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Interview with ESTELLE KIEFER

Holocaust Oral History Project

Date: 3-28-91

Place: San Francisco, California

Interviewers: Mike Askenazer and
Denise Weitzel

Transcriber: Heather G. Slate

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BEGIN TAPE ONE

3 BY MIKE ASKENAZER:

4 Q. THIS IS THE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT IN SAN

5 FRANCISCO AND MY NAME IS MIKE ASKENAZER AND MY

6 ASSISTANT IS DENISE WEITZEL, AND WE'RE INTERVIEWING

7 ESTELLE KIEFER, THE SECOND PORTION OF THE INTERVIEW

8 WHICH WE STARTED TWO DAYS AGO.

9 ESTELLE, WE FINISHED OUR SESSION TWO

10 DAYS AGO WHERE YOU WENT TO THE GESTAPO OFFICE IN

11 CONSTANCE. AND CAN WE PICK UP THERE? WHY DON'T YOU

12 TELL US WHAT HAPPENED ONCE YOU ENTERED THE OFFICE.

13 A. Yeah. I went 10 minutes before 12:00 to the

14 Gestapo office in Constance. And I would never,

15 never go to the tail, I always went to the head, I

16 went straight to the Gestapo. And nobody in their

17 right mind would ever come in their own way to the

18 Gestapo.

19 So I told them -- I showed them my

20 papers, that I had fabulous reference, and I told

21 them that I am looking for a job here in a hotel.

22 And he said, after looking at my papers, he was very

23 impressed, and he said, "Sorry, you cannot stay here

24 because here is the Swiss border. We like you to

1 work for us but you can't stay here, here is the
2 Swiss border." And he said you have to go I think a
3 hundred kilometers away, which was on the other side
4 of the lake. I said, "The Swiss border, where is
5 the Swiss border?" And he pointed out there, that
6 forest over there. "And in that forest, the border
7 starts Switzerland." That's all I needed to know.

8 That night, I went into the forest.

9 And all of a sudden a soldier with a rifle:

10 "Halt." And he said, "Who are you? What are you
11 doing here? How do you come here? It's the middle
12 of the night." And I said, "You know what happened,
13 I am Polish, I am not a German, and I came all the
14 way from Poland here because before the war, my
15 father -- my mother had a vacation in Switzerland
16 and she never came back, the war broke out, you
17 see. And my father was an officer of the Polish
18 army and I lost him, he got killed, and I wanted to
19 go to be with my mother." And he said, "Uh-uh, the
20 Swiss won't let you in to begin with. If I don't
21 shoot on you, they will. They're very, very worse
22 than we are," he said, "they don't let anybody
23 through. I tell you something, you are so young, I
24 will be back at 3:00 a.m. or 2:00 a.m. in the

1 morning. I tell you where to stand. Don't move. I
2 come back on duty and you go straight back. Just
3 stay there."

4 I did not intend to go any further
5 because I believed him. I have heard of stories
6 where the Swiss wouldn't let anybody in. Maybe I
7 did the right thing; maybe I did the wrong thing.
8 But, you know, by not getting into Switzerland,
9 later on I analyzed it, that I could save my sisters
10 also, the way the story developed later.

11 So he came back and he showed me where
12 to go back and I got back and I got myself a room
13 and I went to bed and I slept.

14 And the afternoon, I knew where I was
15 going, I was going up to Uberlingen, which is on the
16 other side of Lake Constance. And I was sitting on
17 a bench, was a beautiful day, it was June maybe 20
18 or 21st.

19 Q. 1943?

20 A. Yeah.

21 And I walked and came back to the
22 bench, a man was sitting at the bench. He was
23 reading the paper. And he looked at me and he said,
24 "You know, I've been watching you walk. You have a

1 very unusual walk. And I like your face," he says.
2 "Why are your eyes so sad?" Everybody said why are
3 my eyes so sad, go and tell them the story. And he
4 said, "I like your face, you have so much
5 contradiction in your face. You have that strong,
6 very strong chin and very soft lips and that
7 marvelous broad, clear forehead." You see, in
8 Europe when you had a big forehead it meant -- had a
9 special meaning. And I was very skinny and had high
10 cheekbones.

11 He said, "You remind me very much of an
12 actress." That actress, her name was Pola Wesalich,
13 was one of the most famous actresses at that time.
14 And he said, "You know, I am a director for
15 movies." I should have recognized his name. "Why
16 don't you come to Vienna and maybe I can do
17 something for you." When I heard the word "Vienna,"
18 all of a sudden I remembered that so many, many,
19 many people, foreigners were living in Vienna, you
20 know, word goes around and I heard about it. And I
21 said -- and he gave me his card. And I left town.
22 I went over to Uberlingen, slept the other night,
23 and then took a train to Vienna. I arrive very
24 early in Vienna, very early, 6:00, 7:00 o'clock, I

1 don't know, and I walked the streets of Vienna. I
2 was very, very impressed and excited.

3 And there was a beautiful building and
4 I stood in front of that building admiring the
5 architecture. And a man came up to me and he said
6 Ausweis, identification papers. Now, people had
7 started to go to work, streetcars were running,
8 people were going to work. And I looked at him and
9 he said Ausweis, identification paper. And I said,
10 "Who are you?" He said, "I am Gestapo." I said,
11 "Well, anybody can say they are Gestapo. Let me see
12 your papers." And he took out his papers and I
13 showed him mine. Humph, I said, "you know, I just
14 arrived in Vienna, I have no place to sleep. Where
15 do I go?" And he said, "You go to the Nord Baanhof,
16 they give out rooms." And I said, "Tell me, look
17 all these people coming and going, why do you pick
18 on me?" And he said, "I tell you something, you
19 have been standing here for 10 or 15 minute looking
20 at that building." I said, "It's a beautiful
21 building. Why can't I look at the building?" He
22 said, "This is a present for the political people."
23 Well, how should I know?

24 So I went to the station, I got a

(J 58' 1 room. There was a very old lady, her name was Mrs.
2 Scheir, I remember. She rented out beds. A lot of
3 people were renting out beds at that time. So I
4 stayed there. And she had another woman there, a
5 German. I knew homosexuals but I never thought of
6 lesbians. She was a lesbian. Well, I slept that
7 night and I got out of bed fast. I didn't
8 understand but I didn't like it and I slept on the
9 chair. She left the next day. So after two, three
10 days I think I went to Hosenhugel, that's where the
11 film industry was. And I asked for him and he
12 introduced me to everybody and I met a lot of movie
13 stars there, it was very exciting.

(14 Q. ASKED FOR THE GERMAN YOU MET?

15 A. That was the man I met in Constance on the
16 bench. And it was very exciting. And they tried to
17 shoot a picture of me. And anyway, not for maybe
18 three, four weeks, I don't recall, I got rationing
19 cards, food, and I got special privileges, was a
20 school for actresses.

21 And one day they were telling Goebbels
22 was coming. Goebbels was Minister of Propaganda.
23 If Hitler was bad, he was just as bad. He had a
24 club foot, he must have had polio, he was a homely

1 man. He had a magnificent, a beautiful wife. He
2 had five children. And his mistress was Liede
3 Barova, also a very famous actress. And he was
4 coming to the school. They had to make all the
5 propaganda movies, you see. And I figured he has
6 never seen me and if he would lay -- he might lay
7 eyes on me and I be finished because: I want her.
8 You see, that was the kind of person he was and you
9 could not say no to him. And I said that's it, and
10 I run away, quit this, you know, no more movie
11 career.

12 So I went to the department of
13 employment. I forgot what kind of story I told
14 them. Anyhow, I had my workbook. I had my workbook
15 and I showed them my papers, my references, my
16 beautiful references. And they gave me a job, a
17 doctor, to help assistance, as an assistance to the
18 doctor, okay. When I got there, it was the most
19 beautiful apartment you can think of. And I worked
20 there. I got a beautiful room. They had -- there
21 was another girl there, she was a Yugoslav girl.
22 And I don't know what happened, she left and I got
23 her job. They had a little girl I just adored. I
24 just adored her. They were big, big Nazis. I

1 understood later on he was an officer, I forgot what
2 kind, maybe colonel, I forgot, and he was not sent
3 to the front or to the army, he did something very
4 different. He went to the old-age home and they
5 killed off the people there. They were of no use to
6 Hitler, to nobody. I found that out later. Anyhow,
7 I could do nothing. He had come from a small
8 village and the parents got the money together and
9 they educated him, he became a doctor, an
10 internist. He had met his wife while skiing. She
11 came, her mother was a widow and they were
12 greengrocer, and she caught him. And she was at
13 that time maybe six, eight years older than I am. I
14 was -- her husband was more than 20 years older.

15 And instead of me helping as an
16 assistance, which I did sometimes, I had to clean
17 the house and do the washing and all of that. Later
18 on, I was grateful because she really taught me how
19 to clean house and to do things. I stayed with
20 them. I had a beautiful room, I must say. I didn't
21 get much time off. I could -- I didn't hear nothing
22 from my sisters.

23 And one evening, I had the evening
24 off -- I'm getting excited -- I went out to the

1 streetcar to go to the opera platz, opera platzen in
2 Vienna, there were kaffee houses and all of that.
3 And when I opened up my purse to take out the money
4 to pay for the fare, a man behind me said "I will
5 pay for the lady." And I turned around, I said,
6 "You're not paying for me."

7 Anyhow, we ended up and we went to the
8 opera cafe, spent the evening, we went -- I went
9 home and he got very -- and we made a date for the
10 next day and he got very fresh. And I'm very loose
11 with my hand, I slapped his face.

12 Don't forget, there was a war, there
13 was a lot of syphillis going around during that
14 time. I didn't want to get involved with nobody.
15 You could get pregnant, all kinds of things could
16 happen. And I had two little sisters. Somehow I
17 was their protector even though I was far away.

18 So I went upstairs. And there was a
19 mirror when I opened the room, and let me tell you,
20 I knew my life had changed, I knew I had met my
21 fate, I was snow white in the face and my eyes got
22 very, very large. I knew something has happened.

23 I went to the date the next night, he
24 wouldn't show up, I had slapped his face. For six

1 week, six weeks, I looked for him all over the
2 city. Now, Vienna is a big city, I had no idea
3 where to find him. And I had to see him again. It
4 took six weeks. And one evening I go into the opera
5 cafe and he is sitting there with another man and
6 two girls. I had left my coat on the garderobe.
7 And I couldn't face him, I turned around and I was
8 walking back to get my coat and to leave. I got my
9 coat. And he had followed me, took the coat, put it
10 over my shoulders and we walked out together.

11 And we got together many times, we
12 dated. He was a Yugoslav. And he asked very
13 strange questions and he talked very strange. He
14 wanted to tear my heart out, he wanted to know
15 everything, you know. I finally broke down and told
16 him who I was. We had another date and then he
17 says, "You know something, there is somebody here
18 who is from that town where you were in the ghetto,
19 you told me, where you went before the war to visit
20 your grandfather, he's coming to see you, we have a
21 date, you come with me. I want to know if you told
22 me the truth."

23 So he brought him along one evening.
24 And he looked at me and then my friend Johnny said,

1 "Sorry, I have a very important appointment,
2 goodbye." We left him and Johnny and I went away.
3 And then a day or two days later he came to me and
4 he said, "You know, he knows you. Everybody knew
5 you. It was a small town. You were a foreigner and
6 you did a lot of horseback riding and everybody knew
7 you. It's true what you told me and he says that
8 you are Jewish." Okay.

9 So time went on and I came home very
10 late at night. The people didn't like it, you
11 know. Well, I became a, how shall I say, a
12 locksmith, actually, I knew to open up all the
13 locks, I had a special gadget I always carried with
14 me. I opened a lot of locks I shouldn't open when I
15 was in Warsaw and so on to get food and other
16 things. I just happened to have a talent for it.
17 And to this day, I'm not opening up any more locks.

18 But I arranged the door somehow so that
19 when I did come in late, they wouldn't know, they
20 wouldn't hear me. Now, he said, "The only way for
21 me to do is to marry you, get the papers." To get
22 married, you needed 13 papers. I only had maybe
23 three. So he decided we get married somehow, and we
24 did get married. And I went someplace to the rings.

1 he said got to get the rings, there's a jeweler on
2 that street, go and get the rings. I went there and
3 I said, "I'm getting married, I'd like to have two
4 rings." And the man looked at me, he said, "You
5 know that the war, all the gold went to the
6 government, there is no such thing of rings, you
7 cannot have, I don't even know you." And I must
8 have looked very upset or very sad. And he said to
9 me: "Why don't you come back tomorrow at 3:00
10 o'clock." I came back the next day and he called
11 out his wife, was a beautiful red-head woman, and
12 she looked at me and she looked at me and she said
13 to him: "Yes, let Sissy have the rings." That's
14 the first time I ever heard the name Sissy. I got
15 the rings.

16 He arranged to get married in the Karls
17 Kirche. Now, the Karls Kirche is where the emperor
18 and the empress got married in Vienna, you know,
19 that was. We got married. One of the priests
20 married us, ceremony. I don't know what he paid
21 him, could be -- I don't know what. Maybe gold,
22 maybe food, I have no idea, and I didn't care.

23 But before that, before we were getting
24 married, I had left this job. I finagled somehow to

1 leave the job and I had -- yeah, I left that job and
2 I had gone to the department of employment and I
3 told them I want to go on vacation home, my year was
4 over. And they said it's the war, nobody goes on
5 vacation, nobody goes home. I said, "I tell you
6 something, when I came here, I was promised by the
7 agency, by the German agency in Warsaw, that after a
8 year, one year, I get permission to go home. And
9 you know, I feel very strong about your German, I
10 believe in you, and I believe that you, whatever you
11 say you hold onto it, you will not disappoint me."
12 So they gave me the papers, you know, and I got my
13 book, that book.

14 Q. THIS WAS THE SUMMER OF --

15 A. '43, it was already '44 maybe.

16 Q. OKAY. WHAT TIME OF YEAR WAS IT?

17 A. I don't remember, I don't remember.

18 Anyhow, Johnny arranged for me a room
19 with an elderly lady. I stayed there, he at his
20 apartment.

21 Before we got married, he told me the
22 strangest story. He said I want to tell you who I
23 am and then you tell me if you really want to marry
24 me. He told me a story. It didn't make any sense.

1 He was so complicated and I didn't try to understand
2 him. And he was -- I don't know, he told me a
3 strange story. He lived in -- what's the capital of
4 Yugoslavia? I forgot now, B, B, comes right back to
5 me, Belgrade, yeah. And he was a student at the
6 university, law student, and one day somebody came,
7 called him from the government, from the Tito
8 government, you know, from the underground, and he
9 got training as a spy.

10 They taught him to become a barber and
11 he was sent to Vienna. So when people came to
12 deliver messages, they would come to the
13 barbershop. And it was very easy in a small
14 neighborhood barbershop and he would shave them or
15 whatever and they would exchange the messages. I
16 didn't believe it anyhow. But anyhow, I found out
17 later, much later, that it was true.

18 Anyhow, we got married at the church
19 and I also told him that I have two sisters. I knew
20 where they were. And he said, "Yeah? I'm going to
21 look up your sisters." I don't know where he got
22 the papers, he went to look up my sisters and he
23 came back and he said, "You know what you told me,
24 it's true, we got the girls -- we have to help the

1 girls, we have to get them out." So he said "I get
2 the passports." And one day he came home and he
3 showed me a passport under the name of Monique
4 Beyal, French, my sister spoke fluently French.

5 My sister was a very, very intelligent
6 girl. I wasn't very intelligent, I was more
7 streetwise, you know. But in the end it paid off.
8 And she spoke very talented in languages and
9 everything else.

10 So he said, "Here is the passport." I
11 look at the passport, I said, "Look, false." And he
12 was speechless. I immediately found where it was.
13 He said, "The Germans wouldn't know, so much going
14 on. You go and bring your sister."

15 So I went back to Germany. I got some
16 travel papers, how I got that I don't remember. But
17 I went and I arrived in this small village where my
18 younger sister was and I told her what I'm planning
19 to do. And she says, "You know, they're very
20 suspicious of Hela and me." I said, "But I have the
21 paper, I'm going to get her." And I spent two
22 nights with my sister I think.

23 And I went to the other village late in
24 the afternoon. How do you get her? I couldn't go

1 in and ask for her or anything. It was a small
2 village, it was Sunday afternoon. And there was a
3 big tree, a beautiful tree. And here I was standing
4 under the tree. I had beautiful long curls and I
5 wore a gray custom-made suit and high heels to match
6 and a handbag to match. And I didn't belong there,
7 I didn't look like it and I didn't belong there.

8 So anyhow, I waited and waited and
9 slowly was getting dark and I see three girls
10 coming, one of them was my sister. She looked at me
11 and she just became a piece of stone. I never
12 forget that face. She was so startled. She didn't
13 expect me. And she said something to the two girls,
14 they left and I made a sign like this (hand
15 motion). She went into the place where she worked
16 as a maid, as a farmer's maid. She came out a few
17 minutes later with a small suitcase which all her
18 belongings were in.

19 Now, this was a time that everybody,
20 Sunday, they were eating dinner, there was nobody on
21 the street. She came out with the suitcase. In the
22 excitement, the suitcase opened, everything fell
23 out, she closed it and she came, and I started to
24 run away. And she was running, she was going after

1 me and then I slowed down and I said, "Listen, I
2 want you to go ahead, here's your passport, study
3 your name, we are taking that train going to
4 Vienna." And it was already dark and I said,
5 "Listen, I tell you now, the Gestapo or anybody
6 comes into the train, you tell them that you live in
7 Vienna, that you work in Vienna, that your brother
8 is very, very ill, he lives near the French border,
9 where he is a slave worker, and he's dying and you
10 were notified and you did not have a chance to get
11 traveling papers. If they come."

12 Well, the trains are packed, I said,
13 "You go here, I go here, we are not going to sit in
14 the same compartment but I will be watching."
15 Believe it or not, that day they came, the German
16 came in, they came in our department and they looked
17 everybody's paper. I took out a cigarette, I said,
18 "Would you care for a cigarette?" He took my
19 cigarettes: "Thank you, madam." Not me, not me.
20 But they went next door and I got out to the hallway
21 and I see he interviewed my sister and he left.
22 Then the train stopped in Munich, Munich was
23 completely bombarded at that time. She came out and
24 I said, "What happened?" And she said you know, I

1 told him the story and he said, "Well, I should
2 verify your story, I should take you to the police
3 and verify your story, call Vienna. But you know
4 something, we don't have enough laborers, we need
5 you as a laborer, I let you go, I believe you." So
6 we got to Vienna.

7 Now, in Vienna, I smuggled her through
8 the woman's living room, the kitchen, living room
9 into my little room, put her to bed there, you
10 know. And we were hiding her for three weeks under
11 the bed, and I don't know. Finally, my husband said
12 she's got to go. How? She's got to go. We have to
13 find a way. The next day, I think we all went
14 swimming and there was a group of French people were
15 sitting there. So Johnny said, "You know, go over
16 and tell them that you're from Strasbourg, which is
17 on the French border, and was bombed, you lost your
18 parents and you came here and you don't know where
19 to go and what to do." So she went over there and
20 they said to her we have a consul here.

21 You know, I don't know if you wouldn't
22 know maybe, didn't read the history, the Vichy
23 government, they were working with the Germans and
24 they had an office in Vienna. And these people were

1 all Vichy people. And they said go ahead and tell
2 them your story and they will help you.

3 So the next day she went there. She
4 didn't come back. It was evening. She came with a
5 man. She said that's my husband. I said what are
6 you talking about? You know what happened, I went
7 there, there were lots of people, and I was sitting
8 on the floor and this man came up to me and he said
9 are you French and I said yes and he said you have
10 to be my wife, you have to help me. She says how
11 can I help you? He said you have to be my wife, I
12 have real papers, I'm a POW. And I have the papers
13 for my brother-in-law. So when they call me, you
14 come in with me. She said sure. It sounds
15 unbelievable but that's the way it went.

16 Q. ESTELLE, I HAVE A COUPLE QUESTIONS --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- TO KEEP UP WITH YOU. WHEN WAS ALL THIS
19 HAPPENING?

20 A. In '44.

21 Q. EARLY '44 OR SUMMER OF '44?

22 A. I would say almost spring.

23 Q. SPRING '44, THIS WAS BEFORE YOU GOT MARRIED?

24 A. After, after, all after.

1 Q. WHEN DID YOU GET MARRIED?

2 A. I got married before. I got married in
3 early, very early '44, when I quit the job at the
4 doctor.

5 Q. YOU WERE STILL LIVING IN --

6 A. In Vienna.

7 Q. -- IN A SEPARATE ROOM?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. YOU WERE NOT LIVING WITH YOUR HUSBAND?

10 A. No, no.

11 Q. OKAY. DID THE GERMANS KNOW YOUR SISTERS
12 WERE JEWISH --

13 A. No.

14 Q. -- IN GERMANY?

15 A. No. You don't understand that nobody knew.
16 If anybody knew you were Jewish, you have had it.

17 Q. SO THEY HAD TO --

18 A. They had different names.

19 Q. -- SAY THEY WERE POLISH?

20 A. They were lucky they got there and could
21 work.

22 Q. BUT THE WORK THAT THEY HAD, WAS THAT SORT OF
23 FORCED LABOR WORK BECAUSE THEY WERE POLISH OR WAS IT
24 JUST A NORMAL JOB?

1 A. Yeah. No, because they had no people doing
2 that kind of work, they all were in the army, in the
3 war. You see, they had -- they occupied Poland,
4 they occupied France, they had to take a lot of
5 their women, send them over there as secretaries,
6 nurses.

7 Q. WAS THIS SORT OF FORCED LABOR?

8 A. Yes and no. Because she went there on her
9 own will. But it was --

10 Q. COULD THEY LEAVE ON THEIR OWN WILL IF THEY
11 WANTED TO?

12 A. No.

13 Q. THEY COULDN'T?

14 A. Nobody could leave.

15 Q. SO THEY TOOK A JOB, THEY HAD TO STAY THERE
16 UNTIL THEY WERE ALLOWED TO LEAVE?

17 A. There was no such thing as leaving a job
18 till after the war.

19 Q. ALL RIGHT. ONE OTHER QUESTION: WHAT
20 HAPPENED WITH YOUR YOUNGER SISTER? WHEN YOU WENT
21 BACK TO VIENNA, WHERE WAS YOUR YOUNGER SISTER AT
22 THIS TIME?

23 A. My younger sister was still with the
24 farmers.

1 Q. SHE WAS STILL IN GERMANY AT THAT TIME?

2 A. Yeah. I only got my older sister, which now
3 came back with a husband.

4 Q. NOW, FINALLY, YOUR SISTER'S NEW HUSBAND, YOU
5 SAID HE WAS A POW?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. COULD YOU EXPLAIN THAT A LITTLE BIT, HOW
8 THAT HE WAS A POW, WHAT WAS HE DOING IN THE FRENCH
9 CONSULATE? DID HE ESCAPE OR HOW DID HE HAVE PAPERS
10 IF HE ESCAPED?

11 A. He escaped from the camp and he had papers
12 from his brother-in-law. So he figured he goes
13 there and tries to find help, not as a POW but as a
14 regular Frenchman.

15 Q. THESE WERE HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW'S PAPERS --

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. -- IN HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW'S NAME?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. OKAY.

20 A. So she said -- you know, he said -- so when
21 we got into the consul's office, he wanted to talk
22 to me. And I didn't know nothing. I said I have a
23 terrible headache and a stomachache, I don't feel
24 good, why don't you speak to my husband. So they

1 got out and they came to me. And I said, "I am not
2 keeping your husband, I don't know where to put
3 him. He has to go." So we decided they should keep
4 in contact, and he left. Now my sister had some
5 papers and I said let's go and get a job.

6 Q. WHY DID YOUR SISTER'S HUSBAND NEED TO BE
7 MARRIED, DO YOU KNOW?

8 A. For his -- I don't know. I seen him once in
9 my life. For security, most likely.

10 Q. BUT HE DIDN'T TELL HER WHY HE NEEDED TO BE
11 MARRIED IF HE ALREADY HAD PAPERS FOR HIMSELF?

12 A. He had paper for two people, for himself and
13 for his wife. He felt secure more, you know,
14 because both of them didn't escape from the prisoner
15 of war camp, that's the way I look at it.

16 So I took her to the department of
17 employment and they gave her a job in a butcher
18 shop, butcher and sausage maker, which was the
19 largest one in all of Vienna, it was a whole city
20 block. It belonged to a millionaire, Mr. Ladler.
21 She was sent there and they had accommodations,
22 there were a lot of Ukraine people working there,
23 Polish, and she had a job there and she worked.
24 Now, she spoke Polish but she got in there as a

1 French person. She could not -- was not permitted
2 to understand Polish.

3 So there was a piano and she was an
4 excellent pianist, so she played the piano in the
5 evening. The boss heard her play the piano.
6 Something, she looked quite different than all the
7 other ones. And she spoke different. He said you
8 come home with me. And he took her home.

9 I haven't seen my sister for a week.
10 We all got very upset. And Sunday she came. She
11 wore a pair of man's shoes and she had a jacket on
12 and she brought food and sausage and cake and
13 everything. I said, "What happened to you?" She
14 says, "You know, I played the piano and he must have
15 been very impressed, he took me home to his house.
16 I went with him and he has an 11-year-old daughter
17 or 10-year-old daughter and I'm supposed to give her
18 French lesson and piano lesson. And I was made the
19 head of the business, handling the ration cards, you
20 know."

21 I mean, can you imagine what that meant
22 during the war? If you had a few slip of the cards
23 and some go in your pocket, I mean unbelievable what
24 a job that was.

1 Every night she went home with him, he
2 even had a car. Now, he was married to a very
3 beautiful woman, Baroness Pollack, Baroness Pollack,
4 and at that time they still had two servants, they
5 lived in magnificent place. I never been there till
6 after the war. I know only what she told me, that
7 she had the most beautiful Russian sable and furs
8 and everything, that he never permit her to leave
9 the house, she was like in a prison, one of them.

10 And so she worked and she came every
11 Sunday and she had a French name, Monique Beyal, and
12 now my youngest sister was still over there.

13 And it was June the 5th, 1944, a knock
14 at the door. And I opened the door, again she was
15 there, the youngest one. She says I don't know,
16 something is going on, everybody's very nervous,
17 June the 5th it was, June the 5th. I said, "How did
18 you get here?" She says you can get on the trains,
19 everybody's going out that way. She says you know
20 what, I went in a train full of soldiers, they were
21 going to Vienna, I found out before, and they took
22 me -- a little girl, 10, 11 years old, they put her
23 up in the compartment where the luggage is, and they
24 covered me with a blanket and here I am. So here we

1 were again with another problem. But I introduced
2 her to my landlady, she had the same name I had.

3 So we lived there and Johnny came every
4 day and everything. We had lots of food, beautiful
5 clothes. I didn't know where it was all coming from
6 but he used to tell me -- every month or so he
7 disappeared for three days, I don't know where,
8 what, nothing. And he always used to say I tell you
9 where you get the money, some gold, and if I don't
10 come back, if I don't come back. But he always came
11 back.

12 And one day somebody came and gave me a
13 slip of paper and said, that much later on he said
14 to me be at 7:00 o'clock at that and that street on
15 that and that corner is a telephone booth, be there
16 and bring a hat. It's about Johnny. He was gone
17 already five days I think. So when I got there, at
18 7:00 o'clock, he came, they had caught him somehow,
19 I don't know how he got out, he got away, but they
20 had shaved off his head. Now, Johnny was an
21 extremely handsome man, beautiful teeth and dark
22 hair and the large eyes with the long eyelashes. He
23 was very, very vain, very good-looking, all the
24 women made a tremendous fuss over him, very, very

1 charming. And I brought him the hat. But in the
2 meantime I got an attack of laughter because he
3 looked so strange to me.

4 So now where was I before? My sister
5 was there, we had to do something about.

6 Now, where I lived in that other place
7 before at the doctor's, a lot of -- up in the upper
8 there was an attic and there was a very, very
9 beautiful apartment and there was a count living
10 there with a woman, his wife. She was a Hungarian,
11 she was Jewish, I don't know they let her live
12 there, that's what they say. But when I went
13 shopping I heard a lot of that name, Vollenberg,
14 Vollenberg, Vollenberg. And I overheard a
15 conversation that that Vollenberg, he pays \$2,000,
16 \$2,000 a head for any Jewish person to come out and
17 go to America. That was in Vienna, to come out of
18 Hungary. I have seen already -- no, that came
19 later. I seen a lot of Hungarians on the street but
20 they were all in groups and the police went with
21 them, they took them to work camps or something.

22 Now, my sister was there and we had --
23 now, the most important thing was to get a rationing
24 card. They picked up people on the street, you

1 didn't have the rationing card, that means you
2 didn't work and there was something not right. I
3 had a rationing card. My sister Hela had a
4 rationing card. But she didn't and we had to get a
5 rationing card. So I said to her one day, you know
6 what, I bring you down to the Gestapo. I'm not
7 going to the Gestapo. I said don't be a fool, they
8 are so stupid, you are beautiful, you are blond, you
9 are blue-eyed. You go to the Gestapo and you tell
10 them there was a bombardment in Warsaw, your parents
11 were gone and you started to run and run and run,
12 you didn't know where to run, and you are here in
13 Vienna and that somebody said I should come to you.
14 She was maybe 11, 12 years old, you know, maybe 13.
15 Beautiful blond, deep blue eye, tiny nose. And you
16 tell them that.

17 So I took -- first we go in two
18 different streetcars. We met there, I said, "You go
19 upstairs, there's the Gestapo, and you got to come
20 and tell me what's all about it." Well, she didn't
21 come, one hour, two hours. I got pretty nervous.
22 Then she comes out, she didn't look at me, she never
23 knew me, never seen me, and she dropped something on
24 the floor. And she went someplace. And I pick it

1 up and it says I am okay, don't worry, will get in
2 contact with you, go home.

3 So maybe a week or 10 days later, I
4 didn't hear nothing, she comes and she says look, I
5 got the paper, got the rationing paper. What
6 happened was they believed my story, they took me to
7 a krankenhaus, to a hospital, and they put me in a
8 nice room with two other girls and we were supposed
9 to be trained as nurse's aides. And every hour we
10 had to say heil Hitler, heil Hitler, heil Hitler.
11 And now I come home, I have the papers. So she came
12 home to us. I had her settled.

13 Q. HOW OLD WAS SHE AT THAT TIME?

14 A. Maybe 13, maybe 14.

15 Q. 13?

16 A. 14 maybe.

17 Q. AND WAS SHE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE HOSPITAL OR
18 WAS SHE --

19 A. You ask such question. I'm terrible sorry.
20 This is a war and you do what you have to do at that
21 particular moment, you don't analyze nothing, you
22 just go and do it or run or whatever. You got to be
23 (snaps fingers) quick on the trigger. There were
24 seconds involved in your life. And she just took

1 the opportunity and run. I wasn't allowed nothing.
2 Nobody was allowed anything. The Germans had the
3 rule and the regulation and that was it.

4 So she came home and -- came home,
5 yeah. What happened next that's very interesting?
6 Maybe I have something written down. I don't
7 recall. (Looking at notes).

8 Yeah, it was the winter and across the
9 street there was -- they had coals, they were
10 selling coals, and everything was rationed, you got
11 practically nothing. I wasn't home, she said a man
12 came up and he brought some -- he said Sissy lives
13 here? And she says Sissy? And he says yes, your
14 sister. She says yes. And he brought up coals and
15 he said Sissy should not get cold, here she has
16 coals for the winter. I was very conscious, older
17 people would always look at me in a very strange
18 way -- the buses were full, the streetcars was full,
19 they wouldn't let nobody in, they would point at me
20 and would say you come in, Sissy, you can come. I
21 figured a young, pretty girl, you know, I looked a
22 little bit different. And wherever I went, I really
23 got everything I wanted.

24 And one day again, I was taking a nap

1 and she opened the door and then came in and says
2 that the department of employment wants her to come
3 tomorrow morning. And I said to my sister, you
4 know, if I don't go, they catch us both, they come
5 back. I go. And somehow, I don't know, if they put
6 me away, they still give me a chance to go to the
7 bathroom or something.

8 So I went down and they asked me some
9 questions about the book, the employment book that
10 they gave me, I said yes, I'm looking for a new job,
11 they gave me an address to get a new job, I put the
12 book back, I never heard of them. People had other
13 things on their mind, you know, the Russian were
14 already approaching.

15 Yeah, the day my sister came and she
16 said something's going on, the next day was the
17 invasion of Normandy, June the 6th, which is also
18 her birthday.

19 Now, I got to tell you something very
20 interesting about my family, which just reminds me,
21 if you don't mind, which is very, very unique. I've
22 never found -- there must be other people like it
23 but I never seen it. There were five of us, my
24 parents and us three girls. My father was born on

1 Purim and he was killed on Passover, the first day
2 of Passover, okay. My mother was born on,
3 Semprestavo and she was gassed in Treblinka on
4 Semprestavo because friends told me. My sister was
5 born on Hanukkah. My other sister, the youngest
6 one, was born June the 6th on Shabuoth. Now, I fell
7 out of the frame. I fell out of the frame. But
8 very interesting is that the grandchildren, four
9 grandchildren were born on the birthdays or on the
10 days their grandfathers died. That's very unique,
11 very unique. The two boys -- three boys and one
12 girl, all born either when they died or when they
13 were born. And I -- maybe there's some -- maybe I
14 was born on a lucky day, who knows.

15 So she, somehow they all sense
16 something about the invasion. So we were in Vienna
17 at that time, I had plenty of food. I had a radio,
18 we had radios but you didn't hear nothing, you
19 didn't get nothing. It was a beautiful summer. My
20 husband --

21 Q. CAN I ASK YOU A QUESTION ABOUT THE RADIO?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. YOU COULDN'T GET ANYTHING AT ALL, NOT EVEN
24 SOMETHING FROM --

1 A. No.

2 Q. I DON'T KNOW IF BBC WAS POWERFUL.

3 A. No, not on my radio. I knew people had
4 radios which they were hiding in the cellars and I
5 would go down at night and listen to it. I knew
6 that. I knew of somebody who later on I met.

7 Q. WHAT WERE THEY LISTENING TO?

8 A. They didn't tell me. I have no idea. But
9 they told me they could listen to foreign -- they
10 listened, it was illegal.

11 Q. IT WAS ILLEGAL TO LISTEN TO FOREIGN RADIO?

12 A. No. You could have a radio but you could
13 not listen to foreign -- anyway, at that time they
14 had special radios. The radios were just local in
15 Germany at that time. You had to have a special
16 radio to listen to faraway places.

17 Q. MORE POWERFUL?

18 A. Yeah, much more powerful.

19 Q. THEY WERE NOT SHORTWAVE?

20 A. No, they were not shortwave, no. We never
21 got anything. Mostly we got propaganda on the hour
22 and music.

23 Yeah. I seen a lot of Hungarians on
24 the street. And my husband was insanely jealous, I

1 didn't understand why. And he always used to say
2 people look at you, people look at you. And he
3 was -- he wasn't very faithful I found out later.

4 And one day we all went swimming and he
5 was just telling me that he has never been this
6 happy in his life since the day he met me, you
7 know. And I thanked him for what he did for my
8 sisters. And there was a beautiful girl passing by
9 in a red bathing suit, he got up and went after that
10 girl in the red bathing suit. So I got pretty mad.
11 We had the locker where our clothes was in, I went
12 over and got my clothes and left his clothes and
13 gave the key to a friend of his. I took Ruthie and
14 we went home. Well, what shall I tell you? He came
15 home in a fury, they stole his watch, and he got so
16 angry he hit me.

17 I've never been hit by anybody --
18 once -- and I made up my mind wait, wait, wait, I
19 get even with you. And I started to have --
20 somebody once told me if you hit a woman once, you
21 hit her again. So I started to take care of my
22 nails, nice and long and pointy. I don't take care
23 of them now. And the next time he came up to me and
24 I scratched his face. I mean, there's nothing more

1 powerful in life, not hunger, no sex, than a man's
2 vanity. I tell you, I know. Now, he was bleeding
3 until it heals, you know, everybody was making fun
4 of him. He would never, never come close to me.

5 Well, I got pregnant. And I told him I
6 got pregnant. I had gone to a doctor. And then he
7 was stunned and then he said it's not from me. I
8 was standing against the door and I was holding onto
9 the post because I just started to shake, I got so
10 upset. And some people, you read or you hear a
11 broken heart, my heart just broke in half. I could
12 feel it, I had such a pain inside. And I made up my
13 mind I'm not going to have the baby. And my sister
14 was very, very upset. She was a child.

15 And I went to the doctor again and that
16 doctor was a giant of a man, lived in a beautiful
17 villa, he was a gynecolog. I said to him I'm
18 pregnant. He said, "yes, you are." I said, "I
19 don't want the baby." I figure if I tell him I
20 wanted an abortion, it's absolutely against the law,
21 he would say get out, he won't do anything. I was,
22 you know, it all depends the way you approach
23 people, all what matters. I said you know, I'm
24 Polish, I'm from Poland. And I told him something

1 and he said -- he looked at me and he said something
2 very interesting that put it right in my mind, he
3 said the Germans -- he didn't say the Germans, he
4 said, "Listen, the Germans are going to occupy
5 Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, France and Russia,
6 we need people, the population isn't big enough to
7 occupy all these countries. If you deliver a child
8 and you are very fair, very light skinned, very
9 light eyes, your child will be very fair, they will
10 take it away. But you have the right as a foreigner
11 to have an abortion." I said, "I take the
12 abortion."

13 I went to the hospital. There were
14 maybe 20 girls in that room. I wasn't the only one,
15 you know, other ones had the same problem. And they
16 start -- they gave me an injection, I was on that
17 table, and it was very, very, very painful, and I
18 started to scream. And I screamed "I hate you all.
19 I want my mother." My voice was very different than
20 now. I never heard anybody doing -- I'm partly
21 anesthesia, in a voice like this, I was very alone,
22 very sore and very painful, and I screamed "I want
23 my mother. Where is my mother? You killed my
24 mother. I must have my mother." And I don't know

1 what went on there because I wasn't all there.

2 I got back into bed and across the bed
3 was another girl and she said, "I feel so sorry for
4 you, I feel so sorry for you." I said -- I wasn't
5 feeling good and the pain and so on. And she
6 said -- I said, "You be next." Well, anyhow, she
7 came over and hold my hand and she said, "I'm so
8 sorry for you." She knew what I was -- what I had
9 screamed, you know. I knew I screamed but I didn't
10 remember.

11 It was 2:00 o'clock in the morning,
12 late at night, a man came in. There was always a
13 man coming in. With a flashlight, he went over all
14 the beds. He come to my bed and he said, "You come
15 out with me." I said, "I'm so sick, I can't go."
16 He said, "You should have heard what you told them
17 while you were lying on that table. They get you
18 tomorrow. Here's a blanket, let's go." I said, "I
19 can't walk." Come on, I will carry you. And he
20 took me out, middle of the night. He was a male
21 nurse from Holland, he worked there. And took me to
22 his place, put me in his bed and he slept on the
23 floor, took care of me for three days or something.
24 He says now you go where you belong, I don't ever

1 want to see you again. So I got back where I
2 belonged, you see.

3 Now, this girl one day was walking with
4 my sister on the street and a girl comes, she said,
5 "Do you remember me? I was across the street from
6 you in the hospital. Do you remember my name is
7 Basha?" I said, "Yes, I remember." And she said
8 look, and she pulled up her sleeves and there was A
9 and the number from Auschwitz. I heard of it by
10 then. I never met anybody. I said to my little
11 sister get out of here, run, quick, disappear. And
12 she told me I'm Jewish too. I too married a
13 Yugoslav. My mother works in the hospital and every
14 day she gives me an injection into the blood, warm
15 milk or something, so I have continuously
16 temperature, so I am continuously sick. I always
17 have an excuse not to go to work, not to check me
18 out.

19 Now, this girl later on, that's a
20 remarkable girl, she looked exactly like Loretta
21 Young, she was a beautiful girl. She applied right
22 after the war to go the university into
23 mathematics. She never even finished high school
24 and she was accepted. She separated too from her

1 husband. Her sister, later on I had a good radio
2 and she came over and said my sister is giving a
3 speech. Her sister was a Communist, a well-known
4 Communist in Poland. She went back to Poland with
5 her mother. But she used to come and visit me and
6 brought me some things later on. Basha was her
7 name.

8 So I'm back in my place. The bombs
9 were falling. The Russians were already coming. It
10 was already maybe the beginning of '45 maybe. The
11 Russians already. And then I see the first
12 American. He had, how do you call it, I'm all mixed
13 up now, you know, his plane had crashed but he, how
14 do you call it, you know.

15 MS. WEITZEL: PARACHUTE.

16 A. In a parachute, he came down in a parachute
17 in the center, right close by the little park where
18 we were living. And everybody came up running and
19 running and running and some welcomed him and gave
20 him chocolate and other ones cursed him. Naturally
21 he was taken away into most likely a prisoner of war
22 camp. Yeah. I mean, we all knew it was getting
23 closer. The bombs were falling.

24 And, you know, I would lie awake at

1 night to think what to cook the next day, something
2 good to cook. But you see, we got very little gas.
3 We had gas stoves, you know. And we got so much
4 gas, you could not cook with it. But when the bombs
5 were falling and they had an alarm, people would go
6 in the cellar and I knew the gas would come up big.
7 So I stayed with my little sister, we did the
8 cooking. But one day the bomb came, knocked us all
9 over, nothing happened to us but it was a shock.
10 From that day on, I went into the cellar across the
11 street. They had some kind, I don't know, they
12 called them wing bombs, they took a whole city block
13 like this (circular motion with hand) but nothing
14 happened to Ruthie and to me.

15 Q. WERE YOU STILL LIVING -- AT THIS POINT YOU
16 WERE STILL LIVING APART?

17 A. Yeah, yeah. No.

18 Q. WHAT WAS THE REASON --

19 A. Go ahead.

20 Q. YOU WERE STILL LIVING APART?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR YOUR NOT LIVING
23 TOGETHER AFTER YOU GOT MARRIED?

24 A. It was too dangerous for him. Yeah, yeah.

1 They told him -- somehow, they knew we were married.

2 Q. WHO IS "THEY"?

3 A. I don't know who "they" are. Because he
4 came one day and he told me that -- I knew that he
5 was doing spy work, I knew that, for the Yugoslav,
6 and he told me they wanted him to get rid of me and
7 he refused. So they told him okay, we are going to
8 use her. And we want her to get up at 4:00 o'clock
9 in the morning and go with the streetcars to where
10 they do ammunition, ammunition work, where they make
11 the guns. And she has to listen to conversations
12 and bring back the conversations. That's the way
13 spy work works, you know. Well, he refused, he
14 wouldn't let me go. He absolutely -- and I didn't
15 go. Because I will be the only one left in the
16 streetcar coming back. Everybody else would go to
17 work and they wouldn't know what's she doing there.
18 So I didn't do that.

19 Well, April the 12th is a very
20 important day in my life. I kept diary on it for
21 many, many years, I don't have it anymore. What
22 happens April the 12th --

23 Q. 1945?

24 A. 1945, the Russians came in. And they were

(R J
1 looting and raping but they had been given by
2 General Tschukof, I think it was, three days free of
3 looting, you know, the stores, and raping the girls,
4 anything, that's what I understood. Now, my husband
5 said you are not leaving this place, and I wasn't
6 going to, I was much too much afraid. And they
7 broke open the shops and took everything and they
8 got drunk.

9 And then after a week or two, I don't
10 know, we still were on rationing cards and they were
11 giving out sugar or something, I forgot what it was,
12 and I went down with my sister and we were just
13 standing in the corner like this, nobody, so the
14 Russians shouldn't see us, and I see center of the
15 street was a very tall, a real Russian bear standing
16 there, a high officer, and soldiers around him. And
17 everybody gave respect to him. And we were standing
18 in the corner, we just didn't exist. We got our
19 rations, our sugar, our bread, whatever it was. We
20 went back again. The war was over and Johnny came
21 and stayed with us and I told my landlady who I
22 was. But when he had said it was not my child, I
23 had made up my mind that my marriage is over,
24 finished.

1 And now I wanted to have that doctor's
2 apartment. They were big Nazis. It wasn't this --
3 no. I wanted to leave and go someplace else, maybe
4 America, I don't know. No, it wasn't that neither.
5 I wanted to establish myself as a Jewish person,
6 that's what it was.

7 And I went to the commandant to the
8 headquarter. And on the way up I'm thinking you
9 know, if you remain Catholic, maybe life would be
10 easier. And it went back and forth and back and
11 forth in my heart and I said no, no, no, no, I'm
12 going become Jewish. And I went to the headquarter
13 and lots of people, they let me in. And as the door
14 opened and I stand here and they were interviewing
15 people and all of it. And there was a beautiful
16 blond girl there and I see that officer I had seen
17 on the street. And he was screaming and yelling.
18 And he said why didn't you stay in Lapland. Now, I
19 knew the girl, she lived about two houses away where
20 I lived. She was a beautiful blond lavish girl,
21 absolutely magnificent looking. She had studied
22 medicine at the university. I knew her, you know,
23 we went shopping at the same place. And that
24 officer screamed and yelled at her why she came

1 here, why she didn't stay in Lapland, that she
2 didn't help her country and the Russians.

3 And I got very nervous. I was next.

4 Well, I didn't want to go in. I had no choice. She
5 left. And he said, "You come in, what is it you
6 want?" And he had a soldier standing with him, his
7 adjutant. And he said, "What is it you want? Why
8 are you here?" I said "I am Jewish." Yeah? And he
9 said to that adjutant, go out and close that door.
10 He said, "You are Jewish?" I said "Yes." Do you
11 know how many people were here today telling me you
12 are Jewish? I said, "I don't know but I'm Jewish
13 and I can prove it." And I could see a smile coming
14 into the corner of his eyes. He said, "You can
15 prove it?" I said "Yes." How? And I said, "Jemai *Shma Yisroel*
16 is hoel." I couldn't prove it any other way.

17 And he came up to me, picked up my chin
18 and he kissed me on my forehead and on my eyes. And
19 he said, "I am Jewish. And what can I do for you?"
20 And I told him I have two sisters. And where do you
21 live and what do you do? And I told him they're
22 with my husband and so on. He said, "What do you
23 want? Anything." I said, "I want that fabulous
24 apartment from the doctors, they have left town.

1 They were afraid of the Russians and they just run
2 away." No problem. It's already done. What else?
3 Do you need a bicycle? Whatever you want. I send a
4 soldier with you and we go and we take the things
5 and they have to open up the door, they had a
6 concierge, and that's yours. Give me the address.
7 And I gave him the address and that was fine.

8 And we moved in and everything was
9 there, you never seen a place like this in your
10 life. Everything they just left. It was carpets,
11 oriental carpets, and silver, everything. So we all
12 moved in, all of us, Hela came and my younger sister
13 and Johnny.

14 And that officer came up to see us, you
15 know, occasionally. He was glad he found some
16 Jewish people, Jewish girls. And he left. And he
17 had a girlfriend, she was a widow with a daughter
18 and I seen him with her. And he came to visit us
19 all the time. And my husband -- and he tried to
20 date my sister Hela, and showed interest in her.
21 And my husband said, "He's not interested in her,
22 it's you he want." I said, "What are you talking
23 about?" And he came and he went.

24 And one day, I don't know what

1 happened, my husband, he had a very -- he got very
2 upset about something and he took a -- he had a
3 pistol, you know, carried it with him, a little gun,
4 and he said, "Nobody is going to have you ever. I'm
5 going to kill you." And my sister start to scream
6 and I passed out and a knock at the door. I was so
7 lucky. He came in, that officer. And he said, "Why
8 do you do that to her? Hasn't she suffered
9 enough?" And he said to me what is it, what can I
10 do for you? I feel so bad, so sorry for you. I
11 said, "I want a divorce or an annulment, number
12 one. I want him out of the country. I have
13 ammunitions and guns under the bed." That was
14 against the law.

15 And I took him into the bedroom and I
16 showed it to him. And he said to him: Listen,
17 mister, you got two choices, you leave the country
18 forever, I will help with your marriage certificate
19 or you go to jail. You're not supposed to have
20 that, you know that. Would you like to be sent to
21 Russia into a prison? He said, "I agree to leave
22 the country." He left the country. We all went
23 with him to the train and I cried terribly because I
24 lost a protector. I cried terribly.

1 He had a very close friend that came
2 with us to the train and he said Georgie, he said
3 don't worry, I'll take care of you, I'll take care
4 of you, don't you worry, anything you want, I take
5 care of you.

6 Well, what should I tell you, a few
7 days later that Russian officer came. And then
8 three days later was my birthday. And at 5:00
9 o'clock, knock at the door and I opened up the door
10 and a soldier came and another soldier and another
11 soldier, they brought sausages and ham and anything
12 you can think of. Then -- no, in the morning came
13 24 long-stemmed red roses, was my birthday, he had
14 sent me. And then they came and did the cooking and
15 everything. And then a group of officers came and
16 there was a big, big party, my birthday. And the
17 next night we all went to the theater, you know, was
18 operetta. And on the third day everybody got sick,
19 we overate, you know, my sister got very sick, the
20 little one.

21 Yeah, something happened before, I got
22 rid of my other sister, yeah. And then he started
23 to date me and he said I lost my family, I have a
24 dacha and I have a car in Russia. And meantime I

1 got my annulment because it was easier, I was a
2 false name, you know. And you marry me. Well, I
3 wasn't going to marry nobody anymore, that was it.

4 But before that something happened,
5 before that he was coming and going and Johnny had
6 left. I heard over the radio that General
7 Eisenhower, not I knew that he was, General
8 Eisenhower has his headquarter in Frankfurt am
9 Main. And I said to my sister Hela, you know what,
10 you got to go home, you got to go to Frankfurt, now
11 we can go to Frankfurt, you go, I hold onto the
12 apartment. And if my mother is alive -- I didn't
13 know if she was dead, my mother, I knew my father --
14 you will go on your knees -- she will go there on
15 her knees to find us. I'm not going, you sit here,
16 I should go. I say you speak the languages, you go.

17 Well, there was, in Vienna there were
18 the Russian, the Americans, the French and the
19 English, and she would have to go to the Russian
20 border to get out of Vienna. The zone was a Russian
21 zone. They wouldn't let nobody out. I said never
22 mind, let's go. And I gave her food and I gave her
23 lots of things and I took her down there and they
24 said nobody goes out. So I started to flirt with

1 one of the soldier, you know, and before he looked
2 around, she was gone. So she went to Frankfurt. I
3 never to hear from her again. She went to Frankfurt
4 and now where was I? I was in Vienna. Yeah.

5 Oh, many times while she was still in
6 Vienna I remember one day the bombs were falling --

7 Q. THIS IS YOUR OLDER SISTER?

8 A. I'm the oldest. The middle one.

9 Q. THE OLDER OF THE TWO SISTERS?

10 A. Yeah, the middle one.

11 Q. THERE WERE TWO SISTERS?

12 A. Yeah. One day she was still living at that
13 rich man's place, the bomb had fallen, that was
14 before the war was over, the opera house was
15 burning. And nobody could run through and I knew I
16 had to find my sister, if she's alive or not. We
17 were very close at that time, you know. And I run
18 and run and they wouldn't let me go and I kicked
19 everybody, I got by the fire and I found her. She
20 had jumped out of the window and a floor below.

21 Well, anyhow, now I am -- where was I?
22 I sent her to Germany and I'm still --

23 Q. ABOUT WHEN WAS THIS, WHEN SHE WENT TO
24 GERMANY?

1 A. Oh, she went to Germany after I heard
2 General Eisenhower headquarter.

3 Q. ABOUT WHEN WAS THIS?

4 A. I would say, I tell you something, that must
5 have been in June.

6 Q. STILL JUNE OF '45?

7 A. Yeah. The war was over. Maybe it was
8 July. No, it was later. It was already October,
9 November. It was cold, yeah, I think it was that
10 time.

11 Now, one day the officer had
12 disappeared, no trace, no nothing, no protecting.
13 Then somebody came, another officer, and he said you
14 see that given 24 hours or two hours to leave the
15 army, he had to go with them.

16 So now, I have not heard nothing
17 from -- yeah, from Hela. Oh, one day when Hela was
18 still living near the opera, she lived on
19 Schwartzenberg Platz, the most exclusive
20 neighborhood. And one day it was hot and I wanted
21 to go and see her. It was, I think it was maybe
22 July or August '45. I went down and I seen her and
23 I come back, trying to get back, it was Sunday
24 afternoon. There wasn't a soul on the street, not a

1 single, single soul. And I went back home to my
2 part of the city, in a different district, and I see
3 an officer coming there, and he had a saber, and he
4 was drunk but he was drunk. And he came this way
5 and I came this way and we come close and we close
6 and we stood looking at each other. I was
7 horrified, you know. And he looked at me -- I
8 looked him straight into the eye like: You try me,
9 you know. And I walked slowly by and then I started
10 to run. And I turned around, he was still standing
11 in that spot. But that's one of the episodes.

12 Yeah, something else happened. The
13 Russians, that was, you see, everything belonged to
14 the Russian in the beginning. April 12, they came
15 in and the whole city belonged to the Russian.
16 Later on they made the agreement where they divided
17 the city, that came later, like they divided Berlin
18 later.

19 And Hela's boss said to me one day I
20 want to talk with you. I even had a telephone,
21 because the Nazis had the telephone, the big shot, I
22 still had my telephone, come and I want to talk to
23 you, I went to him and he said to me, that's very
24 funny, he says I have a warehouse full of food. I

1 tell you where it is. It's confiscated by the
2 Russians. And there's liquor in it and flour and
3 rice and sugar, it's full, packed full. He said,
4 you know, it's confiscated, there's a lock, I have
5 the keys. If you go there and open up the
6 warehouse, you can take with you whatever you can
7 carry. I said are you crazy? If the Russian came,
8 they take. He said oh, you get away with it, you
9 will. I said I'm going to let you know.

10 I went home and talked it over with my
11 sister. I had a baby carriage in the house. I knew
12 somebody who had a grocery store, he had a wagon
13 with these big wheels and there was two long
14 handles, you know, you see them in the old movies
15 maybe sometime, call it a cart, a vegetable cart.
16 And I said can I have that? And he lend it to me,
17 he loaned it to me. And blankets. And I said, I
18 went back to him, I said let me have the keys, I am
19 going to get, I am going to open up the warehouse.

20 Sunday morning, nice and quiet, not a
21 soul around, I said Ruth and Hela, let's go. Right
22 now, it was pretty far to go over the bridge. So we
23 took the cart, we took the baby carriage, we took
24 the blankets and off we went. And I got to the

1 warehouse, I took the keys, I ripped off the paper
2 where it says confiscated. And we got in, we were
3 speechless. I said first take the liquor, then take
4 the cigarette, then take -- we loaded up, I cannot
5 even tell you, all three of us, we loaded and we
6 loaded and we filled up the baby carriage. And
7 meantime all the windows open because they wouldn't
8 dare, the Austrians, I mean they were horrified by
9 the Russians, absolutely horrified. There all the
10 windows are opened, everybody looked. And we
11 started to go home, we left the whole thing open.

12 And believe it or not, two Russian
13 soldier came. We covered everything with blankets.
14 Three young pretty girls, they were going to help us
15 to push.

16 Q. DID THEY KNOW WHAT YOU WERE PUSHING?

17 A. No.

18 Q. IT WAS ALL COVERED UP?

19 A. It was all covered up. Listen, I told you
20 I'm very street smart. I got to be street smart.

21 Well, anyhow, they pushed and they
22 pushed and then they had to go someplace else. We
23 all spoke a few words of Russian, they let us go.
24 And I got everything into the house. So I was very.

1 very rich by then, very rich because I had all these
2 things I could trade. Yes, I went every day, the
3 Russian park was in the center of town and there the
4 people would meet and do black market. And I met
5 some Americans and I said you give me your watches,
6 I sell them to the Russians, I get you money, you
7 know, all of this, and went on. And there was
8 always a lot said, the police always came, I always
9 run away.

10 So my husband had gone, I haven't heard
11 from my sister. Here I am. And I met a girl, her
12 name was Audie, through the people where Hela
13 worked, through the wife, the Baroness, she had a
14 sister who was married to an Arab. And I met
15 Audie. Audie was a beautiful blond. She lived
16 together with an Arab. And he wasn't in one day,
17 she told me, somebody, the Gestapo, the police came
18 to the house, went where she has the linens, looked
19 under it and took up, I don't know how many hundreds
20 of dollars. Now, one dollar was worth a lot of
21 money at that time. And she said somebody must have
22 tipped him off and he disappeared.

23 She later on, after the war, I got in
24 touch with her, it was a very interesting story, and

1 he lived in Switzerland, she went to Switzerland,
2 married him, they went to Cairo, they lived in
3 Cairo. Later on she got away from him and got back
4 to Austria, she now lives in Austria.

5 So now I lost my thought. Where was I?

6 Q. YOU WERE AT DIFFERENT STORIES?

7 A. Yeah, I want to bring them in.

8 Q. I HAVE A QUESTION, YOUR APARTMENT?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. AT THAT TIME, DID YOU HAVE TO PAY RENT TO
11 ANYONE? WHO OWNED THE BUILDING?

12 A. Yes, yes. Very good question.

13 Q. DID THE RUSSIANS CONFISCATE BUILDING? HOW
14 DID THAT WORK?

15 A. No. The Germans had confiscated the
16 building. There was a magnificent building, marble
17 stairs, everything, absolutely magnificent. They
18 had taken it away from Jewish people by the name of
19 Landau who went to New York. And they had a
20 manager. And the people who lived there paid rent
21 to this manager, who took care of the estate. He
22 was a German. Like I explained to you before about
23 the businesses. You see, I had to pay rent to the
24 manager, which I did. And one day the manager

1 showed up and see what I did to the apartment. He
2 says I've never seen such a clean place the way we
3 kept it.

4 That was a good question, yeah.

5 Q. I'M SORRY, WHEN WAS THIS? YOU SAID YOU PAID
6 RENT TO THE GERMAN.

7 A. Yeah, to the manager, that was after the
8 war.

9 Q. AFTER THE WAR, WHY WAS HE STILL IN CONTROL
10 OF THE BUILDING IF HE WAS PUT IN THERE BY THE
11 GERMANS IN THE FIRST PLACE?

12 A. Well, who else would be -- look what goes on
13 in Baghdad, in these places.

14 Q. WELL, THE BUILDING WAS OWNED YOU SAID --

15 A. By a Jewish family.

16 Q. BY A JEWISH FAMILY BEFORE THE GERMANS
17 ANNEXED AUSTRIA?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. AND THEN WHEN THE GERMANS ANNEXED AUSTRIA,
20 BASICALLY THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TOOK OVER THE
21 BUILDING AND INSTALLED THE MANAGER?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. HOW LONG WAS IT THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT THEN
24 OWNED THE BUILDING OR THEY GAVE IT TO A GERMAN

1 CITIZEN?

2 A. No, no. I think, I personally believe --
3 no, I couldn't tell you.

4 Q. ALL YOU KNEW, THERE WAS A MANAGER --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. -- BUT HE WAS NOT THE OWNER?

7 A. No. The owner was in New York. And you see
8 he never sold the building. If he would have -- now
9 he must have gotten back a lot, a lot of money.

10 Q. THE OWNER WAS A GERMAN?

11 A. Was a Jewish fellow.

12 Q. OKAY. SO THE GERMANS --

13 A. Confiscated.

14 Q. -- CONFISCATED BUT DID NOT SAY THAT IT WAS
15 NO LONGER OWNED BY THE JEWISH FAMILY, JUST THAT THEY
16 WERE --

17 A. I don't know this detail.

18 Q. OKAY.

19 A. They confiscated the building, they sent in
20 a manager and -- you see, he never sold the
21 building, this I know, because it would be a
22 different owner.

23 Q. SO RENT WAS PAID TO THE MANAGER. DO YOU
24 HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT HE DID WITH THE MONEY?

1 A. No, no, I don't.

2 Q. DID IT GO TO THE GERMANS OR THE JEWISH

3 FAMILY?

4 A. I have no idea. He did that for many years.

5 Q. AND AFTER THE RUSSIANS CAME --

6 A. He still did it, yeah.

7 Q. HE STAYED THERE AND YOU HAD TO PAY HIM RENT?

8 A. You couldn't turn everything upside down.

9 It doesn't go like this. Most likely the people

10 paid maybe rent to them for another 10 years till

11 this people here reclaimed their property in New

12 York. I don't know.

13 Q. OKAY. SO YOU STILL HAD TO PAY RENT --

14 A. Yeah, everybody paid it.

15 Q. -- TO THE MANAGER?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. WAS IT THE SAME RENT THAT THE GERMANS

18 WERE --

19 A. I suppose so, yeah, it was the same rent.

20 Q. HOW MUCH WAS THAT, A LOT OF RENT?

21 A. No.

22 Q. AT THE TIME, COULD YOU AFFORD IT?

23 A. Money was worthless. It was a schilling,

24 and schilling, money was worthless. They later on

1 changed the schilling into something else,
2 reevaluated.

3 Q. WOULD YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO AFFORD THE
4 APARTMENT IF YOU DIDN'T TAKE THE MERCHANDISE FROM
5 THE WAREHOUSE?

6 A. I would have sold some of my clothes or
7 something, things would be organized later on.

8 Q. BUT YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE --

9 A. Oh, yeah.

10 Q. MY QUESTION IS THIS: YOU WANTED THE
11 APARTMENT AND YOU WENT TO THE RUSSIANS TO ASK FOR
12 THE APARTMENT AND YOU WERE COMFORTABLE THAT THE RENT
13 WOULD NOT BE A PROBLEM, THAT YOU WOULD BE ABLE TO
14 AFFORD IT?

15 A. I never worried about the rent for one
16 second. As long as Russian were there, if I
17 wouldn't pay rent, I still would be staying there.

18 Q. OKAY.

19 A. I knew I wasn't going to remain in Austria
20 anyhow. I knew it was only temporary.

21 Meantime, I hadn't heard from my
22 sister, you see. And one night Audie and I went to
23 the opera, Tales of Hoffman's, and I've never seen a
24 performance like this in barcarole that the opera

1 singer later on went to New York and created a
2 sensation at the Metropolitan because she, in Salome
3 she took off her clothes, the seven veil dance, she
4 went back later on. And no tickets, no nothing.
5 Money was worthless. So you go here, you go there,
6 you don't care.

7 Q. SO GO BACK, WE'RE NOW AT THE END OF THE WAR.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU FOR YOU TO TELL US WHAT
10 HAPPENED TO YOUR FAMILY, ESPECIALLY YOUR PARENTS AND
11 ANY OTHER RELATIVES OTHER THAN YOUR SISTERS DURING
12 THE WAR BECAUSE YOU REALLY HAVEN'T COVERED THAT.
13 YOU SAID YOUR FATHER DIED, YOU KNEW THAT --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. -- AND LATER ON YOU FOUND OUT YOUR MOTHER
16 DIED AT TREBLINKA.

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. COULD YOU GO BACK AND I GUESS FIRST TALK
19 ABOUT YOUR FATHER, WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM AND HOW YOU
20 FOUND OUT.

21 A. I can tell you, yeah. I told you he was
22 taken away, he went to Dachau in a concentration
23 camp.

24 Q. WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN?

1 A. Yeah. He went back to Germany to liquidate
2 the business and the war broke out, it's in the
3 first part, and they put him into a concentration
4 camp.

5 Q. OKAY. WE REALLY DIDN'T DISCUSS YOUR
6 FATHER. I THINK THE LAST TIME WE REALLY TALKED
7 ABOUT HIM WAS WHEN YOU SAID YOUR FAMILY WENT TO
8 POLAND.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. AND THEN YOU SPLIT UP.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. AND YOUR FATHER WENT TO ANOTHER LOCATION.

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. AND THAT'S THE LAST TIME WE REALLY TALKED
15 ABOUT YOUR FATHER.

16 A. No. I mentioned he went back to Germany to
17 liquidate the business.

18 Q. WHEN DID THAT HAPPEN?

19 A. That happened in '38.

20 Q. OKAY.

21 A. And then the war broke out and they took him
22 to Buchenwald and to Dachau.

23 And the reason -- the way I know he
24 died is that I never forget that it was Passover,

1 the first day, and my mother was peeling some
2 potatoes and I said you know, Mother, I don't
3 believe in being psychic, I know I am, I hate it, I
4 said something wonderful happened to Father now, to
5 Dad, at this moment, I know, I feel it, something
6 very good happened. And maybe three weeks later, we
7 got the notice he had died at that time and at that
8 date.

9 Q. WHAT YEAR WAS THIS?

10 A. That was '41.

11 Q. '41?

12 A. Yeah. April the 12th.

13 Q. THE GERMANS WERE SENDING OUT NOTICES TO
14 FAMILIES?

15 A. Yeah. And they sent me back his pocketknife
16 and his portfolio, yeah. So I knew.

17 Q. WHAT DID THEY SAY?

18 A. It was a certificate of death with the
19 date. And they said kreis lauft sturen, which means
20 heart attack, yeah, heart attack.

21 Q. AT THAT POINT WAS IT KNOWN WHAT WAS
22 HAPPENING IN THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS?

23 A. Nobody came back. Nobody came back.
24 Something else interesting happened

1 during the first 1940s, this happened, we were
2 living in Thomashoff and they came and took away a
3 lot of men, they ignored our door and they took
4 them. And people still believed in humanity and a
5 group of women were organizing to go back to Germany
6 and to ask for the relief -- for the release of the
7 men from the concentration camps. And they picked
8 me to be the speaker to go with them. And I was
9 very excited to go back to Germany, I never thought
10 of escaping and all that thing came all later. And
11 I was supposed to go and I stepped on a nail and I
12 got an infection in the foot, my foot was swelled up
13 and I couldn't go. How -- my life was just
14 incredible. I never went. I don't know -- here
15 again I feel if I would have gone, I would have
16 escaped, but my sisters would have been lost.

17 Q. THIS WAS BEFORE YOU EVEN WENT TO WARSAW?

18 A. Yeah. It was pretty much in the beginning
19 of the war, you see.

20 Q. WHEN YOUR FATHER WAS SENT TO BUCHENWALD,
21 WERE YOU NOTIFIED, WAS THE FAMILY NOTIFIED THAT
22 THAT'S WHERE HE WAS OR DID HE JUST DISAPPEAR?

23 A. I think we got one letter, I think so, he
24 wrote us.

1 Q. FROM HIM?

2 A. Yeah, one, maybe two letters, yeah.

3 Q. WERE YOU EVER ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH HIM
4 AFTER?

5 A. No, no, you could not communicate with
6 nobody. Yeah.

7 Q. SO HE WAS TAKEN AWAY, I'M SORRY, WAS IT YOU
8 SAY 1939?

9 A. No, no. He went back -- yeah, '39, yeah.

10 Q. THEY SENT HIM TO A CONCENTRATION CAMP?

11 A. Maybe the end of '39. No, no, maybe the
12 beginning of '40. I don't know.

13 Q. WHEN DID HE DIE AGAIN?

14 A. '41, first day of Passover, April the 12th,
15 yeah. You see, I was liberated April the 12th too.

16 Q. WHEN THE RUSSIANS CAME IN?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU WANT TO TELL
19 US ABOUT YOUR FATHER?

20 A. Yeah, I can tell you. The people, the
21 Germans occupied already or had walked into
22 Czechoslovakia and to Austria. And my father would
23 go to synagogue Friday night and he would bring home
24 people and they looked pretty bad. And it was

1 Shabbas and I was the oldest one and he would put
2 the chair next to me they should sit there. And I
3 said I don't want to sit next to them. And why
4 don't you give them money, I said, let them go
5 someplace else. And he said money is easy to give,
6 they're going to stay. That kind of a father I
7 had. Charity was very, very important to him and to
8 my mother. Friday, Friday afternoon being the
9 oldest, I had to take challah and fish to people who
10 didn't have -- had very little, that's the kind of a
11 man he was.

12 And many, many years later was a dinner
13 party, a man across the street said, "You know that
14 face of yours, I know that face. I'm going to tell
15 you something, there was a man sitting the third row
16 in the synagogue and he had your face, exactly the
17 lips and the nose except he had very deep, almost
18 violet-colored eyes. He had the kindest face I've
19 ever seen on a human being." And I said, "That was
20 my father." That kind of a man he was. If I didn't
21 care for him, he couldn't handle me, you see. My
22 own husband can't even handle me, so a little bit
23 improvement.

24 Q. DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT YOUR MOTHER NOW?

1 UNLESS THERE'S SOMETHING MORE YOU WANT TO MENTION
2 ABOUT YOUR FATHER.

3 A. That's what I want to say about my father,
4 what kind of a person he was, yeah. He gave us a
5 lot of freedom, we traveled a lot as children, which
6 was very unusual, especially me, I went to France
7 and here and there. And he always said if she wants
8 to be a bad girl, she can do it behind the house.

9 Q. HOW WELL-TO-DO WAS YOUR FAMILY ECONOMICALLY?

10 A. The worse the situation got, the better off
11 we were because there was no more competition. And
12 we bought -- he bought up one of the oldest wineries
13 in Frankfurt.

14 Q. WAS IT A NON-JEWISH WINERY BEFORE?

15 A. Yes, a very famous one, El Gottheim, they're
16 very famous in the Jewish, the Frankfurt history and
17 so on. He bought that, we kept the land.

18 Q. YOU WERE FAIRLY WELL-OFF, THEN?

19 A. Yeah. I mean, we didn't have any kind of
20 hardship. When you're in this kind of business,
21 you're always short in money. You know why? My
22 father always found a good piece of wine he had to
23 have, he had to invest, there was always something.
24 He was also a wine taster and people send a lot of

1 small bottles for him to taste, he specialized. So
2 was always short on cash because he always found the
3 other piece to invest.

4 Q. DID YOU LIVE IN AN APARTMENT?

5 A. We lived in an apartment, yeah.

6 Q. YOU DID NOT OWN THE BUILDING?

7 A. No.

8 Q. WERE THE OWNERS JEWISH?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. ABOUT HOW MANY FAMILIES LIVED IN THAT
11 BUILDING?

12 A. About -- yes, you know what happens, a lot
13 of people left, then the people from the villages
14 came in, got this apartment from the Jewish
15 congregation.

16 There was also one night, the way what
17 my parents were like, at 2:00 o'clock in the morning
18 the doorbell rung and my father opened up, he had to
19 go through a little garden to open up, and he brings
20 in a woman, very thick eyeglasses, very much afraid
21 and shaking. And he said to me you get out of your
22 bed, you go into the living, you're going to sleep
23 there, she's going in your bed. I said who is she
24 anyhow? I tell you, I think she stayed with us five

1 or six weeks. How she got to us was her son knew us
2 and he had left the country and her mother was in a
3 small town, they had very difficult times in the
4 small towns, and he had said to her whenever you
5 leave the small town, go to Frankfurt and go to the
6 Goldbergs. That was the kind of father.

7 My mother was also very, very helpful.
8 She kept her for five or six weeks. She got her a
9 job. That woman had no husband, even got her a
10 husband. And she went with him to America, just
11 before the war started. That way my parents.

12 Q. COULD YOU TELL US SOMETHING, TELL US MORE
13 ABOUT YOUR MOTHER, WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE WAR AND
14 ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO TELL US.

15 A. My mother was a very vivacious woman, very
16 vivacious, she loved to sing and to dance. And her
17 children -- very good mother, very good. And she
18 would take food out of her mouth to give to us. And
19 as I said, she got up 3:00 or 4:00 o'clock in the
20 morning to do some work, to get some things done and
21 bring us bread. She was a great, great mother, I
22 must say. I loved her dearly.

23 Q. WHAT HAPPENED TO HER DURING THE WAR AFTER
24 YOU LEFT?

1 A. After I went back and I seen her again and
2 then she was sent to Treblinka that same night my
3 little sister said the wall was moving and escaped.

4 Q. ABOUT WHEN WAS THAT?

5 A. That was in '43, yeah, '43, beginning '43.

6 Q. '43?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. I JUST WANT TO DIGRESS ONE QUESTION ABOUT
9 YOUR SISTER BECAUSE YOU MENTIONED IT AGAIN, YOU SAID
10 THAT WALL, THE WALL MOVED. DID YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS
11 ABOUT HER STORY?

12 A. Whose story?

13 Q. YOUR SISTER ABOUT THE WALL MOVING.

14 A. No, no, no. It's very simple to
15 understand. You stand against the old brick wall,
16 people pushing against you. Two bricks are loose,
17 you push them out, you push out two more bricks and
18 you run out.

19 Q. OKAY.

20 A. It's very simple. Walls don't move.

21 Q. SHE WAS SAYING THE WALL WAS MOVING --

22 A. She felt, yeah, it was moving, I mean, she
23 felt something was moving, the bricks were moving,
24 so she got out.

1 Q. I'M SORRY FOR INTERRUPTING.

2 A. No, that's okay.

3 Q. YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT HER MOTHER, SHE WAS
4 SENT TO --

5 A. Treblinka, the way I understood, yeah.

6 Q. DID YOU KNOW THAT AT THE TIME?

7 A. No.

8 Q. YOU FIRST FOUND OUT WHEN YOUR SISTER CAME TO
9 YOU?

10 A. My sister was telling me they were all lined
11 up and all the lights were burning, nobody could
12 escape, and they were taking them into camps. She
13 knew that she was going away. And she got out the
14 last moment. And that, I have not heard from my
15 mother, you know, after this, I just figured if
16 she's alive she would go on her knees back to
17 Frankfurt.

18 Q. HOW DID YOU FIND OUT THAT SHE HAD DIED?

19 A. Oh, much after the war, she didn't come
20 back. You heard a lot of things after that.

21 Now, we were at the opera that night
22 and we couldn't get in and I took out a pack of
23 cigarettes and he let us in. He said that's a VIP
24 loge, how do you call it, the loge.

1 Q. THE LOUNGE?

2 A. No, no, no. At the opera when you go in,
3 you know.

4 MS. WEITZEL: Box seat?

5 A. Box seat, yeah. And they most likely aren't
6 coming, but they came, two American officers. One
7 was very tall and he was a high navy officer, he had
8 gold stripes here, you know, very elegant. And the
9 other one was also high officer who later on told
10 me, the way I found later out, his father was
11 assistant secretary of war under Roosevelt. I even
12 remember his name, Chris Peterson, and he was
13 telling me later, we dated, that he will study
14 Russian and will go to Russia to become ambassador
15 or something.

16 Q. COULD YOU JUST GIVE US A LITTLE BACKGROUND
17 ON THAT, THOUGH, YOU WENT TO THE --

18 A. To the opera and they came in.

19 Q. IS THERE ANY BACKGROUND YOU CAN GIVE US ON
20 THAT, WHEN DID THAT HAPPEN, WHY DID YOU GO --

21 A. Why, I went to the opera.

22 Q. YOU JUST WENT TO SEE THE OPERA?

23 A. Went to see the opera and it happened, I
24 tell you when, 1946.

1 Q. YOU MET THE AMERICANS AT THE -- YOU FIRST
2 MET THEM --

3 A. No, they came in later. I met them at the
4 box. They came later. We wouldn't have gotten in.

5 Q. BUT YOU DID NOT KNOW THEM BEFORE?

6 A. No, no, no, no, no.

7 Q. IT WAS NOT A PREARRANGED DATE OR ANYTHING?

8 A. No, no no.

9 So we dated them. And he was a very
10 high navy, I don't know, I didn't know the ranks.
11 And he was very interested in me. And he turned me
12 off. I never seen anything like it, you know. He
13 was a big man but he had hands like a little girl
14 and his feet were this size (indicating). It was
15 repulsive. Well, anyhow, he came up one day and he
16 says -- I said I don't know, maybe I go to America,
17 I said. He said don't go to America, it's hard,
18 it's not for you. Don't go. You live here quite
19 nice. Don't go, he said.

20 Well, meantime I have heard from my
21 sister and I got pretty upset. What did I do? Who
22 knows if she got there?

23 Q. WHAT IS THE TIME PERIOD HERE AGAIN?

24 A. That is again 1946.

1 Q. AND IT WAS STILL '45 WHEN SHE WENT --

2 A. Yeah, she went -- yeah, she went the end of
3 '45 back to Germany where I got her through the
4 Russians.

5 Q. SO ABOUT HOW MANY MONTHS NOW DID YOU NOT
6 HEAR FROM HER?

7 A. At least five months maybe, yeah.

8 So I got very nervous and I decided to
9 go. And I went down to get some papers to go, no
10 way, out. I met two girls that came from the camps,
11 they had no place to stay, Jews, and they were
12 registered. I didn't register anywhere after the
13 war, which was stupid. So I took them into my house
14 and they were going down to go to Palestine and they
15 had to register, so I went down with them and I got
16 a paper. The next day we all left.

17 Q. LEFT FOR WHERE?

18 A. To Germany to go into certain camps, from
19 there on they would go to Palestine.

20 Q. YOU WENT?

21 A. I went with them, a group of --

22 Q. DID YOU SISTER --

23 A. No, no, just me, I had to go to Germany to
24 find my sister in Germany.

1 Q. YOU LEFT YOUR YOUNGER SISTER BACK IN --

2 A. Youngest sister there, yeah, back in
3 Vienna. And I went with them and we got to Linz and
4 I was already, I figure now I manage myself, I'm
5 going to Germany, left the camp, was a camp there.
6 And I went to Germany, I got into Frankfurt and I
7 asked about Hela Goldberg. And people looked at me
8 and looked at me, they looked very strange at me.
9 Some smiled, some made some remarks. And somebody
10 said if you want to find your sister, one of her
11 friends is getting married tonight and that is the
12 address, she most likely will be there. Yes, she
13 wears an American uniform, your sister. So I got
14 the address and I went there and there was my sister
15 and there was a wedding. And she screamed, you
16 know, was very happy.

17 And she became associated with the
18 UNRA, United -- it's like the joined -- like the
19 HIAS at that time, they send them already over to
20 help. And she wore the uniform, she says you know,
21 didn't you get my letter. I say what letter? She
22 said I gave an American soldier a letter, I gave him
23 just maybe four, five days ago. I said I'm so
24 happy. What's going on? She says I'm getting

1 married. I said to whom? She says you should see
2 that man, he's an American officer. How did that
3 happen? She said, you know, I came here, I didn't
4 know where to go and I knew there was the Gemein,
5 that's a congregation, the Jewish organization was
6 in that hospital, the old hospital, the children's
7 hospital, and I went there and I started to work and
8 a man came in in a uniform and he talked to me and I
9 talked to him and he dated me and he wants me to
10 marry him.

11 And she said you don't know what I
12 looked like. You had given me food along and a
13 bucket of grease, I mean pork -- lard. And I put
14 the lard in my hat and I put the hat over me. I
15 looked -- don't ask -- I was full of lice. And he
16 dated me. And you know what, he insists on marrying
17 me. I said who is he? Well, he lives there in
18 America and he is General Eisenhower's guard band
19 leader.

20 Q. HIS WHAT?

21 A. His guard band leader. He was a band leader
22 in the army for General Eisenhower, because
23 Eisenhower -- and I am glad you are here, we can
24 marry right away. So I met the man, I nearly

1 flapped, he was such a good-looking man, such a
2 sweet, gentle person. If the Jews would have
3 saints, he would become a saint. He didn't know he
4 was Jewish till he joined the army. He became so
5 religious he wouldn't even ring the bell on
6 Shabbas. So I was there and big thing to do and
7 they got married and I had to go back to Vienna.

8 And I got back to Vienna, I managed.
9 Oh, no, it wasn't as simple. Yeah, somebody gave me
10 a tip, he said if you go, the money, all the
11 schillings, America, the currency in Austria will be
12 worthless, they're changing the money, try to get as
13 many marks as you can, somehow handle it. I did
14 manage to take the schillings, I don't remember.
15 But I managed to have a lot of marks.

16 It was winter and I got back and I had
17 to stop someplace to sleep over and I had a ski
18 outfit on, ski slacks, you know. And I got to the
19 border and I got thing, I don't know, the pants
20 busted, the money fell out, don't ask, it was a
21 riot. When I got back to Vienna, my sister was
22 there and everything was fine.

23 Now, the Nazis -- I got a paper where
24 there were big Nazis, a special inscription how

1 important they were and all of that, they wanted the
2 apartment back. And somebody came and I said they
3 were big Nazis, look at them, I didn't know they
4 were working on this side.

5 Q. ON WHICH SIDE?

6 A. On the Viennese side, on the Austrian. And
7 he said may I have the paper, I will show them that
8 they were Nazis, and they took the papers.

9 Q. I'M SORRY, ESTELLE, WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT, ARE
10 YOU STILL GOING IN ORDER HERE, NOW?

11 A. Yeah, yeah, I'm back in Vienna.

12 Q. OKAY. SO YOU CAME BACK TO VIENNA --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. -- AND SOMEBODY BROUGHT YOU A --

15 A. Came in and said you know they are supposed
16 to get the apartment back, the doctor.

17 Q. THE ONES YOU USED TO WORK FOR?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. OKAY.

20 A. And I said they can't get it back because
21 they are Nazis and I can prove it. And I showed him
22 a big certificate and he said okay, let me have the
23 certificate so that you don't have to go out. I
24 tell you what happened, they destroyed the

1 certificate and I had to get out. Meantime I had
2 taken Ruth, the little one, and got her over to
3 Germany to be with my other sister. I was still in
4 Vienna and I moved to a friend of mine, to Audie,
5 and I waited, I said I don't -- I was waiting for
6 certain paper or something or to hear from my
7 sister. I don't recall. I don't recall.

8 I finally got everything together. I
9 had taken the linens, whatever I could take, I had
10 big overseas trunks, filled them up, and I was
11 waiting to get on the train with all that stuff,
12 every piece was value. And I got out of Germany, I
13 got back to -- I got out of Austria and I got back
14 to Frankfurt. When I got back to Frankfurt, my
15 sister told me you have an affidavit to go to the
16 United States. I said I never applied for it and I
17 don't want to go. She said you're foolish. No, no,
18 it wasn't like that. I was in Vienna and I got a
19 telegram. I got a telegram from then my brother
20 knows brother from America, immediately for
21 Frankfurt, immigration ready for U.S.A., and that
22 was when I left Vienna. Okay, now when I got to
23 Frankfurt --

24 Q. ABOUT WHEN WAS THIS?

1 A. That was, I tell you, that was maybe May or
2 June '46, maybe June, maybe even July. I got back
3 to Frankfurt and I went to the consul and all of
4 that. And then time came, Ruth and I, she remained,
5 she got pregnant, her child was born there, was the
6 first baby born, Jewish baby born after the war
7 there.

8 Q. IN A HOSPITAL IN FRANKFURT?

9 A. Yeah. Mrs. Eisenhower came to visit because
10 there were no babies, you know. And they lived at
11 the headquarter right where Eisenhower lived.

12 Q. YOUR SISTER GAVE BIRTH?

13 A. Yeah. She married the officer.

14 Q. SHE WAS PREGNANT BEFORE SHE GOT MARRIED?

15 A. No, not really, not really. She was not
16 pregnant before she got married. She married him --
17 she married him right in '45 and Sylvia was born in
18 end of July.

19 Q. IT WAS '45 THAT --

20 A. He was much too religious, please. On the
21 day on the wedding, you're not supposed to see the
22 bride, he wouldn't see her.

23 Q. THE REASON I ASKED YOU THAT --

24 A. Yeah.

1 Q. -- IS NOT THAT --
2 A. Yeah, yeah.
3 Q. -- IT'S JUST THE CHRONOLOGY?
4 A. I know. He was much too religious till the
5 day he died.
6 Q. IT WAS '45 THAT YOU WENT --
7 A. Yeah.
8 Q. TO FRANKFURT, THEN YOU CAME BACK --
9 A. Yeah.
10 Q. -- TO VIENNA AND --
11 A. Yeah.
12 Q. -- THEN WENT BACK UP --
13 A. Yeah.
14 Q. -- SO IT WAS ABOUT 10 MONTHS LATER THAT YOU
15 WENT TO AMERICA?
16 A. Yeah, yeah, more. Maybe -- yeah, something
17 like this. I went back very late, after the
18 telegram.
19 Q. OKAY.
20 A. And we came over on the second ship of
21 immigrants that came to America. But before I went
22 to Bremerhaven to the camp where you had to wait to
23 get processed. I had take a big suitcase and made
24 donuts and food and everything. I wasn't going -- I

1 never went anywhere without food till to this day, I
2 never go anywhere. And we went there, me, and we
3 got there. And I took also a large painting of
4 myself with me, I was painted and exhibited, and
5 certain things I could. We got on the ship and we
6 got to America. When I arrived in America, the
7 worst time of my life started.

8 Q. THIS IS AROUND FALL OF '46?

9 A. Yeah, fall of '46, Labor Day.

10 Q. WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE THAT YOU WOULD GO TO
11 AMERICA?

12 A. Well, it was thrown at me. I said I'm
13 foolish not to go. I didn't know where I was going,
14 what I was doing, so I went.

15 Q. SO YOU ARRIVED IN AMERICA FALL OF '46?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. ONE MORE QUESTION, BACKTRACK ONE MORE TIME,
18 THEN WE'LL DISCUSS AMERICA, BUT IN VIENNA, DURING
19 THE WAR, AND IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS TOO, I GUESS TWO
20 DIFFERENT TIME PERIODS, DID YOU HAVE MUCH
21 INTERACTION WITH THE VIENNESE PEOPLE?

22 A. I had no interaction with nobody.

23 Q. WERE YOU ABLE TO OBSERVE THE ANTI-SEMITISM
24 THERE AMONGST THE PEOPLE?

1 A. Sure.

2 Q. EVEN THOUGH THEY DID NOT KNOW THAT YOU WERE
3 JEWISH?

4 A. Sure. But I did not associate with anybody,
5 not a single person except Johnny and my sisters,
6 never. I tried not to talk to anybody.

7 Q. WERE YOU ABLE TO GET ANY SORT OF FEELING
8 ABOUT HOW ANTI-SEMITIC THE VIENNESE WERE COMPARED TO
9 IN GERMANY?

10 A. Well, the worst were the Poles, the Poles
11 and then the Viennese and then the Germans, you see.

12 Q. AND RIGHT AFTER THE WAR ENDED, THAT ATTITUDE
13 WAS STILL THERE AMONGST THE VIENNESE?

14 A. Well, they told you nobody was a Nazi, you
15 know, same old story.

16 But in America was the worst time of my
17 life.

18 Q. OKAY. WHY DON'T WE DISCUSS THAT. YOU
19 ARRIVED IN THE FALL OF '46. TELL US WHAT HAPPENED
20 AFTER THAT.

21 A. Well, I had an aunt and she came with her
22 son and daughter and the other man came with a
23 chauffeur and a Cadillac. And he said I take you
24 with me, you come to our house. And I said no, I

1 don't. That was the father of the man my sister
2 married. I didn't know who he was. His picture is
3 at the Smithsonian Institute, a very important man.
4 I did not know. I said I go with my aunt, my
5 mother's sister.

6 Q. THIS IS NEW YORK CITY NOW OR SOMEWHERE ELSE?

7 A. In Patterson, New Jersey. I went with her
8 and I stayed there and I was very unhappy. And I
9 decided I'm not staying there, I am going -- we are
10 going to New York. We moved to New York, my sister
11 and I.

12 So we started life in New York, we got
13 a room with an old lady. And I was very lonely, I
14 was very disappointed in life. I was very hurt
15 because nobody wanted to hear my story, to begin
16 with. We had no money. We didn't know what to do.
17 We were so lonely. I should have gone to some
18 Jewish organization, but charity, we were the people
19 who gave charity, it never occurred to me to go
20 anywhere and ask for anything, which I could have.
21 Very, very -- because I was used to be lonely and
22 alone, because I lived under a lie, but here I was
23 starting to talk and nobody, not a friend,
24 absolutely nobody, just Ruth and me.

1 And I got a job. I have always had
2 exceptionally special clothes, always, beautiful
3 clothes. And when I was 15 and 16 I used to design
4 clothes for my mother, and people would ask me to
5 design clothes for them, you know. I just tried
6 and -- but so I wanted to become a dressmaker, you
7 know. And I got a job, they think coming from
8 Europe you are especially good at it. And I got a
9 job at that time 1946, '47, she charged \$350, I mean
10 that's \$6,000 today. And I worked there for 10 days
11 and I was fired, naturally. But in this 10 days, I
12 learned so much. I cannot even tell you how much I
13 learned. I was fired and I got another job in a
14 very, very fine place at Carnegie to make the
15 clothes for Marlene Dietrich and Elizabeth Taylor,
16 you know, I was fired and I went to Tailored Woman
17 and there again I started to work, and my eyes were
18 going, I wanted to learn.

19 And I came over with absolutely
20 beautiful clothes and people would stop on the
21 street. I had a Russian brotel coat with sable
22 tails, you know, my spring coat was blue wool with
23 white mink cuffs. I had beautiful clothes, people
24 always looked at my clothes. I wanted to have some

1 new clothes and I couldn't afford. I decided, I
2 bought some material and I made myself a suit. And
3 I was going to tear that suit to pieces, I was going
4 to put it in the bathtub, throw it out of the
5 window, burn it. After six weeks the suit was
6 finished, I put on the suit and I went to -- no,
7 what happened, I went to work.

8 About a week before, the woman who was
9 working there, she said, you know, I'm going to be
10 here 25 years. I said wonderful, you get a watch or
11 something. She says my God, I shouldn't have told
12 you. Don't tell nobody because they're going to
13 fire me, I'm too old. And that stuck in my mind.

14 Well, I came back with this -- now the
15 forelady said to everybody, she likes to learn, it's
16 not important that she does good work, let her
17 watch, let her watch, let her watch, the forelady.

18 Q. ABOUT YOU?

19 A. Yeah. She could see I was very interested.

20 So I come in with that suit and they
21 said how can you afford a suit like this? And I
22 said why not. That suit costs at least a hundred
23 and fifty dollars. I said I made it. Well, they
24 started to laugh. I said why do you laugh? I made

1 the suit. Never. I said okay, I quit.

2 So meantime I met a young man, that's
3 another story.

4 Q. WITH THE JOBS, ESTELLE, HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO
5 GET THE FIRST JOB AT THE PRESTIGIOUS DRESSMAKER?

6 A. I went through agency.

7 Q. BUT OUT OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO WORK
8 THERE, DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHY YOU WERE ABLE, WHY
9 YOU WERE SUCCESSFUL?

10 A. No. She needed somebody that day, you know.

11 Q. WHAT WAS THE POSITION?

12 A. A seamstress. She needed somebody
13 because -- she wanted people from Europe who knew
14 how to sew. There are fabulous dressmakers in
15 Europe, that's the reason I got the job.

16 Q. DID YOU SAY THAT YOU HAD EXPERIENCE AS A
17 DRESSMAKER?

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. DID YOUR CLOTHING HELP AT ALL? DID ANYBODY
20 LOOK AT YOUR --

21 A. I think my appearance. The doors just
22 opened up. People are very impressed with clothes,
23 which is stupid.

24 Q. MAYBE NOT IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY.

1 A. Well, they were very impressed, always.

2 Q. ABOUT HOW LONG AFTER YOU ARRIVED IN NEW YORK
3 CITY DID YOU START THIS JOB?

4 A. In New York City, what happened was I found
5 an old girlfriend of mine, my very best girlfriend,
6 I found her, I located her. And she walked into the
7 room, the small room with my sister, she says I
8 would have recognized that this is your room all
9 over anywhere. I always had -- I loved art and I
10 had always cut out of -- when I left the ghetto to
11 escape, we had a library of beautiful art books and
12 I tore out all the prints and always carried them
13 with me, I had something to look at. I would
14 recognize you. So she said, you know, I have a date
15 tonight and I'm going to make a double date. So we
16 made -- she made a double date.

17 And he told me later, he says, you
18 know, your friend Maria is a very expensive girl. I
19 knew it would be a very expensive evening. She
20 doesn't go just anywhere. And I tell you honestly,
21 I walked around you three times to see if I want to
22 spend the money on you. He claims he spent \$10,000
23 on me. Could have been, it's true. But my friend
24 said she was worth it, wasn't she? So the next, I

1 went home very early, I said I always go home
2 early. He said I paid a fortune for the dinner at
3 the Essex House. I'm going to work tomorrow. I
4 dated him and when I went out I always said I have
5 two dinners, I eat two dinners, I was so hungry.
6 And after a while, you know, I picked at the second
7 dinner. And he said you got to finish the dinner,
8 if not, I don't buy you any more dinners.

9 And my sister went to beauty school to
10 become a beautician. But she was very sick, she was
11 very sick. She could barely walk. I often carried
12 her on my back through the streets of New York to
13 the park. And the cars would stop, they couldn't
14 understand, they saw it, and then she would throw
15 up, and they wanted to take us into the cars; never
16 did. And I sent her to Europe back. His name was
17 Freddy and he said we send her to Europe and I pay
18 for it, you know. In the beginning -- we went down
19 the street, there was a doctor, an Italian, and he
20 said she shouldn't be working. And she's homesick
21 and all of that, let's send her back to Europe
22 someplace to a resort. He said I'm from Milan,
23 Milano. I said okay, I'll send her to Milano.

24 We put her on and we got the papers and

1 I brought her to the ship, never forget that. And
2 that day was a strike. And she couldn't eat. So we
3 didn't know if she was leaving or not, so I said I
4 go in and eat the lunch and the dinner. And I went
5 on that ship and I had lunch and I made three dates
6 with three young men for the evening. And one man
7 followed me around, wherever I went he kept on
8 looking at me. He followed me and he wouldn't talk
9 to me at all. I remembered it only later. And the
10 ship was sailing and my sister left on that ship.

11 And it turned out that this man -- oh,
12 the man came and said where is that other girl, I
13 have a date with her. And she said oh, she was just
14 teasing you. I'm her sister, she isn't going. And
15 that fellow who followed me around all day, he said
16 now listen, that girl who didn't come on was
17 Estelle, wasn't she. And my sister says yes. He
18 said your parents and my parents were close
19 friends. Where are you going? She says I don't
20 even know where I'm going. He said never mind, I
21 take you home to us. He took my sister, he went
22 back to Milano to his parents' house, where she
23 stayed quite some time.

24 Q. THIS WAS ANOTHER PASSENGER ON THE SHIP?

1 A. Yeah, as a passenger, as a passenger, he
2 knew my family. She stayed there. And I was -- and
3 he helped me financially a lot. He was very,
4 very -- well, he was very young, he was very smart,
5 he was very wealthy.

6 Q. NOW WHO IS THIS?

7 A. The boyfriend I picked up in New York, yeah,
8 yeah. And he was also very jealous. I never met
9 anybody else.

10 And one day I was very lonely, one
11 day -- yeah, and I said I'm going to have my own
12 business, I don't care what will happen to me. I
13 had large advertising makes and I wrote down my name
14 and my address and I do dressmaking and alteration
15 and I put it on the newspaper kiosk and I put it all
16 over and the police came and said you cannot do
17 that. I had gotten myself a nice room in the city.
18 That is against the law, you cannot paste that on
19 the walls. I took it off. The police left, I put
20 it on again. The police came again, I took it off.
21 The policeman said listen, don't put it back, he
22 says, I have to take it off. Go into the grocery
23 stores to the butchers, talk with them, they'll let
24 you put it up. And I started to get work, you

1 know. I had a nice room. My sister was in Italy
2 and my other sister was in Germany with the baby.
3 And I worked and -- what happened next, something
4 interesting next, I forgot about it.

5 I stayed in New York, I was very, very
6 lonely, very. I wanted my people, my people.
7 First, one day was a beautiful day and I went out
8 for lunch, I'm going to spend a dollar, I go out for
9 lunch today. And I go to a cafeteria, New York, and
10 I have a tray and I put things up and I see three
11 men. And I see that one man, the tray fell on the
12 floor, I run over to the man, I put my arms around
13 him, I hugged and kissed him and I said
14 Mr. Tannenbaum, Mr. Tannenbaum. And he said -- and
15 the other two men said meshugana Americana, a crazy
16 American woman, run away, let's get out of here,
17 push her away, push her away. And I said I am
18 Estelle, I am Estelle. He said you are dead. I
19 said I am not dead, I am alive, look, look, here I
20 am. And that's -- after I took him and his wife
21 into my place, they had no place to stay neither,
22 they didn't want to stay with relatives.

23 Q. WHO WAS HE?

24 A. He was a very famous tailor from

1 Thomashoff. He survived the war because the Germans
2 used him to make uniforms for him and then his wife
3 was a very, very good dressmaker and his daughter
4 was the most beautiful child I've ever seen. All
5 three survived.

6 Q. WHERE DID YOU MEET HIM?

7 A. In a cafeteria in New York. I just told
8 you I went to --

9 Q. THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME YOU EVER MET HIM?

10 A. After the war. No, I met him in the lagger,
11 in the ghetto, we lived together in the same
12 building. I knew him.

13 Q. THAT WAS WHEN YOU FIRST WENT INTO POLAND?

14 A. Yeah, I knew him.

15 Q. THAT'S WHERE YOU MET HIS FAMILY?

16 A. Yeah, yeah, yeah. He survived, his daughter
17 survived, yeah. And that's about it, I can think.

18 I lived in New York and then I had
19 enough of the boyfriend. He came home, he came one
20 day and he said get a passport, that was '49, I'm
21 taking you to Europe, all over Europe, we go to
22 Israel, to the best hotels. I said yes, I'm going
23 with you.

24 BEGIN TAPE TWO

1 Q. ESTELLE, WE WERE TALKING ABOUT IT WAS AROUND
2 1949 OR SO AND THE GENTLEMAN WITH WHOM YOU WERE
3 GOING OUT WANTED YOU TO ACCOMPANY HIM ON AN OVERSEAS
4 TRIP.

5 A. Yeah, deluxe and everything. Meantime my
6 sister was still in Germany and she had gotten a
7 telegram that she is going -- being transferred to
8 San Francisco. When she heard that, she got
9 hysteric. When she was about 15 years old, we were
10 living in Frankfurt, she had gone to the movie "San
11 Francisco" with Clark Gable and she came home crying
12 terrible. We asked her why do you cry, what's the
13 matter. She says I just seen that movie and I know
14 I was in the earthquake. I said don't be silly.
15 She says I know I be in that. So when she got the
16 telegram, she says you see, I knew I was and I'm
17 going back. So meantime she went to San Francisco.

18 And the gentleman said do anything, you
19 can have new clothes, anything, we will go to
20 Europe, that was something very special, who went
21 deluxe to Europe in '49. I said yes, yes, yes.
22 Then he says where's the passport. I said I am not
23 going, I have enough of you, that's it. I wanted to
24 marry you very much but your parents hated me, they

1 just hated me. And he says if I marry you, my
2 father gets a stroke. I get you an apartment on
3 Park Avenue. I said no, I've had enough of you,
4 forget it. And he didn't believe I wasn't going
5 with him to Europe. So I went to California.

6 When I arrived, I was lucky again, it
7 took me some time. I was going -- my brother-in-law
8 was going -- supposed to go to Japan. My sister had
9 another baby. So I decided to go with them. But
10 instead they went to Korea and nobody went with them
11 and I got an apartment on Nob Hill, very nice. I
12 seen Cary Grant, I seen everybody. Because I lived
13 near the Huntington, 1200 California, so. And my
14 sister had beautiful clothes, she started to work
15 for Joseph Magnin, the youngest one. And people
16 asked where did you get your clothes and so she sent
17 them to me. I established myself. I did okay.

18 Q. YOUR YOUNGEST SISTER CAME BACK?

19 A. I sent her to San Francisco when the second
20 baby was born.

21 Q. YOUR YOUNGEST SISTER?

22 A. Yeah, I sent her to be with my other sister
23 and I remained alone in New York.

24 Q. BUT THE LAST WE HEARD OF HER SHE WAS IN

1 ITALY.

2 A. She was in Italy, yeah. She stayed there
3 nine months and she came back and gained 39 pounds
4 and looked wonderful, you know. And then my sister
5 was expecting the baby, so she went up to San
6 Francisco. I remained and he came with the
7 proposition to go to New York. And his parents -- I
8 didn't know what a father or a mother complex was at
9 that time, and he had some mother complex. It took
10 him 20 years to get married. I still see him, we
11 still see when he comes or we go to New York, he's
12 very gracious, you know. He is still my biggest
13 love and is divorced since, so.

14 And I came to California and had that
15 apartment. And one day I went swimming, my
16 brother-in-law was in Korea, I went swimming with my
17 sisters, the two girls, and Ruthie, we went
18 swimming, and a young man came, they had a
19 conversation about Kiefer. And I knew a Kiefer in
20 Frankfurt, he was much older, he wouldn't look at
21 me, but I looked at him. And I said, "Is that the
22 Hans Kiefer from Frankfurt?" And this man said,
23 "Yes, it is." I said, "I got to meet him."

24 So a few days later, we went swimming

1 again and he comes again and he brings Kiefer, this
2 is Kiefer. Now, Kiefer was snow white when he was
3 15 years old, you met my husband, snow white. I
4 said that's Kiefer, not for me. Well, meantime I --
5 he wrote every day from Europe, Freddy wrote every
6 single day from Europe. So I said okay.

7 Q. ESTELLE, WHO WROTE EVERY DAY FROM EUROPE?

8 A. My former boyfriend. He went alone to
9 Europe. And when I came back, he called, he wrote,
10 and I said okay, if you send me a return, going and
11 return ticket, I will come and see you once more.
12 And I went to New York and I said no, no, I don't
13 want you. And I went back to California.

14 And I was sewing and one day that other
15 fellow came in and my sister said you got to get
16 married -- I said I'm not getting married to nobody,
17 I don't care, I've had it. You've got to have a
18 date. I don't want any dates.

19 Well, anyhow, they arranged a date for
20 me and this young man came to pick me up. And while
21 I was very busy, I really had no time, please my
22 sister. Now, that date, yeah, that fellow I met the
23 first -- no, we had a car accident in San Francisco
24 and we went to our agent, the agent said to me would

1 you like to meet somebody, he's very successful,
2 good business and all. I said okay. And that was
3 that fellow, I met him. He came to pick me up, I
4 was working at a job in the beginning. And when I
5 come home, the little one says I made a date with
6 this one for you tomorrow. I had the date, I
7 couldn't stand it, we had the biggest argument. But
8 he had a look at my sister and fell for my sister,
9 you see, he married her.

10 Q. WHO MARRIED HER?

11 A. My date, the first night date, I hated him.

12 Q. YOUR INSURANCE AGENT?

13 A. No. The insurance agent made arrangements
14 for a date and that fellow came to pick me up and he
15 seen my sister and fell in love with my sister. So
16 I went back to New York and then I came back and
17 worked again and then a year later, they tried to
18 fix me up again. So he comes and picks me up again
19 and we go in the car and I said tell me something,
20 whom am I supposed to meet, I'm busy. He said he's
21 tall and blond and has a beautiful car and has lots
22 of money. I said, you know, it sounds a little bit
23 too good to be true.

24 So we get out of the car, the Palace

1 Hotel, there was a revolving door and I see the same
2 Kiefer sitting there. And I said to him, you know,
3 I'm too well brought up, I would like to let you
4 stand here and let him sit there. So we walked in
5 and he introduced me again and he said I have to
6 make a telephone call, never to return, and that's
7 the way I met Kiefer. 41-year-old bachelor never
8 going to get married, ever. Everybody told me he
9 will never share his money and he never goes out
10 with a girl more than three times. He's a very
11 decent human being and won't give anybody the idea
12 that he has intentions. That went fast.

13 Q. SO WHAT YEAR DID YOU GET MARRIED?

14 A. The third date, he took me already, he was
15 going to Reno. I said I'm not going to Reno, I
16 don't have to run away. He took me to meet the
17 family. He says -- I didn't want to go, I don't
18 want to be looked over. He said my aunt is dying
19 and I want her to meet you. So I went over and met
20 his family and they said don't you dare let her get
21 away. And he bought me a house as a wedding gift
22 and we had to wait a few months before we could move
23 in.

24 Q. WHEN DID YOU GET MARRIED?

1 A. The same day President Reagan got married,
2 March the 4th, 1952, we have the same anniversary.

3 Q. DID YOU CONTINUE WORK AFTER THAT?

4 A. Yeah. I start again my -- I also studied
5 art history when I was -- right after the war, I
6 went back to the university, and I start to here and
7 I worked in my house. My husband was a traveling
8 salesman, he left Monday and came back Friday
9 night. Being very independent, I didn't miss him
10 till maybe Thursday. And I establish -- I had
11 written letters to all the people who had come to me
12 up on Nob Hill, said I have gotten married and I
13 have moved there and that I know it's a little bit
14 far and I would like to continue working for them.
15 They never had gotten a letter like this. They all
16 came.

17 I worked for many years. And we
18 traveled an awful lot, and I started the art, I
19 worked with -- finished studying and did my research
20 in art and I collected paintings. And I dealt with
21 one of the most important people in California, they
22 would buy my paintings and they told me to buy
23 paintings for them. So I have a nice collection at
24 home. And I do research for people, you know, who

1 buy paintings and I love beautiful things and I
2 restore them and all kinds of things I do.

3 I can build a house, I can do brick. A
4 man, I had to have some tile work done, the man
5 came, six or ten dollars an hour, I paid him after
6 one hour, I said you go now, he said I'm not
7 finished, I said I finish. People claim I'm the
8 best wallpaper hanger in the city. I do anything,
9 anything. I did anything. And one day I had
10 enough, I just quit overnight. My husband was in
11 shock. I did a lot of things in my life. I worked
12 25 years at the museum, I was one of the founders of
13 the volunteer, one of the first docents in 1956.

14 Q. WHEN DID YOU START WORKING AT THE MUSEUM?

15 A. '55, '56, when they started to organize it.

16 Q. WERE YOU BASICALLY A CLOTHES DESIGNER UNTIL
17 THEN?

18 A. I did a lot of things. I built. I became
19 my own contractor, small things. I, oh, just don't
20 ask. There's nothing I didn't do. And people used
21 used to say what is it you don't do, you can't do.
22 I said all the things I haven't tried yet. I repair
23 roofs. My husband says no more, no more. We went
24 out in our garden, it was 12 foot ceiling. He said

1 you hire somebody. I said what am I going to do,
2 stand next to him and tell him how to do it, I do
3 better job.

4 Q. AS FAR AS YOUR CAREER IS CONCERNED --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. -- WHEN YOU MET YOUR HUSBAND, YOU DESIGNED
7 CLOTHING?

8 A. I did, yeah.

9 Q. AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR CAREER AFTER
10 YOU GOT MARRIED?

11 A. I kept it on, I had a room, people came to
12 my house. I was never, ever going to push a clock,
13 ever.

14 Q. DID YOU EVER CHANGE CAREERS AND DO SOMETHING
15 ELSE?

16 A. No. I went into art business -- no, the
17 museum was volunteer work, volunteer work, you
18 know. No. I still am very, very interested in art
19 and I still do visit. And I've traveled, I must
20 have been on, I don't know, 30, 32 ships. My
21 husband is an adventurer. I was in Iran, there were
22 no Americans there. I've been to the Orient 35
23 years ago -- no, 32 years ago. And I had a very
24 interesting life.

1 Q. HOW MANY CHILDREN DO YOU HAVE?

2 A. None.

3 Q. NO CHILDREN?

4 A. That is interesting. You know, I got
5 married and I was -- for 20 years I was very ill. I
6 was five days -- three days a week I was sick, four
7 days a day I was well. And it went on and on and on
8 and some emergency surgeries and on and on. And one
9 day I was again for checkup or something and I
10 walked there the hall and the doctor says -- I was
11 called to the phone, the doctor says you're
12 Mrs. Kiefer, yes, we just had a lecture on you,
13 you're very, very ill. And did exploratory surgery
14 and then the doctor came in and he said tomorrow
15 we're going to have the big surgery and you are not
16 going to live, that's your last night. If you live
17 through, you will be in a coma for two, three
18 weeks. I said what are you talking about? I said
19 how long -- he said call your family. I said
20 doctor, how long have you been married. He said
21 three years. I said, you know, if you are a smart
22 man, don't ever tell everything your wife. And if
23 she's smart, she's not going to tell you
24 everything. And a girl was with me in the room, she

1 cried.

2 And I said -- I called my husband, I
3 told him how much I loved him and that was it. And
4 I said I wanted a double portion of a sleeping
5 pill. And I called in the nurse, I said is that
6 true what that doctor told me and she said yes, it's
7 true. I said you bring in the papers and you take a
8 pen and you write under the papers that none of my
9 -- if I die on the operating table, none of, nobody
10 must be told, no member of my family must be told,
11 not my husband, nobody. When I come to -- and I
12 must not be told neither, except when I ask. I had
13 a very good friend, an older lady, she's the only
14 one you must tell.

15 Q. TELL WHAT, ESTELLE?

16 A. How sick I was. And the doctor, my doctor
17 used to say, he used to come in and sit at my bed, I
18 was there 18 days, and he said did I ever tell you
19 you were sick. And I said no. But he says
20 something must have happened to you in your life. I
21 don't -- he always used to say that. And then years
22 later I remember I had the abortion in Vienna, you
23 see, they left dirty. And when the abscesses
24 formed, I was sick. When they dissolved, you felt

1 fine. Sometimes I had lumps coming out of my body
2 and they would operate and an abscess would come
3 out. And that happened for so many years. And ever
4 since I haven't been sick a day. But it wouldn't be
5 for my husband, I think I would have killed myself.

6 But still I had a very interesting
7 life. I make it interesting. When I go out in the
8 morning, I say something interesting must happen to
9 me today and it always does. And I intend to keep
10 it going. But I was very lucky in life. Maybe it
11 was my birthday.

12 Q. AFTER YOU ARRIVED HERE IN AMERICA, SINCE
13 THEN?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY ANTI-SEMITISM? HOW
16 DO YOU FEEL ABOUT LIVING IN THIS COUNTRY?

17 A. There's plenty of anti-Semitism, there is
18 plenty, yeah. Some people, one day I had a customer
19 and she says her daughter is going to the Palm with
20 a boy and he's Jewish, you know. And you know, I
21 thought the Jews looked different. I said to her
22 I'm Jewish too. She never came back. So, ignorant
23 people. There are lots of them, sure. There's no
24 way about it.

1 Q. HOW RELIGIOUS ARE YOU NOW?

2 A. I'm not religious. I believe in myself.

3 Q. DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR EXPERIENCES DURING THE
4 WAR CHANGED YOUR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS?

5 A. Definitely. Definitely.

6 Q. HOW SO?

7 A. Well, you don't kill six million people if
8 there is somebody above you. I said it when I was
9 very young, I said already, my mother believed God
10 will help. I said yes, if I help myself, he will.
11 If not, nothing doing. I don't believe in.
12 Somebody said to me oh, you're just angry at God.
13 Maybe he's right.

14 I believe I became a very decent
15 person. I used to lie and to steal. When the war
16 was over, we were invited once to a party, the
17 Russians and Americans were giving a party, we were
18 invited, I was invited with Audie. And all of a
19 sudden she pulled out of her panties a net, a
20 crocheted shopping bag, she said let's fill it up
21 with sausage and take all that stuff and run. I
22 said no, the war is over, I will not take nothing
23 anymore. I'm very proud of myself now what I've
24 become. I hate liars because I lied so much. I

1 might not tell the whole truth but I tell the
2 truth. My husband would say and what else. I say
3 nothing else. He knows.

4 Q. AND YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN A GOD?

5 A. No. No. I maybe -- look, all the things
6 which happened to me, everything was handed to me
7 really, all the people I met. It's true I was
8 pretty sharp and took advantage.

9 Now wait a minute, that's the most
10 important thing now. Wait a minute. I shouldn't
11 forget that. Wait. You know I told you wherever I
12 went, people would look at me and -- he looks, he
13 knows -- people would look at me and I would get
14 into the buses, I would get extra piece of bread, I
15 would get everything, in Vienna. And they would say
16 Sissy come here, you get this or Sissy this.

17 And 20 years later I was in Vienna
18 visiting a friend and I go to the museum, it was the
19 Belvedere, and there I was hanging, my portrait. It
20 was me. I just couldn't believe it. I closed my
21 eyes and opened it up and there I was again. And I
22 went and I looked and I looked and then I understood
23 why I got everything, why everybody called me
24 Sissy. There it was, in a beautiful gown, the

1 empress of Austria, Kaiserina Lisabet "Sissy". I
2 have a portrait at home and that's her and that's
3 approximately the way -- where is it -- the way I
4 looked. Did it fall out? I took the thing with
5 me. (Looking for picture.) Here it is. I don't
6 have it because I've assembled it tremendously, it
7 must be in the book, I took it with me, I know.
8 That's what I wanted to finish my story with, you
9 see.

10 Q. THAT'S WHY EVERYBODY CALLED YOU SISSY?

11 A. Yeah. Here it is, here. That is Sissy and
12 that is me. At home is a big oil portrait of me.
13 You can keep it. Here, here you see me. You see.
14 (Showing picture.) When you see this portrait at
15 home and you see the painting, here is the painting,
16 wait a minute, I got the painting, why shouldn't I
17 give you the painting. That's the reason. That's
18 the painting.

19 Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT ISRAEL?

20 A. I feel very strong. My God, how can I
21 feel? I've been there six times. And I have what
22 you call, there is a name for that,
23 photosensitivity, I cannot go out in daylight, I
24 wear hats and glasses and all of that. If not of

1 that, I would have retired in Israel. To me it's --
2 each time I go there it's unbelievable.

3 Q. YOU JUST TOLD US THAT YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN A
4 GOD.

5 A. No.

6 Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING JEWISH NOW? DO
7 YOU HAVE A STRONG IDENTITY OR IS IT WEAKER THAN
8 BEFORE THE WAR?

9 A. No. I'm Jewish now, I'm very much
10 involved. And anything, we go now to the retirement
11 home which is expensive, anything left over, part of
12 it will go to Israel. Israel I am interested in. I
13 feel at home. I don't feel at home here. I'm still
14 sitting between two chairs. We spend a lot of time
15 in Europe, my husband and I, lots of time. And I
16 would never live in Europe. I had opportunities,
17 you know.

18 Q. YOU DON'T FEEL AT HOME?

19 A. No. But I'm not really at home here
20 neither, you see. It's just a different mentality I
21 never adjusted to.

22 Q. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?

23 A. Yeah, I never have. I tell you something, I
24 know lots of people who are in business with

1 Americans and they are friends, when they get all
2 older, they pick their own people, it seems to be a
3 human trait.

4 Q. I HAVE TWO MORE QUESTIONS FOR YOU.

5 A. Yeah. Isn't that interesting?

6 Q. THEY IMMEDIATELY KNEW THAT YOU WEREN'T THE
7 EMPRESS. ISN'T THAT CORRECT?

8 A. Yeah, sure. But you see, the old people
9 remembered her and there was photographs of her, you
10 see. I didn't know.

11 Q. WHEN THE PORTRAIT WAS TAKEN, WHAT YEAR WAS
12 THAT ABOUT?

13 A. The portrait -- you remember the portrait?
14 Was done --

15 Q. NOT OF YOU, OF THE EMPRESS.

16 A. The 18th century or whatever.

17 Q. THE 18TH CENTURY?

18 A. When was it, 1880?

19 MS. WEITZEL: 1880.

20 A. Yeah, yeah.

21 Q. I APOLOGIZE. I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT.

22 A. But the resemblance, you see when you look
23 at my portrait at home, I also have the hair the
24 same way.

1 Q. I HAVE TWO MORE QUESTIONS FOR YOU, ESTELLE.
2 A. Sure.
3 Q. ONE IS WHAT YOUR HUSBAND'S EXPERIENCE, JUST
4 GIVE US A BRIEF SUMMARY.
5 A. My husband, yeah, very similar.
6 Q. AND THE OTHER QUESTION IS AT THE VERY
7 BEGINNING OF THIS INTERVIEW --
8 A. Yeah.
9 Q. -- YOU MADE A STATEMENT ABOUT WHEN YOU WERE
10 I BELIEVE IT WAS AUSTRIA 10 YEARS AGO OR SO --
11 A. Yeah.
12 Q. -- AND YOU RAN INTO MR. MOSBACHER AND I'D
13 LIKE JUST TO BRING YOU BACK TO THAT TO TELL US, I
14 DON'T RECALL, WAS MOSBACHER THE SAME MAN WHO WAS --
15 A. He was the lover of --
16 Q. THE SAME FRIEND THAT --
17 A. Yeah, he was the lover --
18 Q. THE SAME FRIEND THAT --
19 A. Yeah, yeah.
20 Q. THE SAME GENTLEMAN --
21 A. Yeah. I didn't run into him. I run into
22 his friend.
23 Q. HIS FRIEND?
24 A. Yeah, and I asked about him, yeah. That was

1 the introduction.

2 Q. AND HE HAD RECENTLY OR HIS FRIEND HAD
3 RECENTLY SEEN EFFIE?

4 A. Yeah, Effie and Robert. That was 10 years
5 ago.

6 Q. MR. MOSBACHER?

7 A. Yeah, and then he died, I was told, shortly
8 after.

9 Q. DID YOU EVER SEE EITHER OF THOSE TWO?

10 A. No, never seen them again.

11 Q. BUT YOU TRIED TO CONTACT --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. -- AND SHE NEVER RETURNED OR --

14 A. No.

15 Q. -- RESPONDED TO YOUR LETTER?

16 A. Never. I kept the letter. I was in Prague
17 but I did not want to call, I didn't want to disturb
18 her life. It wasn't fair, you know.

19 Q. YOU JUST ASSUMED THAT SHE DID NOT WANT TO
20 TALK WITH YOU?

21 A. She would want to talk with but she was
22 fearful that he might have found out that she went
23 to see her lover, not her parents.

24 Q. THAT WHO MAY HAVE FOUND OUT?

1 A. Her husband.

2 Q. OKAY. MAYBE WE COULD JUST GO INTO THAT A
3 LITTLE BIT BECAUSE I'M NOT SURE IT WAS CLEAR AT THE
4 BEGINNING JUST WHO THE DIFFERENT PEOPLE WERE BECAUSE
5 IT WAS BEFORE YOU TOLD YOUR STORY. BUT WHEN SHE
6 WENT, WHICH LOVER ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT HERE?

7 A. The one she met in Poland, when she was
8 lying on the floor and I grabbed him.

9 Q. MOSBACHER?

10 A. Moskraber, yeah. And he divorced his wife
11 and all of that. And she fell in love with that
12 other fellow, that Czechoslovakian, and she married
13 him. And I did not, if I would go and see them, she
14 was afraid that I might have a slip of the tongue
15 and tell that she had been in Germany with her lover
16 after many years of marriage.

17 Q. MOSKRABER?

18 A. That, yeah. That she would have been with
19 Moskraber in Germany, but telling her parents --

20 Q. THIS WAS AFTER THE END OF THE YEAR?

21 A. Oh, much later, 10, 15 years later.

22 Q. I THOUGHT THAT YOU TOLD US THAT SHE COULDN'T
23 STAND HIM.

24 A. Yeah.

1 Q. THAT SHE WAS THINKING OF KILLING HIM SOME
2 DAY.

3 A. Well, things change.

4 Q. OKAY. BUT AFTER THE WAR, MANY YEARS LATER,
5 SHE WAS STILL SEEING HIM?

6 A. That was amazing, maybe 15 years later, I
7 found out because being in Austria, the people told
8 me she was in that town with him for two hours. So
9 I figured out, I knew whom she had married, I
10 thought she must have told her parents -- her
11 father -- her husband that she went to see her
12 parents.

13 Q. SO THEY WERE BOTH IN THIS TOWN WHERE HIS
14 FRIEND LIVES?

15 A. Yeah. I came two years too late. I would
16 have loved to be there.

17 Q. SO THAT'S, YOU'RE TALKING WHAT, MORE THAN 30
18 YEARS LATER SHE WAS STILL SEEING HIM?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. OKAY. NOW, YOU ALSO MENTIONED SHE BECAME AN
21 ACTRESS?

22 A. She was. When I met her she was an actress,
23 a movie actress, when I met her.

24 Q. WHEN YOU MET HER SHE WAS AN ACTRESS?

1 A. She was already, she had already played in
2 movies. Yeah. People knew her name. I did not.

3 Q. BECAUSE I THINK YOU DESCRIBED HER FAMILY AS
4 NOT BEING THAT WELL-OFF.

5 A. Very poor. But she was sponsored most
6 likely. She was very beautiful, exceptionally.

7 Q. DID SHE GO ON TO STARDOM AFTER THE WAR?

8 A. I didn't see them, I don't know where she
9 was, not where I was. The only thing I remember was
10 my mother told me when I left, she said I have
11 nothing to give you but I tell you one thing: You
12 can get away almost with everything. A smart woman
13 will promise everything with her eyes and keep
14 nothing. Wasn't she clever?

15 Q. FINALLY, COULD YOU JUST BRIEFLY DESCRIBE
16 WHAT HAPPENED WITH YOUR HUSBAND? HE WAS FROM
17 FRANKFURT ALSO?

18 A. No, no, no. My husband is from Kreifeld,
19 near Cologne. His father died of cancer and his
20 mother was taken away and his sister immigrated to
21 the States. He somehow, there was a lot of money
22 involved, he got to Havana.

23 Q. WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN?

24 A. In '39, before the war, maybe '38, he got to

1 Havana, and from Havana immigrated to the United
2 States, where he was drafted and then released
3 because he was too old, he was 28, and then the war
4 and he was drafted again. He spent four and a half
5 hours in the year -- four and a half years in the
6 war, became a very orderly man, drives me crazy.

7 Q. I BELIEVE THAT YOU'VE TOLD US, MAYBE IT
8 WASN'T DURING THE COURSE OF THE INTERVIEW, THAT WHEN
9 YOU MET YOUR HUSBAND AND AFTERWARDS, HE DID NOT WANT
10 TO TALK WITH YOU ABOUT THE WAR.

11 A. Yeah, never.

12 Q. OR FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES. DID YOU
13 EVER DISCUSS THAT WITH HIM AS TO WHY HE --

14 A. No.

15 Q. DID YOU HAVE ANY DESIRE TO TALK WITH HIM
16 ABOUT IT?

17 A. No. He cannot take it. He just cannot take
18 it.

19 Q. BUT YOU DID NOT FEEL -- YOU DID NOT HAVE A
20 GREAT DESIRE YOURSELF?

21 A. I had in the beginning very much and then I
22 got to know him. I am the stronger one, let's put
23 it this way, you know. Two people are never the
24 same strength. I am the stronger one.

1 And some -- I never forget some what he
2 did one day, and after this I treated him equal.
3 He, after spending a weekend in the country with
4 friends, and he came to pick me up and he wouldn't
5 talk all evening and all the ride home and then the
6 next morning, something very unpleasant had happened
7 and he told it to me. Because he didn't want to
8 disturb me, very, very thoughtful, and that made a
9 very big impression on me. And I don't want to
10 disturb him. He cannot take a lot of things.

11 Q. SO YOU DID NOT DISCUSS YOUR EXPERIENCES
12 DURING THE WAR WITH ANYONE AFTER COMING HERE TO THE
13 U.S.?

14 A. No. Occasionally I went to New York, as I
15 say we traveled a lot, and we have very different
16 interests, you know. I go to the museums, he goes
17 someplace else. And we always have a lot of talking
18 to do because we look at things different, we do
19 different things, and we very much respect each
20 other. But I knew he couldn't take it. But he did,
21 his eyes and ears opened up when we were in Austria
22 and he started to hear the story. He doesn't know
23 I'm here.

24 Q. HE DOESN'T KNOW NOW THAT YOU'RE DOING THIS?

1 A. He said where are you going. I'm going
2 somewhere.

3 Q. WHY HAVEN'T YOU TOLD HIM, BECAUSE HE WOULD
4 BE UPSET OR FOR ANOTHER REASON?

5 A. You see, I didn't sign the papers for
6 release, it would very much upset him. He's very
7 private. I speak up, you know, too much, I have a
8 big mouth, he's very quiet. He very introvert. But
9 he became much, much better, you know, you have to,
10 living with me for so many years. But certain
11 things upset him very much. He doesn't like
12 publicity.

13 Q. AND YOU DID NOT DISCUSS YOUR WARTIME
14 EXPERIENCES WITH ANYONE UNTIL THIS TAPE?

15 A. Oh, my sisters and the people when I go to
16 New York who were with me, the man I met on the
17 street at that time in the cafeteria.

18 Q. YOU DISCUSSED IT WITH HIM?

19 A. He is one of them who never stops talking
20 about it, you see.

21 Q. BUT EXCEPT FOR THOSE PEOPLE --

22 A. No.

23 Q. AND YOU DID NOT HAVE MUCH OF A DESIRE TO
24 DISCUSS IT WITH ANYONE ELSE ALSO RECENTLY?

1 A. It's too emotionally for me. I'm not going
2 to sleep tonight. I will be very angry at my
3 husband tomorrow for no reason. My anger comes out
4 and I be very angry and I stay away from him
5 tomorrow.

6 Q. YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO SLEEP TONIGHT?

7 A. No.

8 Q. YOU WERE NOT ABLE TO SLEEP AFTER OUR FIRST
9 SESSION?

10 A. No. I wasn't able to sleep the night before
11 neither I was coming here. And that's the very last
12 time.

13 Q. LAST NIGHT ALSO, DID YOU HAVE TROUBLE
14 SLEEPING?

15 A. No. Was better last night. I said I don't
16 care.

17 Q. WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH, ESTELLE.

18 A. I hope you weren't bored.

19 Q. I THINK DENISE MAY HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS FOR
20 YOU, MA'AM.

21 BY DENISE WEITZEL:

22 Q. WHEN WAS THIS PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN, ESTELLE?

23 A. This was taken in '44.

24 Q. IN '44 YOU WERE IN VIENNA?

1 A. In Vienna. I think maybe '43, I made it for
2 my -- who did that? Oh, yeah, that famous
3 photographer, I remember now, yeah.

4 Q. SO YOU WENT AND HAD YOUR PORTRAIT TAKEN?

5 A. Yeah. And I had one in an evening gown,
6 beautiful evening gown. I met General Patton.

7 Q. AND WHO DID THIS?

8 A. This was done by an artist. Here, you
9 see -- when you come in my house, there is a big oil
10 portrait of this, I just took a camera and made a
11 picture.

12 Q. SO DID YOU GO TO THIS PERSON ALSO AND ASK
13 HIM TO MAKE A PAINTING OR -- I'M JUST CURIOUS?

14 A. Oh, I have been photographed many times and
15 modeled hats and all kinds of things, besides all
16 the other -- laying bricks. I love to work with my
17 hands. Okay.

18 Q. I WAS GOING TO ASK ABOUT YOUR SISTERS, WHAT
19 ARE THEY DOING NOW?

20 A. Hela became a widow, she lives in Santa
21 Rosa, and my other sister lives here in Laurel
22 Heights. And Hela has four daughters and my sister
23 Ruth has two daughters. I'm very, very close with
24 my sister Ruth, not very much with my sister Hela.

1 Q. YOU SAID YOU HAD SOME NEPHEWS TOO.

2 A. Yeah, the two boys, my sister's boys. Yeah,
3 I'm very, very close with her, us, I would have
4 brought them up myself, close, yeah. But my sister
5 would never talk about it. Her story is my story,
6 you know, because she was always with me, always
7 tried to protect her. She didn't age well at all,
8 she's very unhappily married, so.

9 No, this portrait was -- the oil
10 portrait was done after the war by a painter, yeah.
11 And this was photographed. Yeah. You see, in 19 --
12 when I was about 40, 41, I had scarlet fever, I came
13 back from the Orient, I was very, very sick. And I
14 had very thick eyebrows and eyelashes and I lost
15 that, the eyebrows went away, the eyelashes I lost
16 because of the medicine, but saved my life, because
17 at that age, it's just too much. But it came back a
18 little bit. But you can see it on the photograph,
19 it's still there.

20 Now I'm 70, I'm 70 years old, fat and
21 ugly, but I still have some of my spirit, I try to
22 keep it.

23 Q. I HAD ONE TECHNICAL QUESTION, YOUR
24 WORKBOOK.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. YOU SAID, I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU WERE
3 SUPPOSED TO MAYBE LET THE AUTHORITIES HAVE IT BUT
4 YOU KEPT IT. WERE YOU SUPPOSED TO NOT HAVE YOUR OWN
5 WORKBOOK WITH YOU?

6 A. I was not supposed to. You had a job, you
7 got a workbook, you got a job and you have to give
8 them the workbook. And then you got the workbook
9 back and you got to get another job and you had to
10 give the workbook. But I didn't.

11 Q. YOU NEVER GAVE IT TO YOUR NEXT EMPLOYER SO
12 THEY NEVER --

13 A. Once, and I got it back and then I learned
14 pretty fast, I better don't. It was very important.

15 Q. THAT WAY THE GESTAPO COULDN'T FIND YOU?

16 A. They couldn't, no. They didn't know where I
17 was working. Even I got the jobs and all. Don't
18 forget, I got all these good jobs because I spoke
19 German, perfect German. One day the general said I
20 don't know if this is your real language, Polish.

21 Before I left, I went over to him and I
22 said there's a very old lady and she wants to commit
23 suicide, she can't take it. Would you please give
24 me something for her. That's when he said come back

1 tomorrow. And he gave me Veronol, I think it was
2 called, you take five, six and you're finished. He
3 said I don't know who you are, I don't want to
4 know. Here it is. I never seen him again. I
5 didn't want to have any contact anymore. I didn't
6 want to know anymore. I don't know if he was alive,
7 I don't know. But he was a great person. They were
8 not all Nazis, it's not true.

9 The Moskraber, who was a Nazi, his
10 friend was not, he didn't give me away. He knew if
11 he would give me away, he would lose Effie.

12 It was an interesting life, looking
13 back.

14 Please shut me off.

15 END OF TAPE TWO

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