

16 Q. Who said this?

17 A. The general.

18 Q. Which general, the one you worked for?

19 A. Yeah, the German general. I found out
20 later he had a sister. After the First World War, they
21 were occupied by English people, the Rhineland in
22 Germany, and his sister had married an English officer,
23 and he was always worried one day what happens in
24 England, what happens in England.

25 He also had a friend, friend had a son,

1 (Turim), not far from him, a very nice doctor; and they
2 were talking -- I heard the -- overheard the
3 conversation.

4 You see, years ago when you had the
5 surgery, the surgeon took a needle, thread, pulled it
6 through and made a knot, and then you went to the next,
7 a little needle, thread and the knot, and this man
8 invented something where you had 6 or 8 or 12 stitches
9 all at once; so the general asked him, "what did you do
10 with your invention?" He said "I gave it to a Jewish
11 doctor. He went to America to start a new life." I
12 said "you are my man, too."

13 Q. And who is this?

14 A. A friend of the general. He worked at the
15 hospital. He was a doctor, yeah, and they were close
16 friends. They knew each other from before, so I guess
17 he didn't do that conversation. I figured if anything
18 happened, I have something.

19 Now the Ghetto was burning -- no, no,
20 before that there was an alarm. The Russians attacked
21 Warsaw, throwing bombs, they did that maybe 2, 3 months
22 before it happened, before they had the revolution in
23 the Ghetto.

24 Q. This is early 1942 now?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. When you say throwing bombs, is that
2 artillery or airplane?

3 A. Airplanes, airplanes, yeah. They bombarded
4 Warsaw. It was a beautiful night, I never forget it. I
5 never know exactly -- the whole war was a whole blur,
6 Oriental design finished with black velvet ribbons, and
7 I remember that.

8 They -- I never forget, I know exactly the
9 whole -- I wore a pale blue robe with Oriental design
10 and finished with black velvet ribbons, it was
11 beautiful. I remember that; they did invent -- they
12 throw bombs, and the next bomb it was before the
13 uprising in the Ghetto, and then later say that the
14 Russians had thrown ammunition into the Ghetto. I don't
15 know if it's true or not.

16 But everybody walked the streets in Warsaw
17 the next day, wanted to see what happened; and all of a
18 sudden somebody tapped me on the shoulder, and he said
19 "where have you disappeared to? I haven't seen you. I
20 looked for you. I couldn't find you. I've seen your
21 picture in the paper once. I knew it was you, and I
22 knew the name. I gave you the papers. I got to talk
23 with you."

24 Q. Who is this?

25 A. The man who sold me the papers, Pole. I

1 told him where I lived. So he came, went into the other
2 room, we talked. He said "listen, I want you to arrange
3 for me a train wagon of sugar; you get plenty, I get
4 plenty."

5 I said "a whole wagon of sugar? Everything
6 goes to Russia, comes from Russia. How can I do that?"
7 He said "if anybody can do it, you can do it, so you
8 arrange it."

9 "I can't arrange it"; and the funny thing
10 happened was about 2, 3 weeks ago, the general gave a
11 dinner party and I was the hostess. And at that
12 evening, a man was in civil, a German, he was head of
13 the whole railroad system. I knew him, but I was not
14 going to get -- can you imagine?

15 I said "I think about it"; and then I never
16 did it, but I happened to have met the man just a week
17 or two weeks before. I couldn't approach him to let me
18 have -- maybe I could have, offered him some money, you
19 know, gold or something, everybody was willing.

20 So now the Ghetto started to burn. I
21 didn't go near it, but lots of people all of a sudden
22 appeared, lots of girls, and they came to me -- I still
23 had -- was the personnel to do -- they wanted jobs. I
24 knew who they were.

25 I said "you can have a job, what's your

1 name?" And they gave me names which came out of novels,
2 off of -- very cheap novels, you know, not real names.
3 I got them the jobs. I got them the jobs, and the
4 Ghetto burned, it was terrible. One was paralyzed,
5 absolutely paralyzed, and they all said the Russians
6 throw the ammunition there.

7 Q. This is April of '43?

8 A. Yeah, March, or that was already April,
9 yeah, yeah. The attack was in February, the air attack,
10 I think so.

11 Q. Warsaw?

12 A. Yeah. Now these girls came, I got them the
13 job and the name was strange, very strange names. Now
14 the two girls I originally worked with, one was 16 and
15 one was maybe 18, her sister 19.

16 She came to me, and the younger one came to
17 me and said "Stefani, I'm going to throw myself under
18 the streetcar." I said "what happened?" She said "I'm
19 Jewish, and you have to bring some papers, and I can't
20 do it. They going take us and shoot us or whatever. I
21 throw myself under the streetcar."

22 I said "wait a minute, wait a minute, let's
23 think about it. Where is your sister?" So the sister
24 came. She said "we are not Jewish." I said "listen,
25 she just told me she's Jewish." "We are not Jewish";

1 "but they will take you anyway," I said.

2 She said "I got to go to (Lenburg) to
3 (Lawolf) and get some special papers, but I don't know
4 where to get the papers. I'm going to do it. They will
5 take us both away."

6 I said "you know, I'm going talk with the
7 General, see what happens." I called him. I said "I
8 want to come over, I would like to talk with you." The
9 General one day said to me, "I don't know who you are,
10 and I must not know who you are." Now, he had an idea.

11 So I said to him, you know, we call the
12 (Klinesheer), she was very petite. She had problems
13 with (Gendarmarie) or the SS, and they wanted to bring
14 some papers, this is person she really is, and she needs
15 paper to travel, you know, she can't go on the train,
16 they will arrest her.

17 He said "what do I got to do with it?" I
18 said you know, "you can call the Gestappo, you are a
19 very important man, and arrange for her that she get the
20 papers."

21 "I can't do that. I'm not going to do it.
22 I get into trouble." I said "you know, if they take the
23 two girls away, they kill them. The war will be over,
24 you will go home and you have to live with this for the
25 rest of your life."

1 He said "okay." He made the telephone
2 call, he got her the paper; she went, came back with the
3 papers. Now there were -- now the people who escaped
4 looked horrified, they had (dupefear). They are
5 (dupefear) on the eyes, and all of that.

6 Q. Escaped from the Ghetto?

7 A. Yeah, some. All of a sudden somebody came
8 in and -- to me. I was working at (aupstetsrie) -- said
9 to me "somebody is outside, wants to see you." I go
10 outside the building, my sister is standing there.

11 They were lining up the Jews and sending
12 them away, and she came. She knew where I was. I had
13 given her where I would be and so on, where to reach me,
14 and she came with a horse and carriage and said -- I
15 said "I don't know her. I don't know this person," and
16 he said, "well, she said that you will pay me; and if
17 you don't pay me, I take her right to the police and
18 that will be the end of her, she's a Jewess."

19 I said "I'll be right back." I went back,
20 got the diamond ring, and said "here's the ring." Now
21 here she was. We walk out on the street. I had my
22 handbag and somebody grabbed my handbag.

23 Now my life was in my handbag, because all
24 the papers. I have never -- I'm not well-coordinated,
25 and I never could play ball or run or anything, but let

1 me tell you, I run, I run for my life, and I got the bag
2 back. Now meantime working there, I had moved out from
3 Evvie, and I gotten a little room up there, small
4 kitchen I shared with a girl, with a Polish girl. She
5 worked there, too. Later on they hired Polish, and all
6 kinds of people. She worked there, too; and I brought
7 her up there.

8 And now that my sister spoke the way -- she
9 spoke Polish with a very Yiddish accent, because that's
10 the way she learned it, and things didn't look good. I
11 said to her, you know, "lots of people go to Germany
12 into the factories to work there, and I'm going to send
13 you, you will be safe there. Poland is worse than
14 Germany, we know that."

15 I took her the next day. There was an
16 office where you would register; that happened before
17 the Warsaw Ghetto, much before the Warsaw Ghetto. They
18 tried to evacuate them before, that was before, maybe 6
19 months or a year before when my sister came, and I took
20 her to an office, and she registered, and in 3 days she
21 was going to Germany, she had the paper. She was going
22 to Germany, fine, she would be okay. She was never
23 going to write. She must give me some address or
24 something, I don't remember; and she went to Germany.

25 Now I had gotten a letter from my family,

1 that's reached me in Warsaw; and in the letter it says
2 Moisha gone, and this one gone; a real Jewish letter,
3 and I wouldn't give up that letter, because it's all I
4 had, that letter was very precious; and it was in a
5 closet in the house.

6 Actually this comes later, but something
7 happened before. Well, what happened -- yeah, let me go
8 back a few minutes, may I? What happened was, before 5
9 o'clock in the morning, a knock at the door, two
10 (Gendarmarie) came in -- I was living with Evvie, still
11 they came in -- and they said "a factory was blown,
12 ammunition factory was blown up, and the girl who did it
13 lives here."

14 So I was in the first bathroom. I was long
15 dark hair, and they look at me, and "that's her,"
16 looking at me. Well, I was paralyzed; "get up." I
17 couldn't get up, I couldn't move, I couldn't think,
18 nothing.

19 Meantime, Evvie in the back room, she got
20 up, and I looked at her, and I said "must be you." She
21 said "what?" "The ammunitions, they pointed to you."
22 She called her sister, she said "yeah," joking, "in the
23 cellar, bring up the vodka, the cognac, you bring up
24 everything, make the fire, set the table. We're going
25 to have the biggest breakfast anybody has had in years."

1 She said to me, "Stefani, get dressed,
2 brush your hair, look decent." We all went in and had a
3 big breakfast, and believe it or not they left; that was
4 her. So this letter I had gotten and wouldn't give up
5 the letter, and one day I wasn't home, and the
6 (Gendarmarie) came.

7 Q. Who came?

8 A. The (Gendarmarie).

9 Q. Who is that?

10 A. No, no, no, all Germans --

11 Q. Germans?

12 A. -- came looking for me -- no, they didn't
13 look for me, they looked for something else. I don't
14 know, either found that letter, when they read the
15 letter, they knew who I was.

16 Also, one day somebody came to the door,
17 never found out who it was, and said "you're having
18 somebody, she is Jewish, you are keeping her here"; and
19 when Evvie's mother -- I called her mother and father,
20 her parents said, you know, "somebody came here and said
21 your name is Ester."

22 I said "no, it's not my name"; "and they
23 know you and they are saying you were Jewish." I said,
24 "you know, I'm half Jewish, my mother was Jewish, my
25 father was an officer in the Army." So they knew who I

1 was.

2 I had to get away. So I managed to get an
3 apartment where I was working near the (lotterette), in
4 that building where I had that room with the other girl.

5 My sister had come and I had sent her to
6 Germany. Now I was home, a knock at the door and my
7 other sister came, my youngest. "I am hungry. I am
8 hungry." I said "I can't keep you. I can't even take
9 you in." "I'm hungry."

10 I gave her something to eat; and I said
11 "you see over there, that building, a new apartment
12 building?" It's all not finished yet, there was no roof
13 yet, "I put you over -- give you some blankets and you
14 sleep in that building overnight." In that building
15 alone, 14 year old girl? "There is no way that you come
16 in here, it doesn't work."

17 So I took off the next day, and I took her
18 straight to Evvie's parents' house; by then they knew
19 that I was half Jewish, and she stayed there. Now she
20 tells a different story. She said that they were all
21 standing against the wall to go to Treblinka, my mother
22 and all of us, and she was standing against the wall,
23 and all of a sudden she said the wall moved, bricks
24 moved, and she pushed the bricks, they fell out and she
25 said "tell my mother I'm going to my sister"; and she

1 came out on the other side, that little girl.

2 Now I have her in Warsaw, they shaved all
3 the women's hair, they were all bald, but it had grown
4 in already, have been wild like hair, course. I said
5 "you got to have a haircut, the hair is course."

6 I had taken her to the General, introduced
7 her, and he said "why does she always wear a kerchief?"
8 So I took her next door was a barber shop. I had a
9 little -- was like a little pistol about this size
10 (indicating) which was actually a fire -- a lighter, was
11 actually a lighter for cigarettes. Then there was
12 nobody in. I stood against the door and I took out the
13 little gun, and I said "you give her a good haircut.
14 Here is the gun, no questions."

15 He give her the haircut, you know; and then
16 I said to her, "you, too, must go to Germany." This was
17 all before the Ghetto burning. I took her down there.
18 "I don't want to go. I don't want to go."

19 I said "there is no way, you go, you be
20 safe." Well, I said, so by coincidence they send her to
21 the same factory, so she was with her sister. She want
22 out of Poland, Poland was dangerous.

23 Q. What sort of papers did your sisters have?

24 A. The little one had no papers, but I had a
25 connection in Warsaw. This is where Jewish people, very

1 wealthy Jewish people, they got papers as being Poles.

2 I never forget I went to the beautiful
3 apartment, they are having a beautiful lunch there, and
4 I told them, "that's my sister, she has no papers, and I
5 have no money to pay you the papers. How much it be?"

6 I forgot. He said "come back next week."
7 We came back, he handed me the papers. "How much?" He
8 said nothing. "Get a picture on it." So he gave her
9 the papers, and with this papers she went there, and she
10 got into Germany.

11 One day a young man came to me, where I
12 worked at the (lotterette), and he says "you got to help
13 me." I says "I can't help you, you're a man, I can't
14 help you." And he said "look," and he gave me a box
15 with jewels, diamond, rubies, fantastic jewelry. "It's
16 yours." I said "I don't want it. If somebody catches
17 me with that thing, they will murder me, I don't want
18 it."

19 "I can't help it, I just got rid of (Ruth)
20 and (Heller.) Impossible. He left. He survived the
21 war; went swimming, diving, hit his head and died after
22 the war. I mean it -- it was supposed to be not to
23 live; that was getting dangerous, I quit my job.

24 Q. (Can't understand question) In '42?

25 A. Oh, I don't remember. It must have been

1 after the Ghetto, everything after the Ghetto, the
2 burning of the Ghetto.

3 Q. That was in '43?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. April?

6 A. I think it was -- it was, yeah about that,
7 because the summer -- I got other job, I went back to
8 Organization Tort, they opened up another office. I
9 applied for a job, I got the job. I hate figures, and I
10 had to make -- not the payroll, I had to add up the
11 figures for 10,000 people worked on that railroad, and I
12 had to add up the figures, you know, how many hours.

13 If I looked the name, I wrote them down,
14 this many down, and I worked there; and one day I see
15 the Gestappo coming, black uniform. They are going to
16 my boss. I said that's for me. Across the property
17 there was a (concerna). You know what a (concerna) is?
18 It's for the soldiers, where they live, how you say it
19 in English?

20 Q. Barracks?

21 A. Barracks, yeah. And they all were out for
22 lunch. I run inside. I found an open closet and I hid
23 myself in the closet. I couldn't hide myself too long,
24 they were coming. I went back, and I looked at my boss'
25 face and it was very calm. He walked in, he didn't say

1 nothing, so I knew it wasn't me.

2 Q. What do you you mean? It wasn't you whom
3 they were after?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Did he ask you why you thought it was that
6 they were after you?

7 A. I wouldn't ask that kind of a question.

8 Q. He didn't ask you that question?

9 A. He didn't -- how could he? He didn't know
10 who I was. So I seen them coming, I try to be a step
11 ahead, run away.

12 Q. When you told him that the Gestappo was
13 coming for you?

14 A. I didn't tell him that, no, no. I knew. I
15 figured they were -- they came for me, no, no, no, I
16 wouldn't go back. It was that summer there, yeah. I
17 had to move out from Evvie -- let me look at something
18 -- during that time there was -- I was still working at
19 the (lotterette), there was a man, Hugo Hoffman, and he
20 was in charge of the supply for the kitchen.

21 Now who cares about a general, a marshal, a
22 president? Nobody cares about that. You care about
23 somebody who supplies the kitchen with food, that's what
24 you -- okay he was very, very good looking. He was a
25 Czechoslovakian, and he fell for me very, very much; and

1 he told me one day, "you know, I was forced into the
2 German Army and my -- I was married to a Jewish woman.
3 She left for America and I couldn't follow," whatever,
4 "and I like you very much. I like you very much."

5 And Evvie fell madly in love with him;
6 meantime Evvie went out with Robert, SS (Hauptsternfuhrer)
7 who divorced his wife, who managed to get her papers
8 that she is a half German. His whole life had changed.
9 He became a different person at -- what was I saying
10 before?

11 Q. Hugo?

12 A. Yeah, Hugo. Well, when Evvie seen Hugo,
13 she fell madly in love with him. She says "Stefani, I
14 have a mink coat" -- and I mean who had it, I don't know
15 give it to her; "you get it, I got to have that man. I
16 want nothing but that man, you have to somehow" -- I
17 said "I can't -- okay. I have a date, you come along."
18 So we made up a date, and he was for me, and then he
19 said "I also work for the underground."

20 Q. Hugo said that?

21 A. Yeah. "I tried to help out" and so on, and
22 one day he said, "you know, we have to go some place;
23 you have to come, you and Evvie and me and the other
24 girl. I wear the uniform, you know; we have to go some
25 place, we have to get some papers," or something. And

1 it was winter, and I was sitting in the kitchen. I had
2 the riding boots. I never forget that I had the riding
3 boots.

4 I try put it on, and I feel somebody is
5 standing with me and holding me back as if I should not
6 go. I felt as in my father was behind me not to go,
7 holding me not to put on the riding boots. I was
8 committed. We left; and we -- I was supposed to cut the
9 telephone lines, you know; everybody had something else
10 to do, and look for certain things. Now when we got
11 there, it was bordello. It was a beautiful apartment,
12 it was beautiful, with beautiful girls, with beautiful
13 food; and they seen the uniform, they let us in.

14 I don't know what happened. He -- they
15 grabbed -- I only know one thing, I think a gold
16 cigarette case, I grabbed it, and somebody must have
17 gotten out and called the Polish police.

18 Q. Called the Polish police about what?

19 A. That something wasn't right, to come; and
20 the Polish police knew the bordello; and Evvie said "get
21 going." So we started to run. The police came up the
22 stairs, looked at me and then they seen her, they knew
23 face from the movies. We kept on running. Hugo was
24 running with us. One girl didn't make it. We don't
25 know what happened to her. We run down on the stairs.

1 One thing the Germans never did, they never
2 would attack a streetcar, because they were hanging like
3 drapes. We jumped on the streetcar, we got away; that
4 gold cigarette case I laid down, I bought some other
5 papers. Meantime there were too many forged papers,
6 they established an office where every Pole had to
7 register, and he got (Apcancarter,) a new kind of
8 identification which can be checked, and you go to the
9 police if this is authentic or not.

10 For the gold cigarette case, I got this
11 paper, but I was very much afraid of that paper. I knew
12 it was false, very much afraid; that was the night at
13 the bordello.

14 One day we were still at the palais
15 working. Oh, we run through the palais, it was
16 glorious, it was beautiful, and under the staircase some
17 place we found some photographs of Roosevelt, and she
18 said "don't touch. You have not seen anything. Get out
19 of here." She knew.

20 Q. Is that Evvie?

21 A. Evvie, yeah. Well, she was trained; and
22 meantime, Robert had become very jealous, and she met
23 some other people. We had a telephone -- most had no
24 telephone, most of them, but we had a telephone, because
25 her brother worked for the telephone company.

1 And her brother was getting married, she
2 was 8 months and maybe 27 days pregnant. It was an
3 interesting wedding. It was Greek orthodox wedding, and
4 he married a girl -- you got to hear that she kept me
5 -- later on I went to her place later on to live for
6 awhile. The Chinese ambassador was in Warsaw in the
7 capital, she was his mistress. He had bought her the
8 apartment and furnished it. They have beautiful Chinese
9 sinks there.

10 So she married this fellow and had the
11 baby, and I stayed with them for awhile, because I had
12 to hide.

13 Q. You say that you moved, or you left your
14 job just around the time of the uprising?

15 A. No, after, after.

16 Q. You left the hospital?

17 A. No, I left after.

18 Q. Just after the uprising?

19 A. After -- after I got my sister settled, and
20 yeah, it was getting too dangerous; no, they found the
21 paper who I was.

22 Q. The letter?

23 A. The letter.

24 Q. What happened after the letter was found?

25 A. They tried to find me; nothing much

1 happened.

2 Q. You ran immediately after?

3 A. I left them. I went to visit them. I came
4 to visit them frequently, and met Evvie and --

5 Q. Did the Germans find out where you were
6 working at that time?

7 A. That's very interesting question. You see,
8 I had kept the book. They could only locate me through
9 that work book, that's only way. I wasn't giving up the
10 work book.

11 I kept the work book, applied for other
12 job, but they did locate me. They had a lot of trouble
13 with everybody's things at that time. They did locate
14 me, because I -- where I worked now again at the
15 Organization Tort, I was called into the office, said
16 the employment agency wants to see me, it was important.

17 Didn't like the call, so I called them
18 myself, and I said "Stefani Pirofska." "Yes, we want to
19 see you." I said "I'm terrible sorry, she is working on
20 a very important job, she can not" -- I was talking
21 "-- it will only be half an hour."

22 Well, I couldn't get out of it, you know.
23 So I went, when I went into the room -- I'm a person who
24 sense people, you know; you can put -- you can put a
25 blinder on me, you get me into a room, I can tell a lot

1 about people because of my life training.

2 I did not like it, the questions. There
3 were two of them. I didn't like it at all.

4 Q. Were these civilians?

5 A. These were Germans civilians. They were
6 just as bad as the other ones. They went out of the
7 room, and I grabbed the phone and called the General.

8 I said "listen, I don't know what's going
9 on here, I'm in deep trouble, something is happening.
10 Please come here, you must come immediately."

11 Wait 5 minutes, they came back in and the
12 phone rings and he called, I went out. He was a
13 wonderful man, wonderful. I had -- I kept the book, you
14 know, it was very important. Now I am --

15 Q. Which book did you keep?

16 A. The work book. I was working there, the
17 Ghetto has happened. I've had pretty much, okay; the
18 girls I give the jobs, you know, with the funny names I
19 know were Jewish, they let me sleep occasionally; one
20 night I slept in the park under a bench, you know.

21 Q. When is this now, Estelle, what period of
22 time? Is that after you were interrogated or before?

23 A. I wasn't interrogated.

24 Q. Well, after you were questioned?

25 A. At the employment agency?

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. It was during -- after, after.

3 Q. So you left, you were able to get away from
4 those two men?

5 A. From this, the two women, yeah, that I'm an
6 important person.

7 Q. Those were women?

8 A. Yeah, that I was an important person.

9 Q. And the General called?

10 A. Yeah, and I got out.

11 Q. What happened?

12 A. I went back to my job.

13 Q. And you were never contacted again to be
14 questioned?

15 A. No. He was too important a man; no, no,
16 no; don't forget, the Germans have respect for
17 authorities, and they would never talk back.

18 Q. And you felt that you were comfortable at
19 that point, you would not feel a need to flee?

20 A. I wasn't comfortable. I didn't know where
21 to go and what to do; things developed. I was still at
22 that job, and one day I went into town. I went to the
23 Grand Hotel one day to meet Evvie, and it was only for
24 Germans.

25 She had the paper. I did not. I went in

1 with her. We had to eat; and all of a sudden the police
2 came, and I disappeared into the toilet. Well, they got
3 me out of the toilet, you know, and they said they're
4 not supposed to -- "you are not a German, you are not
5 supposed" -- out, so I went out of the hotel. I wore a
6 lace dress, it was cold. I telephoned into the inner
7 -- to the hotel to call her to the -- she said the
8 people on the table didn't know what happened. I got my
9 clothes back, but one day I went to (Eurpaski) Hotel to
10 eat, you know. I walked very straight, I look at them
11 straight.

12 When you look at the German, I look down, I
13 don't care how tall they were, I look down at them, and
14 never they never bothered me. Oh, yes, one day while I
15 worked in the (aupstetsrie), an SS man came in, and he
16 said "I am here to interview. A lot of people run away,
17 from running around here from the Ghetto." It was out
18 burning, you know, and he looks at me and he asks me
19 some question. I'm very nice and very polite, and I
20 smile, and he says "you are a semite." I said "and what
21 is a semite?" He said "a semite of the Jews, you are --
22 have Jewish blood in you."

23 I said "what made you say that?" He said
24 "your eyes, white in your eyes has bluish tint, and I
25 have to report you." I said "you're not going to report

1 me?" He said "yes."

2 I said "that's fine, if you report me and
3 claim that I am Jewish, I will tell them you slept with
4 me"; and that it is (rushanshander), "that means
5 concentration camp for you." Out he walked. You had to
6 be quick on the trigger.

7 So I went to that fabulous hotel behind the
8 opera, and I had a fabulous lunch, only Germans, only
9 high officers. I finished my lunch and I walk out
10 straight, and up comes Robert the (Hauptsternfuhrer,) "how
11 are you, Stefani?" "I'm fine." "How is Evvie?" I said
12 "I don't know, I'm just going there." He said, "oh, I'm
13 going to eat, and then I come there."

14 So I went to Evvie, and we were sitting
15 there and he came and we talked, and I hear knock at the
16 door, didn't like it. I went into the kitchen, and at
17 that time they had a table in the kitchen, there were
18 pots, an apron under it, so I went under the pots where
19 the pots were under the apron, so (Gendarmarie) came in,
20 and they said "where is Stefania Pirofska?" and Evvie
21 says "I don't know."

22 Now he said to her -- Robert said to her
23 "you must tell them. The (Gendarmarie) must know where
24 she is." Now I see him an hour before I am having
25 lunch, you know, and he said, "you must tell them," and

1 she said, "Robert, you know, I don't know where she is.
2 She disappeared three weeks ago, and you don't know
3 neither"; then they left.

4 Well, I was -- became too hot property to
5 handle, much too hot; so they decided by then it was
6 pretty hot for me, too. I was very hot, yeah, I decided
7 to go to Germany. I do the same thing what my sister
8 did.

9 Now this was after the burning of the
10 Ghetto, and I didn't sleep all night. I put no
11 lipstick. I wanted to look as bad as can be. I had
12 about maybe a 20, 21 inch waist; and I went down to that
13 office, they interviewed me; and the girls were looking
14 at each other, the secretaries, behind them was a short
15 man standing, and he had a gold medal from Hitler. I
16 mean that was very, very important, it was high
17 official. He must have been a true, true, true SS man.
18 Then he looked at me and he did (indicating) this. I
19 didn't know what it meant, but he kept on (indicating);
20 his girls couldn't see him. He was standing behind
21 them.

22 So I go outside and waited for him, and he
23 walked in with me to another doorway, and he looked at
24 me and he said "you are Jewish." And I said "yes." He
25 said "listen, the girls are running away from the

1 Ghetto, they're trying to get to Germany"; and I tell
2 him, "I told two other girls not to come back, not to
3 try. Now what they did, they came back, the Gestappo
4 took them, they are not here any more."

5 "Don't come back," he said. But he said
6 "you know what, you look different than them. You don't
7 seem to be so fearful. I'm going to be in another
8 office on another street on Wednesday, come back. Maybe
9 you can pass there, because these girls, you didn't
10 pass."

11 So I went over there and interviewed. The
12 girls looked at each other, and he said "come out," and
13 I came out. He said "it doesn't work. Don't do it
14 again. Please don't do it again."

15 "What am I going to do?" He took off the
16 gold medal and gave it to me. "If you wear this medal,"
17 he says, "nobody will dare to approach you, or to ask
18 you any questions."

19 I knew what the medal was. I says "I can't
20 wear that medal." "I'm young," he said, you know, "when
21 you are in a dangerous situation, put it on. Somebody
22 approach you, you tell them it belonged to your father
23 who got killed."

24 You know, I mean you couldn't buy that
25 medal for nothing in the whole world. So I was very hot

1 property. I told him of trying to go to Germany, Evvie
2 and Robert, "you got to leave, you got to leave. We
3 have a connection in Breslow," they told me. "You go to
4 Breslow. There is an address from there, and you got to
5 get out of here, you're just too shot to handle."

6 One day I was walking down and two men,
7 grand men came up the stairs, had a photograph in my
8 hands, "oh, what a good looking girl." They didn't know
9 it was me.

10 So I was going. So I need a reference, you
11 know, so he said "go find yourself a reference." I find
12 myself a beautiful reference, that I'm very German,
13 German, friendly, I'm very trustworthy, I can be trusted
14 with anything.

15 (Videotape two.)

16 Q. So you were --

17 (Beginning of tape can't understand, can't
18 hear.)

19 A. Yeah, there was a price on my head. Every
20 house had many apartments and there was a concierge over
21 there, a price on my head. I found out later I was too
22 hot to handle, so I had to leave; and they give me an
23 address in (Breslow), and I had to have some references,
24 and I wrote -- I had to have references, and I wrote,
25 I'm very reliable, I'm very helpful for the Germans,

1 very German friendly, and they gave me a stamp that says
2 SS (Hauptsternfuhrer Mossgruber,) I mean that was it, and
3 I went some place toward Organization Tort.

4 They gave me -- they knew me, they gave me
5 somehow do you call it soldier's bread. You can buy it
6 here, too. I -- you can buy it here, too, but it is
7 costly, high, some sausage; and I went to Germany, and I
8 went to (Lutzenshu.)

9 Q. When the Germans were looking for you at
10 your home, do you have any knowledge of why they didn't
11 just come to where you work, come for you where you
12 work?

13 A. They didn't make the connections. I had my
14 book with me.

15 Q. You feel it was because of the letter?

16 A. Of the letter they found out, yeah,
17 somebody who was Jewish.

18 Q. One more question. Once you just described
19 you could move on, back to Germany, you have any
20 understanding, you know, the reasons why the German at
21 the railroad station or the office, why he would go out
22 of his way for you like that, why he would give up his
23 medal for a stranger?

24 A. This one here, you mean? I have no idea.
25 He had tried to help two other girls, I don't know.

1 Maybe he had seen the burning of the Ghetto. Maybe
2 something changed in his feelings. He was --

3 Q. He never gave you a reason?

4 A. I had no conversations with him. I
5 couldn't discuss things with him. Why do you do that?
6 You were not sitting down discussing things. So I had
7 the references, I got to (Lutzenshus,) a lot of Jewish
8 people there. I got to Breslow. I never got off the
9 train. I go to Breslow looking for the address. Forget
10 it, there was no such thing, no such thing.

11 I had met quite a few people through the
12 General. One was a banker, he was from Breslow. I had
13 his card. I didn't know where to sleep, where to do
14 nothing. Here I'm in Breslow, you know.

15 Now we had some identification cards, and
16 it says on top for non-Germans only. I took a knife and
17 cut-off the top, so nobody knew what, you know, so what,
18 could be anything. I contact -- I went to the office of
19 this bank here. A beautiful banking house. I never
20 forget that the doors were double doors, thick leather
21 padded between, and come into his office. He was
22 delighted to see me, but he didn't know nothing about
23 me, and we had lunch together, and that was it.

24 But I found out that there was Organization
25 Tort there, so I went to the Organization Tort, and I

1 knew how to handle them; and I said "I need a place to
2 sleep." "What are you doing here?" I said "I am
3 engaged to a German soldier, and he is some place here
4 in hospital, and I have to find him. Could I stay a few
5 days with you?"

6 I got a nice room, a clean bed, I got food,
7 what do you do? Somebody came up to me in that
8 organization one day I was having lunch, and he said
9 "you looking for a job?" I said "yes." He says "you
10 know, a friend of mine has a big estate not far from
11 here, and he has a factory of bricks, they make bricks;
12 and he has Ukranian girls working there for him, and he
13 might need you, maybe help you. He is here in town, his
14 wife is having a baby. I will call him, he will come
15 over and see you."

16 So he came, and he said "oh, that's ideal,
17 you come with me to my estate, and you do the
18 bookkeeping, take care, be the manager." I come to this
19 beautiful estate, I'm telling you, with big ponds and
20 fishing and hunting and everything, and there was a
21 factory and there were about 24 -- no, I don't know how
22 many girls were there making bricks. They were from the
23 Ukraine. They been rounded up and brought there to the
24 factory. And my boss showed me where the food is and
25 what not to give them, and what to do.

1 I tell you I was utterly bored. I was so
2 bored it wasn't funny, because no contact with nobody.
3 He have gave a party one day and he invited me over. He
4 was in his late 60's and wife was 35, just had a baby,
5 and I worked there, didn't do nothing. I read all the
6 books I could.

7 I got a room in the attic, and they gave me
8 no sheets. I slept under a blanket and the straw, and a
9 straw sack, and it was a beautiful summer. I was
10 utterly bored, terrible; and one day he comes and he
11 calls me, and he says "listen, Stefani, I expect 28
12 Jewish men coming who will be working at the brick
13 factory. And you have -- there's so much food for them
14 to be given, and that's all; and you watch, you watch
15 them, and you watch the Ukraine girls. You do a good
16 job with Ukraine girls."

17 Well, nothing I could say. I -- I didn't
18 sleep that night, and the next morning I look out of the
19 window, and I see 28 Jewish boys coming. I had to go
20 down and face them. I faced them, I went down, and I
21 had the girls cook for them, and I said "you come over,
22 you come, you get a second helping."

23 I picked the ones which looked the worse,
24 and I knew -- and one day one of them fell and got hurt
25 and bled, was bleeding on his head, and I grabbed the

1 towel from the kitchen went out and bandaged him. Now
2 one of the foremen used to say he was Jewish too, in
3 love with me. He said "you are so different, you are so
4 kind, you are so helpful." I said "please get away,"
5 you know, I used to tell him, "get away from me."

6 He said "you are too good to us"; because I
7 stole the food, I talked over with the Ukranians. I
8 said I can take a little bit from her, and I gave it to
9 them; now he had fallen and I bandaged him, and the boss
10 sees it, and comes up, "you don't dare touch a dirty
11 Jew. Let him bleed to death, who cares."

12 Well, time to go on, I figured, that's it.
13 I can't handle it. So what are you going to do? How
14 are you going to handle it?

15 Q. It was the summer of 1943?

16 A. It was, yeah, it was early. I am going to
17 Switzerland. I decided to go to Switzerland. Now how
18 do you get to Switzerland? Most important thing were
19 the papers.

20 So I went in to Breslow, to the head office
21 of the employment agency. "I got to have papers to
22 travel." You just -- they come on the train, they take
23 you off the trains. I went to Breslow and that's true,
24 believe me, everything. I go into the headquarters from
25 the employment agency, and ask, "I want to speak to the

1 boss"; and it was my philosophy always, I never bothered
2 with the secretary, always went straight to the boss.

3 "He isn't here"; "where is he?" "He will
4 not be here for another two hours." I says "that's
5 fine, I'll wait." I was sitting there waiting, and in
6 comes a man, and the secretary says "this lady is
7 waiting for you"; and he looked at me and he looked at
8 me, and I didn't like that look. It was not the look
9 you look at a pretty girl. It was something, you know,
10 you just cannot place it, you don't remember.

11 I go inside. He calls me in, and he says
12 "I know you." I said "that's impossible." He said "I
13 know you." I said "I'm Polish." He says "I know you
14 from Frankfurt."

15 Now I learned you don't make arguments. If
16 you start to make arguments, you get into trouble; you
17 just acknowledge as quietly. I said "yes, that could
18 be, because I went for two years to finishing school in
19 Frankfurt," and that settled it; then I remember that he
20 came to our house. He was a young banker. I remember
21 him now, came to our house.

22 You know, in the wine business the wine is
23 flowing freely, lots of young people come. "What can I
24 do for you?" And I said "I want to go to (Constons,) I
25 have a job there." "Sure"; and he gave me the papers to

1 travel, and I went back to Breslow, told my boss I'm
2 leaving.

3 And (Constons) was the border of
4 Switzerland; and something happened a few months ago, I
5 couldn't think of that Swiss town, and I just went
6 Switzerland in October, it came back to be me. So I was
7 going to Switzerland; it's far.

8 I knew where my sisters were. They had
9 run away from the work camp. They spent some time on a
10 cemetary (?) whatever, cut of a wrist, (sorry, this
11 doesn't make sense) and they were picked up and they
12 worked for two farmers in different towns. I knew where
13 one of them was, and before I go to Switzerland, I'm
14 going to visit my sisters.

15 Well, I had to go through Frankfurt, and I
16 hadn't been in Frankfurt for several years. The train
17 -- Frankfurt has the most famous train station in
18 Europe, because it has most trains come and go in that
19 city. There are 19 trains there always at the same
20 time, 19; and I go outside and I couldn't take it. I
21 broke down, I cried so hard I was not going anywhere,
22 and I was afraid people might recognize me. I tried to
23 get on the train, trains were packed, terrible packed.

24 I cried on that train, and people asked me
25 what happened, why -- I said I lost my brother or

1 something. Now I got to the town what my sister is, I
2 go to her, and they do not know who we are. Now you
3 know, the police had placed them there and they told the
4 people in the post office, if there is any mail coming
5 to them you got to trace them down, where they come
6 from, how they got here. We assume they are in
7 (connection.)

8 Q. Trace where the mail came from?

9 A. Where the mail came from, with whom they
10 are in contact, but the people who are -- was a
11 postmaster, was a woman, and she liked the little girl,
12 so she didn't do it. She said no mail ever came.

13 She handed her the letters; so we come -- I
14 went to my see sister. She was at the farm and she said
15 -- I did not see my other sister at that time, I don't
16 think so. She told me where she was, or she came over,
17 I don't remember, and I told her I'm going to
18 Switzerland; and she cried, and I said "listen, I go to
19 Switzerland."

20 I went on the train, and I got to a city
21 (Triborg,) and I forgot the city completely. I never
22 saw thought of that place, never, never, never, and a
23 few years we were in (Triborg,) and we got out of the
24 train and I always looked for the hotel, and I stood in
25 that city.

1 Anyhow, when I come into a city I stand
2 still, I try to sense the city to feel its vitality and
3 what goes on, the excitement. I always stand a few
4 minutes; and at that moment I stood still, and I
5 wouldn't move and I wouldn't move, and I had a feeling
6 that I have been in this city, that something happened
7 to me in the city, and Ernest said, "What are you doing?
8 What are you staring?"

9 I said, "Ernest, I been here before,
10 something has happened here." And now it came back, I
11 completely forgotten; now I bring it into the story. So
12 here I am in (Triborg), which is a beautiful city. It's
13 a university town, very famous, and it's getting dark
14 and Estelle leaves the hotel; and I wouldn't dare go
15 into a hotel, you know, I was -- too small a town, too
16 many questions to sleep. I go out through the city into
17 the fields. This was summer where the hay was. It
18 smelled delicious. My sister had given me some bread
19 and some cake, and I went sitting on the haystack, and I
20 had some bread and I had some cake.

21 I had the Germans -- when my father was
22 killed, sent us back his portfolio and his knife, so I
23 had his knife with me, not his portfolio, his money
24 purse, and I fell asleep. I woke up, I said time to go
25 back to the city.

1 When I go back to the city, I go into the
2 train station waiting for the train to take me to
3 (Constans), and all of a sudden I remember that I have
4 lost that knife. I got to have that knife back. My
5 father's knife is only thing I have. I walk back to
6 town, find a knife in the haystack, at night forget it.

7 I went back to the station and I hear the
8 (Gendarmarie), they had gone into the train, they had
9 taken out people; they would have taken me out, too,
10 because I didn't have the right papers; that knife saved
11 my life.

12 I go on the train. I come to (Constans).
13 (Constans) is a beautiful town. I just happened to be
14 there in October.

15 Q. Was that the same train you went on?

16 A. A different train, the next train.

17 Q. Even though the police had been there
18 looking for --

19 A. Well, while I was looking for knife, they
20 went in and made the (ratsia) on the train station, who
21 didn't belong there and didn't have a right to travel,
22 and because I went back to get the knife, they didn't
23 get me.

24 Q. And you had to still take the chance and go
25 back and try to catch another train?

1 A. I had -- I was going to (Constans). I just
2 seen them going out of a train. I couldn't remain in
3 the haystack. I couldn't remain to the city. I had
4 long, beautiful hair. I looked different than most
5 people.

6 So I got in the train to (Constans), and I
7 I had no seats, no nothing, and I had never been there.
8 I had bandages from the -- particularly I took a
9 bandage, bandaged by my leg very nicely, so somebody had
10 to give me a seat, because I got hurt in the war by a
11 shrapnel, you know, bombs, so they gave me a seat, I was
12 comfortable.

13 I got to (Constans), here I'm in
14 (Constans). I made one big mistake. I had shipped my
15 luggage ahead, and there were some papers in my clothes.
16 I came to the train station, my luggage wasn't there. I
17 was sick. My life was in the luggage, I made a terrible
18 mistake.

19 I waited and waited and waited, and the
20 luggage came. It was like not checked there, and I went
21 outside town, there was a little river. I went into the
22 -- what is --

23 Q. Oh, I'm fine, I'm just listening to the
24 sound here. You're doing great.

25 A. I went in to the river, I washed myself, I

1 had a hair brush. I combed my hair 100 times. I
2 brushed it. I had a beautiful lace dress, Navy blue
3 dress lace with light blue yellow embroidery. I put on
4 the lace dress and it's 20 minutes to 12, I have to be
5 at 10 minutes to 12 at the Gestappo.

6 I always went to the Gestappo, because that
7 is the place nobody in his right mind who has any guilt
8 feelings or is afraid, goes to the Gestappo. I went 10
9 minutes to 12, because they go to lunch at 12. I go in,
10 and I said "I'm supposed to -- I'm looking for a job
11 here, and I show my reference," SS (Haupsternfuhrer).
12 "What's in it," he said. Would you like to get a job
13 here? Would be fine but you can't stay here, because
14 Switzerland around the border, the forest."

15 I said "where is it?" And he said "you see
16 over there? You go this way. It's a forest. There is
17 Switzerland, and they're not supposed to stay here; but
18 we give you permission to stay overnight, and then
19 leave, you can go on the other side of the lake" and I
20 knew where Switzerland was.

21 Night came, I marched through the forest;
22 "halt," a German soldier with, you know, with a -- with
23 a rifle stopped me, and "What are you doing here? Where
24 do you think you're going? Who are you?" I said, you
25 know, "I came all the way from Poland."

1 Q. Excuse me, I've got to tell you --
2 (Video interruption.)
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