

INTERVIEW WITH FRANK J. CATZ
BAY HOLOCAUST PROJECT

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Q TODAY IS JULY 2ND 1997. WE'RE AT THE HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT AT 400 BROWN STREET IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA. TODAY WE'RE INTERVIEWING FRANK CATZ. MY NAME IS PETER RYAN, ONE OF THE INTERVIEWERS. ELIZABETH RYAN WHO IS ANOTHER INTERVIEWER, MAURICE HARRIS WHO IS DOING THE VIDEO AND MICHAEL MARTIN WILL ALSO BE HELPING WITH THE VIDEO.

COULD WE BEGIN BY MY ASKING YOU WHERE AND WHEN YOU WERE BORN?

A I was born February 15, 1919 in Rotterdam, Holland.

Q AND HOW MANY WERE IN YOUR FAMILY?

A My father, my mother and two additional brothers. An older and a younger brother. I was the, what we say in Dutch, I was the "middel maat?". I was the one in the middle.

Q WHAT DID YOUR FATHER DO?

A My father was the third largest insurance broker in the city of Rotterdam.

Q AND COULD YOU DESCRIBE A LITTLE THE KIND OF LIVING ARRANGEMENT YOU HAD?

A We lived very comfortable. My dad had a good business.

Q DID YOU LIVE IN THE CITY?

A We lived in the city and in later years, we had a country home on the seashore.

Q AND WHAT?

A We had a country home on the seashore.

Q OK. AND IN THE CITY - WHAT? AN APARTMENT?

A No, we had a house.

Q A HOUSE?

A We had a house. And we always lived in the same street. The entire family lived in the same street.

Q COULD YOU DESCRIBE THE HOUSE AND THE STREET?

A The street was a long street and I can tell you what the name of it is, you may not be able to repeat it. It was the [Heimraadsingel?]. Singel is a street with a canal in the middle. And, there were little wooden bridges to get to the other side of the street. I was born in one house and later on we moved right across the street to a bigger house.

Q YOU WERE BORN ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE CANAL?

A Oh no.. not especially, not especially.

Q SO, WHAT KIND OF A HOUSE WAS IT AND HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVED IN IT?

A Five of us. And we did have domestic help. My mother had domestic help at times. My father was in insurance, as I said. My mother was doing a lot of charitable work for an organisation - what was it called - an organisation called - helping, working with Jewish children. I've forgot the exact name of it.

Q WOULD THESE BE PEOPLE WHO WERE POOR, OR..?

A Poor, or yeah, mostly immigrant, mostly poor. And, some handicapped, I think. I was pretty young in those days.

Q DID YOUR MOTHER ACTUALLY WORK WITH THE CHILDREN, OR??

A No, she didn't work with the children, no. She was mostly administrative and..went to help them out in different places.

Q HOW LONG HAD YOUR FAMILY BEEN IN HOLLAND?

A Oh, umpteen, umpteen years. I mean, as a matter of fact, many people ask me, the name Catz - C-A-T-Z, what was it originally? It has always been that name, from the beginning on. And I think my great, great grandfather was from Holland, as far as I know.

Q SO DO I ASSUME YOU DON'T KNOW BACK BEYOND THAT WHERE THEY CAME FROM?

A No, beyond that, no, I wouldn't know. It's too close to, it's too far back that I really know, and I should have brought along something, I didn't even think about that you would go this far back, because, my brother, who lives in Holland, at one time, made a complete tree of life on everybody. And, I forgot now how far he goes back. But, I mean, I can probably make you a copy, one time, if you would like that. Would you? I'll make you a photocopy of it. Have to relocate it, where I can find it. But you may not be able to read much of it, because it's all in Dutch. And may be all Dutch to you.

Q THAT'S OKAY. BECAUSE OVER THE YEARS, PEOPLE WILL BE USING THESE TAPES FOR RESEARCH AND SOME OF THEM WILL SPEAK DUTCH.

A Possible, possible.

Q COULD YOU DESCRIBE THE SCHOOLING THAT YOU HAD?

A I had six years of grade school and was supposed to go five years into high school, but I mean, I never, I was not a good student. My brother was a very good student - I was never a good student. And, when I graduated, I think, I didn't graduate completely - in the fifth grade, I quit. And, my parents then sent me to a school in the French part of Switzerland, because my father said: "English you will always learn." I don't know whether I learned it or not.

"But, I want you to learn to speak French."

And, I went in boarding school, in the French part of Switzerland in [Wiely sur Laron??], that's near Lausanne. I was there for a year.

Q FOR A YEAR? [nods in the affirmative]
HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU WENT THERE?

A I would guess about 17, I'm not sure. I'm not absolutely sure. Not sure, 17, yeah, I was probably 17. After High school.

Q DID THAT YEAR MAKE YOU FLUENT IN FRENCH?

A Yes, however, right now, I mean, I'm not fluent in French anymore, but due to lack of practise. But I have a volunteer job at the San Francisco Airport and when I meet somebody French, I make myself still understood. Well I mean I've forgotten a lot of it but

Q THE SCHOOLS THAT YOU WENT TO, WOULD THEY BE JEWISH SCHOOLS?

A No,

Q OR PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

A I was brought up totally without religion. Never denied being Jewish. Typical example I can give you, is I had a couple of friends in high school and they took off for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. And I went to my father and I said, typical boy, wanted to get out of school for a day or so.

I said to my father: "Why can they take off school and I cannot?"

My father said: "Would you like to take off for Yom Kippur? I'm positive you can do it - on condition."

I said: "What's your condition?"

"Every Saturday night you shall go to schul. Every Saturday morning you go to schul."

And we had a country home, to go to the country and I wouldn't stay back to go to schul.

But then, and I may have jumped the gun, but I may as well tell you while I think of it. I have always known that I was a Jew. No argument about that and we never denied it. But then, I married a young lady from England, in New York, and she came from a very orthodox home. And she made a Jew out of me. I mean, I don't read Hebrew. I don't read Hebrew or anything, but I have a lot of Jewish things. I learnt a little bit of Yiddish from her, and different things.

Q IS SHE FROM NEW YORK?

A No, she was from England. She came from London. And she was in - I don't know whether I talk out of line or sequence. She was six, out of seven children. And, all her brothers and sisters were married and she was the only single one. Very interesting .. you don't mind me talking on the subject? The situation was she worked in London and she used the subway, the bus to go to work. She was working for a big paper factory. And she reads an ad in the paper mentioning all the names in her family. American family looking for such, and such and such in England. These were two cousins, both from Russia - her father settled in England, the cousin settled in Brooklyn. Brooklyn, New York. And, they made contact.

And she read it on the bus and when she got to her office, she called her father and said, "Is that our family?" And her father confirmed that. So then she said: "In that case, I want to go for trip to New York, I want to see what New York is like." And she wrote to them and come to New York. And the story how I met her, is another very interesting story, but I'll come to that later.

Q OK, YOU BE SURE TO COME TO IT LATER.

A Ok.

Q SO THE SCHOOLS THAT YOU WENT TO IN HOLLAND WERE THEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

A Yes, um., wait a moment. I don't know, I think in Holland, most schools are private. I'm not sure, I'm not actually sure on that point. Whether they were private or public.

Q IS THERE A SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE IN HOLLAND? WAS THERE?

A I never paid attention. I have no idea.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER ANY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION FROM ANY KIND OF RELIGION IN SCHOOL?

A No, no.

Q IN YOUR SCHOOL?

A No, no. I mean I'll give you an interesting subject. Like I said, I was never brought up Jewish. I was never bar mitzvahed. When I became Jewish - through my first wife, who passed away, from cancer, by the way. I was being enacted in our temple. And I did different things in temple, and was on the board of trustees, And a member of the board of trustees, only one member, goes to group on Friday night to be, to represent the board. And the first time I went there, I was very nervous. You used to meet the rabbi's office and go to the services. I said to the rabbi -

I said: "Rabbi, I'm very uncomfortable of going because I never was bar mitzvahed."

He gets out of his chair, shakes my hand and said:

"Neither was I."

Never forget that.

Q WHERE WAS THAT?

A ??

Q SO YOU DON'T REMEMBER ANY KIND OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOLS?

A None.

Q WAS IT MIXED - JEWISH KIDS AND NON-JEWISH KIDS?

A Yeah. No, no different.

Q YOU WEREN'T THE ONLY JEW?

A I don't think so. But I never paid attention to it.

Q NOW, THE STORY THAT YOU TOLD ABOUT THE KIDS WHO WERE GETTING OFF FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

A Yeah.

Q WERE THEY YOUR FRIENDS?

A We were casual friends. And the parents knew each other. Just casual school friends.

Q YEAH. DID YOU FIND YOURSELF BEING MORE ATTRACTED TO JEWISH KIDS, OR DID IT NOT MATTER TO YOU?

A Never even gave it a thought.

Q NEVER GAVE IT A THOUGHT. OKAY. WAS YOUR FAMILY POLITICAL?

A No.

Q NO. DID YOUR FATHER TALK ABOUT POLITICS?

A Not that I remember. Actually I don't even remember what.. there were so many subjects to talk about, whether we talked politics or not - I don't know.

Q HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR FAMILY? YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.

A Upper, I don't know if they are upper middle class, or upper class. My father was extremely comfortable. He used to have, in those days, he used to have a car. He used to have a chauffeur, who took my mother to different things. So, we were very, very comfortable. We had very good business.

Q DID THE DEPRESSION HURT THE BUSINESS?

A Not that I know of. I mean, I was very young when it - what was it? That was in the thirties - it was mostly America, I think. I think it was mostly America. In the thirties, I was 11, 12 years old. I didn't know about the depression.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER SEEING BREAD LINES, OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT? shakes head]
DID THEY HAVE THAT?

A No.

Q IF IT HAD AFFECTED YOUR FAMILY, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN AWARE OF IT?

A Oh, sure. Yeah, certainly would.

Q AND HOLLAND BORDERS ON GERMANY. WHEN DID YOU BEGIN KNOWING ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT WAS GOING ON IN GERMANY?

A In the thirties, '33, '34. When Hitler got going.

Q HOW DID IT COME TO YOU? WOULD YOU LISTEN ON THE RADIO, OR..?

A The radio. You'd see in the newspapers. See newspapers. And, as a matter of fact, I mean, my grandfather, in '39.. I have to tell you one thing. My father had insurance business, my grandfather had what become the largest import/export companies of food products. Import and export. My father's brother, older brother, operated the company out of New York. They lived in New York.

And, my grandfather walked into our home in August of 1939, and said to my father: "James, the sky is getting too dark. I am leaving. I am leaving for America." And he left. He left and went to United States, lived in New York part time. And, my uncle had an estate in Connecticut.

Q YOUR GRANDFATHER?

A My grandfather.

Q AND WAS THERE A GRANDMOTHER?

A Grandmother, yes. But, I don't for sure remember when she died. That was one of the things I never thought of bringing in. She died - my grandfather was a widower for a good fifteen, twenty years, at least. She died much younger. And, Ok, you want me to talk about my grandfather?

I can tell you the story of how I met my wife. My grandfather was, during the war, in New York. My father stayed. He should have left too - but he didn't - OK. That's besides the point. My grandfather, when he became older, he had a fulltime nurse companion, to help him out with different things. And when I came to New York, in 1948, '48, yah.. 1948 I came to New York, and I used to.. at first I lived for a little while with my uncle, in his apartment. And the weekends, I used to go to Connecticut, where he stayed in the summertime. And this nurse companion of my grandfather, used to have a day off and used to go and play cards, with friends in New York. And she publicised about this single, Dutch fellow, who all of a sudden appeared on the horizon. And they tried to match me up. And the friend of this nurse, to make talking easier - her name was Aileen. The friend of Aileen told her daughter about it, and her daughter knew this English girl who had come to New York to live with friends. And, they put the two of us together and I called her up for a date. And I got off the phone - we made the date, and she turned to her girlfriend, she said: "What's your mother trying to do? Line me up with a foreigner?" And the girlfriend puts her hands on her sides and says: "And what the hell are you?"

This was how I met her. And we were married just short of 25 years when she died of cancer. I never ?? And I took her to Germany - I took her to Stanford University Hospital, but they said couldn't do anything. I took her to a cancer specialist in Germany. That's the only time I ever was in Germany. And, I was scared to death.

Q WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?

A That was in, '73. I think it was 1973.

Q WERE THERE ANY INCIDENTS IN GERMANY, WHEN YOU WERE THERE?

A No, that was 1970's, it was way after the war.

Q NO. I UNDERSTAND. BUT I JUST WANTED TO KNOW IF YOU'D FELT ANY ANTI-SEMITISM?

A Yeah. I don't think I felt any anti-Semitism. I think I felt anti-German.

Q GOOD STORY. WHAT KIND OF CANCER DID YOUR WIFE HAVE?

A She first had bladder cancer, yes, first had bladder cancer, and then they cured her with a overdose of radiation. And then she got, developed into ovarian. And, when I went to the German doctor, she was practically bedridden, stayed in the house, couldn't do anything. We were for ten days in Germany, with the doctor. And we walked out there to go home. But I was from Holland. We went first to see some of my family in Holland, like my brother, because three quarters of my family was killed. And then we went to England. And we danced at the wedding of her niece. She came home, she was up and around, did her housework and everything, and Stanford would not agree to this. Would not admit that she looks a bit better. All they told us, the tumour keeps advancing.

Q WHAT DID THEY DO IN GERMANY?

A Food supplements and injections. I've made all research on this, I mean, I have a lot of information on this, but that's besides the point. And, we brought home in one of these straw shopping bags that they have in Europe loaded with supplements. And when I went through the English security, he said:

"What's in there?"

I said: "All medications."

"Oh, you'd better go."

They wouldn't even look at it.

Anyhow, she had all these little things and we had this doctor in Germany, and I'm a great believer that he was right. He was God as far as I'm concerned.

He said: "Cancer is nothing more than a natural, nutritional deficiency."

When the staff at Stanford kept saying the tumour keeps advancing, I called the doctor up in Germany, and talked to him.

He said: "Mr Catz, you remember I told you, cancer is nothing more than a natural, nutritional deficiency."

I said: "Yes."

"But if it becomes an artificial deficiency, my method won't work, chemotherapy won't work, nothing will work."

I said: "What do you mean? Artificial?"

He said: "Do you remember, I told you, ah, you told me, that she had extra amount of radiation, which was an overdose because they couldn't cure her?"

That radiation killed her, overdose of radiation.

But I am today, I am very much convinced, that this country and maybe others, ?? As far as I'm concerned, this country will never have a cure for cancer, because the doctors have too much money in it. It makes too much money. It's my opinion. People may argue with me, but I don't care.

And I'm very much in the natural foods and everything like that. I hardly ever see a doctor. I never go to a doctor. Mostly, homeopathic doctors. And on my age, I had major surgery, last January, for back surgery. I had spinal stenosis which is a narrowing of the spinal canal. About a month thereafter, I was back swimming, and two months thereafter, I was back playing tennis. And I play tennis now. It may be I jumped the gun, but I mean ..

Q NO, NO, THAT'S FINE.

A Now you probably want to know how I got to the United States and what I did, etc.?

Q WELL, I WANT TO KNOW A KIND OF A SENSE OF THE BEGINNING AWARENESS OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN GERMANY AND WHAT IT MIGHT MEAN FOR YOUR FAMILY.

A We all knew that there was a possibility that Germany would invade. But let me tell you how I got out of this. After I came from the school in Switzerland, I was drafted, conscription service like the eleven month, in the Dutch army. And I went in, in January '39, had to come out November '39. But, in September '39, the war with England and Germany started and they mobilised the Dutch army. So I couldn't get out. You know, I assume, Holland used to have colonies, the Dutch East Indies. Do you remember that - Okay. My dad discovered if I could get a job in the Dutch East Indies, in the colonies, they would release me from the army, because they wanted young people in the Indies, in case a war would break out over there.

Q IN CASE OF WHAT?

A In case a war would break out over there. So, I mean, my grandfather's company, they had five offices, in the Indies, exporting spices, to the extent, that at one time, we were the largest importer of black pepper in the United States of America. We had our own pepper plantation.

So I went first to Java and - I forget how long now - that I was in Batavia. And then later on, they moved me to Macassar, in the Sowerby's Islands??. I don't know whether you know these names or not. But Sowerby's Islands - they have the.. the regions have not changed their names of these islands - so I don't know - I cannot - "???" or something like that. And I worked in Macassar, in the Sowerby's Islands??. and then when the..

Q DID THIS MEAN THAT YOU WERE DEMOBILISED FROM THE ARMY IN ORDER TO GO THERE AND TAKE A JOB?

A Oh, yes. I would be demobilised from the Dutch army to go to the colonies, and had to register for the army there, in case a war break out. So when Pearl Harbour was bombed, the Americans declared war on Japan, and the Dutch followed suit. So then, later on, I got drafted in Dutch army. And then, no sorry, I was drafted in the Dutch East Indian army - which was different.

Q WHEN DID YOU FIRST GO TO INDONESIA?

A In December of 1939.

Q AND WHAT KIND OF WORK DID YOU HAVE THERE?

A Work in the actual business - office work and taught me the business of spices, and everything like that. Like, in Batavia we got the main office, in Java, and we had an office in - west of Sumatra, we exported - I forgot what??

Then we had the southern point of Sumatra, ?? we had our own pepper plantations. And then we had the office in Sowerby's Islands??. where we exported mostly nutmeg and mace. This is a question for you [looking toward Elizabeth] - because, practically nobody knows. Do you know where mace comes from? Did you know that mace is the leaf of the nutmeg. Mace, and I'm told that we had, every day, we had some 50 native women working there in the warehouse separating the mace and the nutmeg. So I worked for them. And then, when the war in Pearl Harbour happened, I was drafted in the army.

Q YOU WERE IN THE DUTCH EAST INDIES WHEN GERMANY OVERAN HOLLAND?

A Oh yes. Oh yes, and I was in contact with my parents. But, it wasn't that easy in those days.

Q DID - THEY HAD ALL STAYED?

A They'd all stayed.

Q YOUR BROTHERS TOO?

A My two brothers too.

Q YOUR GRANDFATHER HAD GOTTEN OUT?

A My grandfather had gotten out - right.

Q AND THIS WAS ON WHAT? YOUR FATHER'S SIDE? YOUR GRANDFATHER?

A Yes.

Q AND HOW ABOUT YOUR MOTHER'S PARENTS?

A My mother's father died when I was very young. Two or three, or something like that - never knew the man. My mother's mother was up and around and she had her own home, and we used to have, every Sunday, we used to visit.

And then, during the war, I was told, and I reckon this is the third story, one of her daughters took her into the house. One of the daughters was married to a non-Jew. And he hoped to keep her out of any problems. Then, I hate to laugh about it, but it's so funny, they did a lot of.. the Dutch had a very good underground. And at one point they changed the identity of the grandmother and gave her a different name. And it happened to be the name of a Prostitute. So that is - the funny thing what people did.

I had an uncle who died also early. He was working very actively in the underground. Yeah, my father had a brother and a sister. My mother had - oh no, my father had a brother and two sisters, sorry. My mother had three brothers - and one brother, one of the sons - he was an artist, a painter. Used to paint - my mother's brother. He even wrote a book at one time, about Van Gogh paintings, that they were false. And he proved it. Anyway, many Van Gogh paintings in the big museums - they are not genuine, they are false. And his daughter is following a lot of his stuff now. But he died early on. He died pretty young.

And my mother's family, my mother's father and children - they owned a bank. They were in the banking business. They owned their own bank in Rotterdam.

And, the interesting part of it is, my father had a sister, I told you, had two sisters - one of his sisters, married the brother of my mother.

Q ONE OF HIS SISTERS?

A My father's sister married the brother of my mother. Very intertwined.

Q IS THAT HOW THEY MET - THROUGH YOUR PARENTS?

A No. And, my, interesting you asked about Judaism. The Catz family didn't practise any Judaism. But my mother's family ?? - her father was very Jewish. And when my father courted my mother - he courted her in a horse and buggy in those days. And my mother's father was very much objecting of riding a horse and buggy on Friday nights. On my mother's side they were more religious.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOUR GRANDFATHER ANNOUNCED THAT THE SKY WAS GETTING DARK AND HE WAS GOING TO LEAVE?

A August 1939.

Q DID ANYONE TRY TO DISSUADE HIM FROM GOING, OR..?

A Nobody.

Q DID HE TRY TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME?

A No, nobody. He was a very active and decisive man. I mean, to give you a cute story - my grandfather went to the States - I told you. When I came on the horizon - when I met my wife and we were married - we were married in the garden of my uncle's estate. And, before that even, we used to have lunches outside in the garden and things like that.

My grandfather said: "I want to sit next to Irene." This was the name of my wife. So fine. But my grandfather was very forward. He liked hard-boiled egg - an many times he'd smash the hard boiled egg on his own head. And when he sat next to Irene, he smashed the egg on her head. And she didn't know what hit her. Very, very great sense of humour.

Q DID YOU HAVE ANY MISGIVINGS ABOUT GOING TO THE DUTCH EAST INDIES WHEN YOU WENT?

A No, no.

Q NO? DID YOU THINK IT WAS A GOOD THING TO DO?

A Yes. It was good to get out of the army.

Q DID IT SEEM ADVENTUROUS TO GO THERE?

A I don't remember that particular situation, whether it was, or not. I don't remember that I can call it adventurous. The only thing is what - I mean, I was very young. I was 19, my early twenties and I had not been away, ever, from my parents. ?? and, I went on a train to Genoa and by ship, from Genoa to the Indies. There were no airplanes in those days. There were some, but there was no regular aeroplane service. I mean, Dutch airline, KLM, I think they flew there but I'm not sure. I don't know if you know that, but KLM was the very first scheduled airline in the world. My father was on the first flight of the KLM from Amsterdam to Rotterdam.

Q YOU SOUND LIKE YOU FEEL PROUD ABOUT THOSE THINGS, NOW.

A Oh, I mean - I am proud of the fact, of my father's experience. One thing I can tell you of my father, my family, with Germany. The very, I don't remember. But, Rotterdam was bombed very heavily. The very first bomb - no, before that even, let's go back a step..My father had a goods stair and he had one man who was a power of attorney, and was handling all claims. Now in Holland, an insurance broker, gets also, in the case of fire or damage, gets 1% of the claim to the broker. It didn't exist in this country. Anyhow, he had this man who was doing all kinds of things. My father trusted him implicitly.

Q ALL KINDS OF THINGS LIKE?

A This man who handled the claims and who had power of attorney in the company - did a lot of things, he was very close to my father. It was always Mr Catz, never a first name.

Q BUT YOUR FATHER TRUSTED HIM?

A What?

Q YOUR FATHER TRUSTED HIM?

A Yes. He trusted him. One day, he walks into my dad's office and said: "James, I think you as a Jew, have been long enough in this company. I am going to take over "

So at that point, my father had a partner who was a Catholic. And the partner was sitting there, and the partner said:

"[Spaderbom?]", that was his name, "lets establish one thing, you are a power of attorney, you handle the claims, but I am a full-fledged partner. If you don't want Mr Catz in this office, that's up to you - and me. I'm not fighting this point. However, before you take over - I take over."

And that set him straight a little bit. I know that Mr [Lipps?] kept the firm going during the war.

Q THE CATHOLIC GUY?

A The Catholic guy. He kept the firm going. They only did, the firm name, the name of the company was "The firm of James Catz." They changed the name - "The Firm of Jan [Lipps?]"

When the war was over, and my parents did not come back from Auschwitz, and I'll tell you how they got to Auschwitz in a few minutes. Mr Lipps went out of his way to find my older brother, and to get him, in my father's place, into the company. And they then changed the name - "The Firm of Catz and Lipps." And then, later on, my brother bought out Lipps company and he enlarged the company considerable. He made a very good business. My brother is very comfortable. And then, at one point, my brother's son, was not interested in the business. He was working for a union, or something like that. And my brother got older - he didn't want to run the company. And he sold out to a very large insurance combine in Rotterdam. They became international also. And he worked for a number of years for that insurance combine and the rules and regulations, that he had to retire by 65, they never let him go until he was 70.

Q THEY DID WHAT?

A They never let him go until he was 70, because he was so valuable. So, that was the insurance company, and..

Q DID YOUR BROTHER TAKE OVER THE INSURANCE BUSINESS?
[nods affirmative]

A Totally. He took totally over, and then, when I came back from the Indies, I was - had been in the import/export business and, I mean, I told you - I don't know whether I told you. I was a prisoner of war.

Q NO YOU HAVEN'T.

A Oh, we haven't got to that. Okay, sorry, I'll come back a bit later. I'm out of sequence - I'm forgetting. So my brother took over the business. And when I came out of the Indies. I came to Holland and felt very empty - parents gone and I told you, I was 19 when my parents died. And I then looked there - I didn't know what I wanted to do, and said I would like to see. Apparently, it is a normal thing when you work in the Tropics - you work in the Tropics for five years and they automatically pay for you to have an eight month furlough in European climate. So, my uncle in New York, who was running the company in New York, extended this for anybody who had been a prisoner of war to also come to New York. And I said: "I want to see New York." And I went to New York. The only thing I could not get was a green card. I couldn't get a green card. The boat was full.

???

And, I was here for six months - then I asked for extension for another six months and they said: "No, you have to leave the country, and wait till you can get a green card." And then you couldn't get a green card. The government said "No."
But Frank Catz said also: "No, I'm not leaving."
Point one; I had gotten married. My wife was pregnant. If I were to leave, my wife and baby would come in charge of the United States government. So with all manoeuvring and attorneys, which was expensive, I stayed, when it came after five years. I stayed - I was living here for five years under the suspension of deportation. They didn't bother me. And, - when we were naturalised - my wife and I - I went into natural [registrar?]. I was a criminal, remember. And I was in and out of there - three minutes. My wife is a legal immigrant that they kept also in the country. She was in the office fifty-five minutes. And came out what she says: "As red as a tomato." Her English complexion. I said: "What happened?" So we had the attorney, my attorney, who used to work for the immigration department, went out to the immigration department, to find out what happened. Oh, a minor thing had happened. Her maiden name was Bogin - B-O-G-I-N. They had mixed her file up with a B-O-G-E-N, which was a Russian spy. Little things like that.

Q HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU?

A To get in there - I tell you, three minutes.

Q THREE MINUTES? [nods in affirmative]

A So, may be I'm a little out of line. You set me straight on line now.

Q OKAY. LET'S GO BACK TO THE DUTCH EAST INDIES. YOU WERE THER WORKING FOR YOUR..?

A Indirectly, for my grandfather - my grandfather's company. I worked, I was employed in the company there. So, I was in Macassar, Sowerby's Islands, I told you that. And, I was there from the army. We had no army. But we knew that if we were to be invaded, we couldn't resist anything. So, they figured out a place up in the mountains, where we could retreat and retract into it, the army and whoever would want to go there. So we were setting up a whole camp in there for retreat. And I was, we were transporting ammunition. This was buried underneath the airport and we carried the - with one or two trucks we had. And we carried it to the mountains.

I helped them carry the ammunition in my convertible. We had no cars. So when we were properly set up, a couple of times - I had a convertible and they was riding with the ammunition in the car. And the Japanese plane would come over. And I was shot at, but was never hit, apparently, because I'm still around. And then, eventually, we retreat in the mountains and blew up the roads. The Japs came in, in Macassar. Found blown up roads and retreated. Said, the hell with it. A month later, they went around and comes from the back. I fought them in the trenches, I think one day and then they walked over. Let the soldiers repair the roads and they threw me in the hold of the ship and shipped me out to prisoner of war camp in Japan.

Q WHEN DID THEY INVADE - RIGHT AFTER PEARL HARBOUR?

A No, not that soon. I would guess, and I don't remember for sure, somewhere around '42. When was Pearl Harbour attack?

Q 1941, DECEMBER.

A December, it was about mid-'42. I don't remember the exact date, but mid-'42. So, I went to prisoner of war camp - we were one of the very first prisoners and we.. all the Japanese were looking what European people look like. So we went onto an island, in the Bay of Nagasaki and they put us to work in a shipyard. Building ships.

And we got a very encouraging word from the president, whoever, of the board of the shipyard, telling us that they had a very good shipyard - good production and if we worked hard, we'd build sufficient ships to beat the Americans. But that never materialized, fortunately.

Q HOW LONG WERE YOU IN THAT CAMP?

A Only three and a half years. I mean, basically, I was there, let's say, three years in Nagasaki, in the island of Nagasaki. And then, for some reason, that I don't know - I'll never know, we were shipped in, further inland to Fukuoka, where we worked in the coal mine.

Q TO WORK IN A COAL MINE?

A Yeah.

Q AND THIS WAS WHEN?

A Between '42 and '45. Somewhere around there. I was three years in Nagasaki and six months in Fukuoka. And..

Q WHAT KIND OF LIVING SITUATION WAS IT, WHEN YOU WERE IN NAGASAKI?

A I mean, Nagasaki, we slept on, what do you call them? These, the netting ...

Q HAMMOCKS?

A No, not the hammocks.

Q FUTON?

A What do you call - straw bedding.

Q STRAW?

A Straw bedding, straw mattresses. And every morning, or every evening, before we went to bed, I hope forgive the terminology, we took our shirts off. We were killing fleas. The seams of our shirts were full of fleas. And the food was usually three meals of rice and some vegetables. And once a week we got a little square of meat. That was usually dog's meat. And, but we survived, and...

Q HOW DID THEY, APART FROM THE FOOD - HOW DID THEY TREAT YOU?

A Lets say, let's call it a second class citizen. That's the best name I can think for it. You have to realise, and I do not blame them for that, if you look at the Japanese army, if a soldier does something wrong, he gets beaten up. They beat him with stick. So, I mean, we are not accustomed to this, but if we did something wrong, we got beaten. So, I mean, whether they call it a second class citizenship, or whether you call it - I don't know. I don't know.

Q WAS IT CLEAR TO YOU WHAT WOULD BE CONSIDERED WRONG AND WHAT WOULD BE CONSIDERED RIGHT?

A To a certain extent, but I have one experience - I followed the rules and regulations as long as they suited me.

Q DID YOU EVER GET BEATEN YOURSELF?

A I have been beaten too. But a friend of mine, he was beaten to a pulp, because he had, for close to three years, he had made a contact, a Japanese contact, at the shipyard. And he brought, twice a week, he brought us the English printed newspaper. And that was forbidden. And he was able bring it into the camp every time, and once he got found out. And they wanted to know from him, who had given it to him. And he said, he was loyal, he refused to give it to them. He got beaten up with sticks and wet ropes and the soldiers had to exchange, because it became too heavy for them. He, for months, he couldn't sit.

Q DID HE SURVIVE?

A He survived the prisoner of war camp. I had heard that he went to Australia, but I wasn't sure. I also heard that he died thereafter. But I had no contact with him at all with the family.

Q WHY WERE YOU BEATEN?

A I don't remember, I must have done something. In those days, which I consider today stupid, I refused to learn Japanese. I didn't do what they told me. Today, it would be useful to know some Japanese.

Q WHAT KIND OF JOB DID YOU HAVE IN THE SHIPYARD?

A Oh, I worked with the riveters. I worked in different departments. As a matter of fact, right here [indicating to right arm], you can still see seven tooth wheels of a cement mixer

They had me transport liquid cement. And the weight of the liquid in the carts, threw me back and I got my elbow into the tooth of the, the wheels of the cement mixer. But...

Q DID YOU RECEIVE AN INJURY BREAK?

A Oh, yeah. They gave me ??

Q AND DID THEY EXCUSE YOU FROM WORK WHILE YOU MENDED?

A I don't remember for sure. The only thing what I do remember, at one time, I was in the camp, and I had double pneumonia and they simply had no medicine, no medication. They put me in a room in the camp, with other sick people. They had no medication, whatsoever. They left you there to die. And then all of a sudden a Red Cross person came in and that saved my life.

Q WHAT DID THEY DO?

A They give me the medication for pneumonia and I got out of it. But, they didn't care. I mean, when I eventually - OK, so let me go back to - we were in the coal mine. We were in the camp - upper Fukuoka, no, the isle of Kyushu, the southern island. There's a settlement. We were in the upper camp in Kyushu, and then, we were told the war is over. And we could not get out, because we had to get out through Nagasaki and that was after the atomic bomb. So the real war ?? and they kept us for a little while. We were, the Americans, were dropping 55 gallon drums of food onto the camp and we were warned when they came over. I was in, I saw the whole thing, also. A Japanese officer, his pride and joy is his sword. He, the camp commander, was, our camp commander, lived in the camp downstairs and we lived upstairs above the camp office. The very first drop of food - dropped in there for the prisoners, fell on the office and broke his sword in two. When I eventually, so we got out, we had to be kept I think, 10 days extra.

Q HOW DID THEY TREAT YOU WORKING IN THE COAL MINES, AND WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

A I do not remember that much of it - the coal mine. I remember more of the dockyard, the shipyard. But the coal mine, I don't remember for sure.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER IF IT WAS HARD WORK?

A I never made it hard work. I mean, like in the shipyard, I was supposed to work, you used to go to the ship and at times, I was even, standing up, leaning against the metal, something, and I fell asleep standing up. We were working hard. We never got paid anything, for any of the work. And, so in the coal mine, I don't remember. We went there and I worked only about three or four months, in total. And then we came out - we lived in the camp, it took 10 days to get out of the camp, because America was liberating us. When eventually the railroad in Nagasaki was repaired, we liberated in such a way that we went down to Nagasaki, where we were going on an American Aircraft carrier to Okinawa. And then they flew us on the belly of a B 25? - they flew us into the Philippines, where we were then distributed to our own nationalities.

Q THE PLACE WHERE YOU WERE STAYING IN NAGASAKI WHEN YOU WERE WORKING IN THE SHIPYARD, WOULD THAT HAVE BEEN DESTROYED WHEN THE BOMB DROPPED?

A I don't know. The only thing I know, a few years ago - about 10 years ago, maybe a bit less, my wife and I took a cruise in the Far East and we land in Nagasaki. And we went to tour Nagasaki, which I had never seen actually. And I asked the guide, we were on a lookout post there.

I said: "Tell me, point me out the island, that's a shipyard, where I was a prisoner of war." I met this total, complete silence, as if I hadn't spoken. They wouldn't speak about it. They don't want to talk about it.

And then when you talk about the atomic bomb - very slight reference on this.

"We don't know where it came from. It just fell on us. We don't know what the destruction was."
That kind of stuff.

Q WHEN THE BOMB WAS DROPPED, DID YOU KNOW THAT, WHEN YOU WERE IN..?

A No. Didn't know the first thing about it.

Q SO, YOU LEARNED LATER?

A Oh, we learned later, yah. Didn't know about Hiroshima, didn't know about Nagasaki, didn't know about anything like that. But it probably was a blessing that I wasn't on the island. Who knows what I would have had?

Q WHEN YOU WERE SENT FROM THE DUTCH EAST INDIES. WERE YOU SENT TO JAPAN WITH OTHER DUTCH PEOPLE?

A Yah, other Dutch people with me.

Q DID YOU BECOME CLOSE WITH THEM, EVEN?

A No, not especially. We were friends and we would talk together, but not really a close friendship.

Q YOU WERE THERE THREE AND A HALF YEARS IN THE SHIPYARD?

A Three years in the shipyard and about half a year in the coal mine.

Q DID YOU MAKE ANY CLOSE FRIENDS WHILE YOU WORKED IN THE SHIPYARD?

A Oh, we were friends. I do not remember any names. I have no contact with any of them whatsoever. We were friendly. I mean, we had in our camp we had Dutch, French, some English - mixture of all nationalities.

Q WOULD PEOPLE HELP EACH OTHER.?

A Yes, yes. You were helping each other quite a bit, if you could. By the way, when I came out of prisoner of war camp, in the Philippines, I weighed 96 pounds.

Q WHAT HAD BEEN YOUR NORMAL WEIGHT?

A Probably about 150, 160 - something like that. I don't know for sure. Anyhow, we came to the Philippines. I don't whether you know the name of Sukhano?, you know the name? Have you heard of [Sukhano?], know who he was? He was a prisoner of the Dutch, wanted for ?? When the Japanese took over Java - when the Japanese landed in the Indies - they let [Sukhano?] free. So, anyhow, when I came into Dutch command, in the Philippines, they gave me over.

They said: "Yes, we have to fatten you up, but physically you are in good shape. And, we need you back in the army, because we are fighting [Sukhano?]." So I was kept for two more years in the Dutch East Indian army.

Q DOING WHAT?

A Oh, I was standing on guard. I was doing different soldier's things. Nothing warlike, but I mean, I was in - I don't know what I was doing. I don't remember for sure

But I was kept for two years in the army. What do they do in the military? Maybe practising, maybe.. I don't remember that for sure.

Q DID YOU HAVE TO GET IN ANY SITUATIONS WHERE YOU WERE CHASING THEM, OR FIGHTING WITH THEM?

A No.

Q FIGHTING OR THAT?

A No, no. The only thing what I did, because I was so disgusted. I was standing on guard, and I had a rifle in my hand, and I was tired of the whole thing and I tried to get out of there because of flat feet - and it didn't work. And I sat down, especially when I saw the commander coming. The commander came around the corner, in his car. I jumped up - I stood.

Q SO YOU WERE IN THE ARMY, OR A PRISONER FOR WHAT ALTOGETHER..?

A Let's see. 1942 - a good five years probably. No, wait a minute, maybe a little - five, five and a half years.

Q DID YOU HAVE HEALTH EFFECTS, OTHER THAN BEING TERRIBLY EMACIATED?

A No.

Q AND WHEN YOU CAME BACK AFTERWARD?

A No, I felt perfectly okay. I can't remember, except for the one time in the morning. I don't even remember being sick.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER BEING HUNGRY IN THE CAMP?

A I don't remember specifically on this. So, no, I do not remember actually being emaciated. Matter of, getting yourself accustomed to it. I would like I could take off weight as easy as at that time, but not as far down.

Q DID YOU EVER WORRY THAT YOU MIGHT NOT SURVIVE?

A Never gave it a thought. I mean, I am a very positive person. And I have arguments with my wife, at present, of the times she has to prepare for when we die or if we get immobile or something like that.

I said: "When it happens, it happens." I don't think about it - OK, I'm 78 years of age. I have so long to live. I have made up my mind, I'm going to live to the same age as Moses did - to 120. Whether I succeed or not, I'll tell you some other day. I don't know. Now I want to tell you, if I may, change the subject a little bit, I want to tell you how my parents got out to, got out of Holland and were killed. When it got too hot in Holland - they were staying in the house on the seashore. When it got too hot in Holland - they had to get out. My father had made for every ??, I mean, he was very comfortable, he had made arrangements with the Dutch underground, to get out of Holland, into Switzerland.

The train they were on was picked up by the Germans in Belgium, and re-routed into Germany to go to Auschwitz. My father, my mother and two brothers. About, and I am guessing at this, 50 miles before that train crossed the German borders, my two brothers worked themselves, they were in freight cars, through an air-hole, an air window, in the roof, of the car - walked around the edge of the car to the [skiboos?] in the back and jumped off a running train - both of them - and ended up in Belgium.

Q DID THEY JUMP OFF BECAUSE THEY KNEW?

A They knew where they were going. They knew they were going to Germany, or wherever it was. And they were in Liege, Belgium for a little while together. And then, my brother was engaged to be married to a girl who had been able to flee Holland, and was in Switzerland. And he was determined to get to Switzerland, to get to his fiancée - who had, in the meantime, run away with somebody else. That's besides the point. He was beaten off the Swiss border seven times, and then snuck through. At one point he - he slept in a bus, in Switzerland and saw, sitting on a bench across in the bus, a guard at the border which is off duty - who had beaten him off. And they recognised each other. The next stop, my brother got off and took a run and went away and the guy went after him. But he never got taken. When he found out that the - that his girlfriend, fiancée or whatever, was no longer for him, he made up his mind to get out of Switzerland as fast as possible. We don't like the Swiss. The Swiss are very materialistic.

Q SORRY, WHAT?

A Materialistic. Very much so. And so, if there is no money to be made there, they're really not very friendly.

And he - so, he got out of Switzerland, but he bumped into, somebody I don't know for sure how they met, to a cousin of mine. A cousin of ours. And the two boys walked through Italy, the entire war, being hidden by farmers, in Italy. Then, my brother was taken prisoners a couple of times and got out. At one point he was picked up - he has been walking around in an English military uniform he found. He was an Englishman, then, he was other things. And one time, what I remember of, is that he - the Germans picked him up and were going to take him prisoner, and he sat with the guards, with the German guard, in the back of a pick-up truck. It started pouring of rain, and his guard didn't like the rain and he had the car stop and went to sit in front, with the other guards. My brother was left alone. Then my brother got out of the truck - escaped, kept running, to the extent - what he tells me, they set dogs after him, to find him. But the ground was too wet and the dogs never found him. My brother wrote the most fascinating book, which I am dying to have my children read - but, it's only in Dutch. And right now, we have a cousin, who is working on the translation - how long it will take, I don't know. But that's a book, what's not for publication, strictly private, he made seven hundred fifty copies for family and friends. And the English version, if my cousin finishes it, will be strictly the same way. And not ever be - big signs - not allowed to be printed or copied. Because if they get a book like that, they want to make a film out of it immediately. I mean, he describes, everything in the book, what has happened to him. The way it went is this way. He had made all notes, and I told you about Liege in Belgium. But then, it got a little difficult and he was afraid that he would lose his notes. So he took a house in Liege, Belgium, lifted up the tile of the roof, got some wax paper, what he bought, put the notes in, put it under the tile roof - close the roof. After the war was over, he went to this house in Liege, lifted the roof and the notes were there. He came home, eventually, took the notes and threw them in the safe of his office, not ever look at it again. He told a lot of stories to his children. And his daughter, at one time, insisted: "Dad, please, let me look at the notes." And he got them out of the safe. The daughter read it - the daughter and her boyfriend - and both of them were literary, they were in journalism, and the two kids interviewed my brother for umpteen hours. And then they wrote his book - and the book is fascinating.

Q SO THEY WROTE THE BOOK?

A The kids wrote the book, with my brother's consent and my brother's input. But I mean it was, basically it was written - I think it says the author is H. S. Catz - I think my brother's name is on there.

Q I WONDER IF MAYBE THE HOLOCAUST CENTRE COULD GET ONE OF THOSE BOOKS?

A Maybe. I don't know. I mean, you cannot read it anyhow.

Q WELL, WHEN IT'S TRANSLATED..IT WOULD BE A GREAT TREASURE.

A Oh, when it's translated. Oh, it would - this is a treasure. But I mean, if it gets translated, my cousin who has been living in Canada, just sold the house in Canada and is moving to Phoenix. She's bought a house there, and she's living there and she's supposedly working on the book, but I'm not sure how much will come of that.

Q WHEN YOUR BROTHERS GOT OFF THE TRAIN, DID THEY GET SEPARATED?

A They were in Liege. My youngest brother said: "Under no circumstances am I going with you, to Switzerland." They didn't trust them. My brother only went because of the fiancée. My younger brother got, in some way or another, got over the Pyrenees, into Spain, into Portugal, and then he got in touch with my uncle. I will tell you about my uncle in minute, who got him into England. And from there, he was drafted, he got drafted, he signed up for the Dutch army. He ended up flying for the Dutch air-force out of Australia, fighting Japanese. He then came back after the war to the United States, and he made up his mind - he said: "As long as I'm a pilot, I want to know what I'm flying and how it works." He then went to a little town, in the south of Florida, Hopolaka?], Florida, where he went to mechanic school. And he became a flight mechanic and a pilot. When he came out, in 1948, out of school and everything, we met for the first time. I had just gotten interested, we met for the first time, after twenty odd years or more. Me, I was in the Indies - he was in Holland - we didn't get contact. We played some golf together and we had a little time together, and then he got himself a job for a freight airplane company, in New Jersey - flying freight.

And one of his first duties, was, around Christmas time, to fly American soldiers out of New York for their Christmas furlough in Florida, where they want to go. They came back from Florida with a load of gladiolas from the Florida market. They got into very bad weather, over North Carolina and crashed - after all that. And my uncle, and my family never wanted me to see my brother the way he was hurt, and after he was buried. He looked so bad. So I only have one brother - who is in Holland.

Q WAS THIS YOUR OLDER BROTHER, OR YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER?

A Younger.

Q YOUNGER BROTHER - WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

A Theo. T-H-E-O. My older brother was Hans, H-A-N-S.

Q DID HE SURVIVE THAT CRASH?

A No. no, he didn't.

Q WAS HE PILOTING WHEN THE PLANE WENT DOWN?

A I'm not sure whether they had a co-pilot or not. I have a feeling he was piloting, but I'm not sure. First, was the story, was told me, that the pilots had been overworked and were very tired. And that could also be the case. I'm not sure of that.

Q WHAT YEAR WAS THAT - DO YOU REMEMBER?

A 1948.

Q WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE DEMISE OF YOUR PARENTS?

A That, I told you about my brothers getting out of the train. My father probably could have done it, but wouldn't leave my mother alone - and that train ended up in Auschwitz.

Q AT THAT TIME DID YOUR BROTHERS UNDERSTAND THAT PEOPLE WERE BEING KILLED IN AUSCHWITZ?

A I'm not sure. I don't know. They most likely were, because there was a lot ... I mean, I do not know how much of the news in an occupied country - Holland. I don't know how much was publicised.

Q WHEN DID YOU LEARN OF YOUR PARENTS FATE?

A After the war. I mean, my brother went through lists of Japanese prisoners of war being liberated after the war. And he found my name on it and he got in touch again. Because we were totally separated.

Q SO FROM THAT LIST WAS HE ABLE TO DETERMINE WHERE YOU HAD BEEN SHIPPED AND ..?

A From the list, he knew where we were going. But he didn't know where I had been shipped from. He knew where we were going at that point.

Q THE OLDER BROTHER GOT INTO SWITZERLAND AND THEN GOT OUT?

A He got out. He met the cousin and went to Italy. He ???

Q AND, IS THAT WHERE HE WAS GETTING ARRESTED - IN ITALY?

A Yah, yeah, it was in Italy. He was very close to the front - he tried to get to the American front. And he got some contact eventually, but at one point he was transported .. after the war he got in through Germany. I forgot now exactly - it's all written in that book. And, he tells his hate for the Germans was such, I mean, very funny. And he said, "I want to get back to Holland." After the war is over. And he said: "The heck with the Germans." And he just took a car he found there. He took a car to drive through to Holland. But he never got through to the Dutch border, because they wouldn't let him through. So he left the car where it was. I mean, the Dutch have special name for Germans. We call them 'mof' - M-O-F.

Q WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

A That stems from the First World War when the rich German women wanted to come across the border to get out of the war scene. It was the heart of winter and they were wearing fur hand muffs. Muff is 'mof' in Holland. I don't know what else I can tell you. You may ask me questions, I don't know.

Q HAVE YOU READ MUCH ABOUT PRISONERS OF WAR THAT WENT TO JAPAN LIKE YOU DID? [shakes head indicating - no.]

A No. No, that I have not done. Can I get some more water?

Q DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT TIME MUCH?

A No. You see, I follow a principle - yesterday is history, tomorrow is the future, today is the present - and it is a present to be alive today. So, I don't - the future you don't know, history you cannot change. I work on a day to day. Maybe it's crazy, maybe it's good - I don't know.

Q TELL US ABOUT THE FATE OF SOME OF YOUR OTHER RELATIVES?

A The cousin, my brother found in Switzerland, who walked through Italy with, his family were four children, and two parents - mother and father. They were all killed in Auschwitz. How the one cousin got out - I don't know. I think he may, my mother's sister, who was married to the non-Jew, she died a natural death. I know that. And her husband did, too. One uncle and aunt of mine moved to Switzerland. He was in the banking business and he retired, and the bank was sold out - he sold the banking business out to another big bank.

Q THIS WAS AFTER THE WAR?

A No, no that was before the war. I think during the war - no, he left for Switzerland, I think, before the war. I'm not too sure when they left. I mean, but three quarters of my family was virtually cleaned out. So I mean, I don't think of these things anymore. My wife - my present wife - she gets very mad with me when I talk down about the Germans. Her father was an immigrant from Germany.

Q TO AMERICA?

A To America. And he was a tyrant. I've learned, I mean, I met the man only one time and he was a tyrant. And, if I, God forbid, would say: "Oh, he's a German", my wife gets so mad. I mean, she says: "You are generalising about the Germans. A few of your best friends.." I mean, I have a couple of friends, "are Germans." I said: "Don't you know that every rule has its exceptions."

I mean, I have a very good friend for 30, 40 years - he's a German immigrant. And he came with nothing - he was sweeping the floor in a hardware company, wholesale hardware company.

Worked himself up to the General Manager of the hardware company - retired at the age of 50, and is very, very smart. He made himself a fortune on the stock market. I mean, I respect people like that. So he came from Germany, but he has adopted the free way. But I've worked as a volunteer at the San Francisco Airport one afternoon a week. And the one fellow who I work with, who is also German, and he loves to see that there a German travellers so he can talk German to them. And he is adaptable, commanding kind of people. I mean, it's just a matter of feeling of different people. I don't generalise, but the Germans did generalise with the Jews, didn't they?

Q WHEN YOU GOT RETPATRIATED BACK TO ..

A The Indies.

Q AND THEN, THEY TOLD YOU THAT YOU HAD TO GO TO THE ARMY. STAY IN THE ARMY. DID THEY ALLOW YOU TO GO HOME FIRST, TO HOLLAND?

A No, no.

Q NO. SO YOU COULDN'T LOOK FOR YOUR BROTHERS?

A No. Couldn't do anything.

Q AND YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO YOUR PARENTS?

A No, until my brother found a list of me and then we got in contact. Then he told me. He told my parents had been...

Q YOUR BROTHER?

A My brother informed me. Yeah.

Q DO YOU KNOW WHEN THAT WAS THAT HE TOLD YOU - WHEN YOU FOUND OUT?

A Wait a moment. The war was over '45, probably 1945 sometime. I can't pinpoint the month, or so. I only got out of the Philippines and there ... I can't tell you for sure, the date, but it was in '45, because the war was over in '45. We had a private war going on in the Indies. That's why they kept me there until '47.

Q WHAT KINDS OF FEELINGS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT THE JAPANESE GIVEN THAT YOU WERE A PRISONER OF WAR IN ?

A That's a very interesting question, because I've been asked that question before. The Germans - I intensely hate, with exceptions, as I told you. Japanese - I have no hate for at all. I'm driving a Japanese car - I would never drive a German car. I have two things that are German - which is a razor and a toothbrush, because they are very, very good. But that is my only exception. I will stay away from Germany, ?? The Japanese, were in a certain way, forced by the Germans, or what it was. A typical thing is, when I worked in the shipyard, I got into a fist fight with one of my co-prisoners for something, I forgot what the story was. The Japanese tried to separate us, or he separated us and this other guy did his utmost to tell the Japanese that I was Jewish. And the Japanese guy had no idea of what he was talking about.

Q DO YOU THINK THAT HIS DOING HIS UTMOST TO TELL HIM THAT YOU WERE JEWISH WAS THE FIGHT, SOMETHING ABOUT.

A Oh, sure. He wanted me to get arrested because I took a fight or something like that. He wanted me to get punished, but the Japanese didn't know what he was talking about.

Q DID YOU THINK THE FIGHT WAS ABOUT.. WAS HE TAUNTING YOU FOR BEING JEWISH OR WAS IT ABOUT..?

A No, that wasn't ... I forgot what the reason was. That had nothing to do with it. But he wanted to say that he was superior, to the guard, or whoever, I forgot who separated us. Whether it was a guard or

Q THE JAPANESE MAY NOT HAVE FED YOU ENOUGH, BUT THEY WEREN'T ANTI-SEMITES?

A They were not anti-Semite - Jewish or not. No, they didn't know about it. I mean, people have told me about many things I have done that I should write a book. I'm never going to do that. I don't know whether I could put a book together. But maybe you are doing some of it.

Q DID MANY PEOPLE DIE THAT YOU KNEW IN THE SHIPYARD WORK?

A None that I know of. I didn't know of any real death. It's difficult - none that I remember. Not that I know of - I mean, there may very well have been but I don't remember it.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER LOOKING AT OTHER PRISONERS AND NOTICING THAT THEY WERE GETTING THINNER?

A I don't remember any of that - no.

Q DO YOU THINK PEOPLE COMPLAINED ABOUT THE CONDITIONS TO EACH OTHER?

A Oh, most likely, yes.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER DOING THAT?

A Oh, most likely I did, but I don't remember anything of it. I'm sure I did. But complaining didn't help anyhow.

Q WAS THERE A FOOD SHORTAGE IN JAPAN, IN GENERAL, THEN, THAT MIGHT ACCOUNT FOR THE RATIONS THAT YOU GOT? OR, DO YOU THINK IT WAS..

A I cannot answer that question. I wouldn't know. No idea. Not that I refuse - I mean, I just don't know. I mean, we got practically no news from the outside, except the guy who got the English paper. We got some news out of there. And I lost a number of bets to a couple of guys. I have always been a very big optimist and I bet a guy a case of beer, that we would be out by such and such a date. I lost it. Then we went up to the northern part of Kyushu island - I said: "OK, I'll put another case of beer on top of that." And I didn't win that either because I lost it too. I would have paid, but the guy - that was the guy that got beaten up so badly. He was a Jewish guy.

Q DID HE EVER GET HIS BEER?

A No, I was going to buy it and then, after we were liberated we were totally separated. So I mean I never saw him again. So I said, oh, maybe I would ever find him - I think he is gone. I think he is dead, but I'm not sure.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER IF THAT GUY EVER DID GAVE THE NAME OF THE PERSON WHO WAS BRINGING HIM THE PAPER?

A To the best of my knowledge - no.

Q DID YOU REMEMBER HIM EVER TALKING ABOUT IT WITH YOU?

A We talked, in general. But I mean, whether he gave the name or not, no. I don't know that

I don't remember talking about it. But he was - the Dutch can be very, very stubborn and keep their mouths shut if it is necessary.

Q HE WAS DUTCH?

A Oh, yes.

Q WHAT IS IT ABOUT THE DUTCH THAT MAKES THEM SO STUBBORN?

A To outdo the Germans.

Q DO YOU FEEL STILL CONNECTED TO HOLLAND?

A Oh yeah. I mean, the only thing what we don't do anymore, when I have contact with my brother. I used to write him letters, and a stamp costs 60 cents and you have to mail it. It takes a week or so. Today, I do it on - you have to make an envelope - today I do it on the fax for 35 cents, or 45 cents I think.

Q YOU DO STAY IN TOUCH.

A Oh yes, oh yes.

Q DO YOU STILL GO BACK TO VISIT?

A I haven't been there in five years. I mean, the last time my brother and I were together was in Phoenix, Arizona, where my daughter lives, and my daughter - together with my wife, made a big party for my 75th birthday. And my brother was somewhere on a trip in South America, with his wife. And he re-routed himself - his wife went home - and he re-routed himself via Phoenix. And he came to the party. It was supposed to be a party for five people - for my wife, myself, my daughter and her two children. Her cousin from Washington, who has a daughter living in Phoenix, came out and my brother came out. We ended up with, I think, thirteen of us, somewhere..

Q WAS THAT A SURPRISE TO YOU - SEEING HIM?

A No. My daughter wanted to make it a surprise, but my wife convinced her not to. I mean, I knew there was going to be a party - certain things I didn't know. There was certain things happening.

Q SO YOU HAVE ONE DAUGHTER?

A Two daughters.

Q TWO DAUGHES.

A My oldest daughter in Phoenix, was working for AT&T for almost ten years, and lost her job in the downsizing. And she has gone through a very hard time making a living and keeping and just, within the last month, she got a fabulous job, which, I hope, what she tells me, will work out. The company which teaches other companies, which teaches basically companies how to use the computer with all the unpublished facts that computers have. People don't know about it and they have made it a point to know about these things. It's supposed to be very successful.

My younger daughter - my daughter was married originally and is divorced for the past 8, 9 years. And when she was working for AT&T in Freemont, or in Plettonton?? and she heard rumours that the department she was working for would let - was going to be closed up and her ex-husband, who lived in Phoenix, told Louise: "Come out here. You can get a house much cheaper. You can live in the bay area." And she decided to move. And, after, she was able to convince AT&T to accept her in Phoenix. And she worked for a number of years for them in Phoenix and then was laid off. My younger daughter - oh, yeah - my older daughter got two children, a daughter and a son. The daughter is right now, with the boyfriend and they live together. They are both students in North Arizona, Flagstaff. And he has given her what I never heard of before. He gave her a promise ring. Promise to marry, but was too early to get engaged. They are both twenty.

And my younger daughter - my younger granddaughter, no sorry, my younger daughter - no, I'm off. My grandson was going to go to the same school in Northern Arizona. And he got a girlfriend, and he didn't want to go to Flagstaff in the state of Phoenix, and I said to him I think he did himself a big disadvantage because the Northern Arizona - that school is far superior. And he's in the local college in Phoenix. He is, right now, with the girlfriend, with the girlfriend, in Alaska - where he is working during the summer vacation. He is working on a retreat lodge for executives, for executives take a break and he is working on boats, fishing and different things. And the girl is working on the inside of the lodge. But I mean, I've never met the girl, so I don't know anything about her.

My younger daughter lives up in K?? - outside Lake Tahoe.

And she was married to a professor at the University of Nevada. And that broke up. But she had one son - 7 years of age. And she is a counsellor - counselling people in psychological.

Q ARE THESE CHILDREN FROM YOUR SECOND MARRIAGE THEN?

A No.

Q FROM YOUR FIRST MARRIAGE?

A All from my first marriage. I have no children in my second marriage. My wife has three children and six grandchildren. Three, five, yes six. [someone sneezes] God bless you.

Q WHEN YOU MARRIED HER, DID HER CHILDREN LIVE WITH YOU?

A No, they were all adults. I mean, we are married twenty years. Just celebrated our twentieth year. My first wife died in '74. We were married in '77. And that time, all the children were grown up and on their own.

Oh yeah, I was going to tell you how my younger brother got out of Portugal, into England, before he went to Australia - remember?

My father had a sister who was married to a man, who was the president of Unilever. Do you know who Unilever is?

Q OF WHAT?

A Unilever? Unilever is the parent company of Lever Brothers. That uncle of mine had a margarine factory in Holland. He supplied Holland. They were bought out by Unilever - a big company. There were two brothers. My uncle stayed on and became, and ended up - Unilever is a half English, half Dutch. And he became the president of Unilever in Rotterdam. His brother retired and came to California. I'll tell you about him too.

So they - when the Germans invaded Holland - one of the first things they did - go into my uncle's estate outside the Hague, to catch him. But he was already, he had already left for England. He had gone, because he was very active in all the movements against the Germans. And he lived in England. And he was very influential and he was able to get my brother from Portugal, into England and got him further on. That's how he did it.

His brother, who retired, came to California, when my wife and I came to California.

Q WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?

A 1949. No, wait a minute. No, no, no, no. 19.. I'm sorry. 1974. Is that right? No, I'm still off. 1974 is when she died. I came here in 1948. '48 into New York, '49 into California. Yeah, that's right. The way I got to California - I told you that - how I got to California?

Q NO.

A I didn't.

Q IT DOESN'T MATTER. THAT WAS MY NEXT QUESTION.

A Okay. How I got to California. I met my wife - I told you how I met her. I want to get married. In my marriage proposal, I made one condition.

I said: "I'm marrying you on one condition."

"What's the condition?"

I said: "If we live together, and we move as far away from my uncle as possible. I can't get along with the man."

And, neither I, nor she knew this country at all.

She said: "And where is that?"

I said: "I've looked at the map, and I found San Francisco is the farthest point."

So we drove cross-country for our honeymoon.

Q SO YOU ACTUALLY KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THIS AREA WHEN YOU CAME HERE?

A Nothing, nothing. But I had trouble in the Indies, in Japan. I've been all over the world, and when I found California, I decided I didn't have to move anymore.

Q YOU LIKED IT RIGHT AWAY?

A I like it here. Except, there is one thing wrong with this country. Too many people find it. It's getting too crowded. Like I was talking to a lady in the train this morning. She is an attorney, young, just 30, new attorney - just came out of school. She said: "I don't want to drive anymore. Driving, it's so miserable to get out. Take the public transport. Americans ??"

And the public transportation system here is miserable.

But that's besides the point

Q WHEN WAS YOUR BROTHER BROUGHT FROM PORTUGAL TO ENGLAND?

A I presume, sometime in the '40's, 1940's. Oh no, Holland was involved in May of 1940, and they left, probably a little bit before. It was either '39 or '40. I'm not sure. When they actually escaped through, to get to Switzerland - I don't know. I don't know that date.

"End of Tape 1 - Frank J. Catz"