

MAX AND HERMAN

(key, M & H in. int. #1)

BY HERMAN:

[In 1939, we came as so-called Polish Jews in the concentration camp Sachsenhausen, near Berlin. Of course the war broke out between Poland and Germany,] and we were supposed to be interned as enemies of the Reich.

But for the Jews, they had only the concentration camp. They thought at first that see what the world, if the world would react to anything they would do for the Jews. And unfortunately, none of the countries, like America or England, had their own problems, they did not care much about the Jews.

So then the Nazis decided, especially through Reichfeuhrer S.S. Heinrich Himmler, to destroy to the Jews.

So at first, they picked the heavy ones, the older ones, and tortured them with whips, with pipes, with sticks, with anything they could get ahold of. And even with directly gun butts and so forth, and shooting them.

And after several months, the Nazi headquarters decided to put the Jews, especially the younger ones, to productive work. But there was no work provided yet, because it was the wintertime by now. It was winter 1940 now.

. . . And we had tremendous heavy snowfall. So we wore -
- we were supposed to wear our prison clothes upside down, inside out, and bring back and forth snow. And move one mountain of

snow from one side to the other.

And of course there were lots of S.S. there with the whips and hit every one of us as hard as they could. And if you fall down, they would step on you until you be unable to move any more. Just until you suffocate.

And this would go on for weeks and weeks. And most of them, of course, passed away.

And then it was decided to put the younger ones to work inside the huge brick factory called the Klingerwerk (phon). It was approximately five to 10 kilometres outside the camp.

There was a new camp built for this huge brick factory. It was the largest brick factory in Europe at this time. And I became a roofer in the camp. They needed all kinds of construction. And of course, the camp was led by the gentile prisoners, criminals, political or antisocial, the Nazis called them.

The Jews in this camp, in this concentration campe were a minority. We were only then mostly the so-called Polish Jews, consisting of approximately 2,500 to 3,000 in four different barracks.

So we worked at this factory, and I became a roofer like I said. And we had the gentiles who would teach us. They were, some of them were masters on the outside, they would put in the camp only for a limited time.

So the Nazis needed, had to make preparation for

prisoners to continue the work, especially in construction. This was the reason why we were taught a trade. As long as you didn't get sick, you would be barely kept alive, although of course, you could have been easily killed if one of the Nazis felt like, don't like your face and you go by them, you had to salute and stand at attention. They would call you back and they say, you didn't take your hat off fast enough or you didn't salute fast enough. And then they could do practically what they wanted.

And many of them got killed this way too.

So we were in this camp for almost exactly three years, until the order came from Berlin, from Reichfeuhrer S.S. Himmler, to make Germany clean of the Jews.

This is when we were shipped to Auschwitz.

BY MAX:

I was living in Berlin, born in Germany. My parents are from Poland. And in Germany, you were a citizen of the country where your parents are and not where you were born.

So I was a Polish citizen, a Polish passport. And then when the war broke out, September 1st, 1939, and the 13th, the Polish Jews, men only, were taken away from homes. And we were collected in the schoolyard until they came from different areas and had enough to ship us to a concentration camp, Sachsenhausen.

Before we were put into open trucks, the wives and

the mothers came running to the school and see what happened with the men. And they told them that we were going to the east in a working camp. We will be POW's, not concentration camp people. And they told them, they asked, can we bring them something, because we came there without anything except our clothes on.

So they said, you can go home and bring some clothes and food. And so everyone, all the women run home. And then they came back. And then we individual men were called out, in my case Max Drimmer. So I run forward. And your mother is here. So as I run forward, excited, I run down a high ranking S.S. man. And he fell flat on his nose. And it's the worst thing you can do to an S.S. man, like you beat him up.

So anyhow, I came to the gate and my mother was there. She had a suitcase and a little package. And this is the last time I saw her.

Went back inside to the camp. Then everything was^{01:07:48:2} done and the big open trucks came, and we were loaded on to open trucks with our suitcases and packages, and driven through the streets in open trucks. And the German public stood on the sidewalk and screamed and yelled to us, "Dirty Jews," and what have you.

So we go to a train station, and we ran into a train and were driven to Orianenberg (phon), which is about 30 kilometres from Berlin. There was the concentration camp Sachsenhausen. And when we got out of the train, everybody

carried his box or suitcase with him, and the order came, drop everything and just march on. So we lost the stuff right there.

And we marched through the camp. We had to keep our hands above our heads and I forgot, half an hour, whatever the march was, S.S. on the side of us, and kicking and beating already with the rifles, rifle butts. People already start falling down, not able to get up any more, and they kicked them more and more, get up, which was impossible for them.

So we came in to the camp, I never will forget, they opened the gate, and iron gate, and it said in German, "Auber macht frei" (phon). That was the main slogan in any German concentration camp. It means, if you work, you will receive freedom.

So we came into the camp, and we were brought into a barrack and had to take -- everybody take their clothes off and march on to the next barrack.

Next barrack, our head was shaven -- not shven, clipped, the hair was clipped. Then you go to the next room, you had to get a towel and soap and had to take a shower. Then the next room, you have -- you were sprayed with some kind of a chemical. And then the next room, you get a bundle of clothese thrown into your arm, and that was your shoes, your uniform, your prison uniform, your underwear. Fit or not, that's yours. You make it out yourself.

And then we are all finished with this, it took a

long procedure, about 1800 people in this one time spot.

And then we were divided into four barracks. And we came into the barracks, and everything was running. Everything had to be done in a running pace, and kicking on the sides, and beating on the sides right away. So we already, they made you an animal there. That's all you were. An animal were even better treated then we were.

And we were barely into the barracks, we had to come again in a place. We were isolated away from the camp. It was a special corner were they had barracks for that purpose.

BY HERMAN:

Excuse me. They sealed all of them completely from the existing camp. The intention of this was to lead to the killing of all the Jews. And they didn't want the other camp, which consisted of approximately 25,000 prisoners, gentile prisoners, not to know anything what was going on in there.

So our barracks were sealed and the only one who had access, of course, were the S.S. and on each side of the barrack was, they were divided into blocks, Block A and Block C, was the eldest of the block and the eldest of the other side. And they were the iron rulers, the disciplinaries.

In our blocks, they were political, and they also were extremely barbaric. So we had three times a day, they called it roll call, where you had to stand at attention. And of

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into the barracks, and then everybody had to go out again. And we were counted. And there was room normally for about a hundred on each side of the barracks, and we were putting two hundred on each side.

So as we stay outside, there comes this S.S. man who I ran over in Berlin on the schoolyard. And he was going through row through row and looking for me. My luck was, I had no more hair, and he didn't recognize me. If he would have recognized me, that would have been the end for me, the first day right away. It would have made me less suffering for five years or maybe it was supposed to be.

So we were back in the barracks, our windows was nailed shut. We couldn't go out, we could go only to the bathroom three times a day, every morning, noon, and evening, when we had to go out and be counted.

We had no access to the camp, we were isolated completely. And at nighttime, we were laying on straw sacks on the floor, and we were like herrings. You had to lay on the side in order to make room. And if one guy turned over at nighttime, then the whole row had to turn with it, because there was no room.

It was good in one way, it was warm. There was no heating, but of course body on body kept you warm. And I was kicked in my bladder and I started getting trouble with my bladder, and I had to urinate more often, I couldn't go. So I

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course, quite a few prisoners where the S.S. had access constantly during the day, and what they would do is, in our barracks, for instance, they had a couple of, among others, who had epilepsy. And they would get their attacks, they would -- we had to bring them to the bathroom, and then the S.S. worked on them.

It was the most horrible thing I ever seen in my life. They put a hose of water in their mouth, and they would blow up like a frog. And then they stepped with their feet on their stomach and you heard a big bang, and they were expired.

And this way, they killed thousands of them. Just to pick the prisoners they did not like. Either they were too heavy, either they didn't like the face, or whatever the reason was. Or of course, no reason at all. But they would torture them to death.

And we were called in, and had to pile them up like herrings until the next morning. They would have to stay in the bathrooms. And the next morning, right after the roll call, we had to bring them into the special area where they disposed of the dead people, next to where they burned them.

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And this of course would go on for weeks and weeks, until finally the order came, quit and put them to work now.

BY MAX:

On the first day, when we got in there, when we got

made in my shoe. And three times a day when we were out, had to go out for counting, I took my shoe full of urine and I emptied it outside.

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BABY BLANKET

And then when people started dying, and they would ask who would volunteer for half a litre of soup more, carry the bodies to the hospital. Carrying a bodying, so they need four guys to a blanker. One guy gets a corner of a blanket, and you put the body in and you walk through the camp to the hospital. And you go into the basement. The first time we did it, the first time I saw a dead person in my life, I was a kid.

We laid them slowly down and had to pile them up. And the S.S. came and kicked us on our butt. And he says, I going to show you how. You just ripped the blanket. And this is how we unload the body.

So we were in isolated for about four weeks. Then every day, 40, 50 people died. And they notified the mothers or the wives in Berlin, they died on heart attacks or they died on this sickness, and this sickness, and sent them home the ashes, the ----- ashes, this is what they sent them home.

Being a Polish citizen, everyone, the Polish consulate was closed, because they were in a state of war. So the Swedish government took over to represent the Polish citizens in Germany. So then there arrives a woman, went to the Swedish consulate in Berlin. And everybody cried and complained, my husband was a strong man, and I get the (ashes?). So now they

inquired.

One day, all of a sudden, or in the morning, they came and they took the nails out of the window and we got fresh air, and they cleaned up a little bit. And during the day, the ambassador from Sweden came and his commission of people. And naturally, they showed them nothing but the best.

But at least, the isolation stopped. Then we starting getting divided into working. Working is like Herman said before, just ----- Move mountains of snow from one side to the other or sand from one side to the other, until a few weeks later.

Then we really went to work in the brick factory, which we marched every morning, half an hour in and half an hour away.

BY HERMAN:

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In 1939, my oldest sister left for Shanghai, and my mother wrote right away that I am imprisoned in a concentration camp Sachsenhausen, and they would release some prisoners who had exit visas to other countries, especially to Shanghai. And she asked my sister to do anything possible to get me out, because I cannot survive very long there.

So my sister, of course, put all these things in motion and got me a exit visa. And I was notified in the barracks to appear before the, they called it where they keep the

effectenkammer (phonetic), where they keep your clothes.

And I was standing in front there, and my heart was pounding because I knew within an hour I going to be free outside. And I just couldn't wait any more, because by this time, I was just a few weeks in the camp, maybe six weeks it was, in November now, and all of a sudden the main gate goes up, you know.

And then eifenconshen (phonetic) and the commandant comes in on his horse, and all the prisoners have to be in line, and he said, you had the summoning of the S.S., "You son of a bitches tried to kill our beloved feucher," and every one had to stand in line, including me, run back to my barracks. And then we were all had to count, everyone had to count ten. And I was number nine, number eleven, ----- for you to count, and every tenth was picked up and shot in the ward in the camp. Because we tried to kill Hitler. There was the first time they tried to assassinate Hitler, in 1939.

Of course we had nothing to do with it, but we were at fault. The Jews were always at fault. And then very, very few prisoners would be released. And then of course it started.

It was very tough until the Nazis got over the shock. They was very brutal in the camp, and they would actually -- I mean, it was worse than ever before.

But after a few weeks, it let up again, because they achieved some victories in Europe, where they overrun those

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different countries. And of course, me being a roofer, I tried to have it a little bit better, because once in a while we worked in the kitchen. And one time, of course, it was the opposite, too. I was ordered to work at the S.S. canteen by the high prison command, and they had all their buddies working as the chief cooks at the S.S. canteen, where the best food was available to them, which eventually had to be smuggled in for their buddies into the camp.

So I was ordered to work on a certain barracks and lift up one of these transports of a section of the barracks, and make myself a little wire, and pick up a huge package.

I did what I was told to and brought it into the camp. I got a slice, it turned out to be a ham in there, you know, a baked ham. So I cut a slice and ate it, and they was watching outside, that the prisoners wouldn't be surprised by the S.S. while they are doing the illegal eating and all the activity.

But a few days later, which of course I didn't know, the chief of the concentration camp, his name was Overgruppenfuhrer Poe, he was right under Himmler, he was the chief inspector of all the concentration camps and the security. He was supposed to make an inspection at this camp, Sachsenhausen.

And of course, he had advance notice. And of course, the Nazis always shivered when a high official would

come. Everything had to be ship and shape. And they found out what is his failure, what he wants to eat. So they ordered the kitchen, they knew he wants a special ham, and they ordered him the best ham. And they ordered German -----, they had all these hams written in the book. Which is mild, which is pepper, which is so and so. And this was a certain number. And the one he was supposed to be served, I stole for the prisoners. So of course, they had to serve something else, and afterwards the leader of the S.S. kitchen, who was also an S.S. official, goes to the commandant and tells the commandant, there was one of the big hams, which he wanted to serve to the high official of the S.S. who visited, and it was gone, missing. And there was no way that any of the kitchen prisoners could have stolen this. It had to be done by some people, some of the workers who worked at the kitchen. Who worked under the roofers.

So I was called to the main gate and asked what I did with the ham. So of course, I said, I am Jewish, I don't eat ham. I thought maybe that would help, but of course, it didn't. And I got a hundred over the ass. And I was in such a bad shape. And then I got fired from my job as a roofer into a special detail. I was supposed to be killed.

But I knew in the camp we were, what is going on in the camp. If you give away prisoners, especially the ones who are ruling the camp, in this case the VIPs, you don't survive the night. The S.S. might kill you, but the prisoners can (can't ?)

save you. And so I didn't talk. Where I got all this punishment, I did not divulge any name, I didn't even know about the ham until after I got released. After the barracks in the evening, the prisoners, the high prisoners ordered medical treatment for me. But of course, when your ass is like a glass from the hundred over your ass what you got, nothing much helps, because the skin came off, you see.

But they tried their best, and of course, several weeks later, they protected me as much as they can. I got my job back.

FEIBELMAN: Were you trained as a roofer? Tell me about that. How did you become a roofer?

HERMAN: Well, like I said before, the most prisoners, the majority of the prisoners in this concentration camp, Sachsenhausen, consisted of gentile. Some of them were untersochen (phonetic), they called untersochen, Germans who wouldn't come, report to work for two, three times in a row. Getting drunk on the job, they put them in a concentration camp. And some of these people were high qualified, skilled workers. They were either carpenters, roofers, sheet metal workers, ----- any trade. So we had quite a few of them at one time or the other.

But the Nazis also knew that these people would only be in for a certain time. None of them, of these people, were

subject to be killed. Only the Jews was subject to be killed, unless these people would do something in the camp or they have done outside which ----- that they will not be released any more. Other than that, they would stay maybe at the maximum, between two and three years.

So one of these guys in there was a chief superintendent in the Rhineland of Germany, and he taught me. He said, "I going to tell you something. You Jews will not survive anyway, but if I teach you a trade, this trade might help you."

But unfortunately, you know, I was 17 years old, but he told me ----- because I was hungry, I was - - and I told him. And he was already my superintendent.

I said, you -- they had reason to imprison you, because he was antisocial. But he says, I haven't done nothing. I said, I am only Jewish. So he hit me with a whip. He said, you bastard, he said, I want to try to teach you, to try to survive. Help you to survive if possible. You better listen to me, because this is the only thing I can do for you, because I - - you know that sooner or later, I will be released. But you will never be released.

So then I listened. And then whatever he taught me, I took. And this is how I eventually became in charge of the roofing in the next camp.

FEIBELMAN: The other thing you had mentioned was that after the attempt on Hitler's life, that the conditions in

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the camp became very bad.

HERMAN: Yes, because at first, we were in isolation. And then the Nazis ordered, after a certain amount got killed, they ordered to ease.

There were always different reasons. A lot of time, the commanders changed. A lot of times they got special orders. A lot of times they achieved special victories in Europe, and they overrun Poland and Holland and Belgium, France. So then the Nazis had nothing else to do but just celebrate the victories. And they got -- they stole so much from those countries, like from France they stole the champagne and the wine and we -- and most of this got of course to the S.S.

And we had to work nights to clean out all these freight cars and bring the stuff in. And sometimes then we got more extra food, because they couldn't eat their food, because they had enough of the stolen things.

So we had it better. But then when they tried the first assassination of Hitler, it was so, because of course we didn't know in what condition he was in, but anyway, it is a known fact, the first time they tried to kill him was in 1939.

And this backfired instantly in the concentration camp and against the Jews.

FEIBELMAN: Could you give me some specific incidences?

HERMAN: Other incidences?

(In Int. #2)

BY MAX:

So in the first four weeks we were in isolation, we were the new ones in the camp. And we were visited every day by umpty S.S. guys, and they wanted to see who was there, the new ones. And they made sport with us, rolling down, up and down, and everything which was just to beat us, to kill us.

And the block -----, which was the inmate, the leader of the barrack. And they picked the Reicher (?) who was helping them along, beating us and killing us.

And I know so because I carried the bodies to the camp -- to the hospital.

HERMAN: You see, what the Nazis did --

(Voices talking about changing the tape)

2 - CONDITIONS

HERMAN: So the S.S. at the camp ordered special uniforms. In the summertime they give us winter uniforms, in the winter, summer uniforms, which was a special punishment. And the shoes had soldier nails, we called them, steel nails. And each shoe approximately had 35 nails. If one -- there was a code in the camp. For one nail missing, you get three over your ass. But you couldn't go to the shoemaker. There were no nails available. And your shoes were inspected almost two, three times a week. And if you are unlucky, you got nails missing, you get plenty of punishment all the time.

And about four or five times a year, we had to walk

FEIBELMAN: Of what happened to the Jews then.

HERMAN: Well, number one, every tenth got shot.

They picked out -- first of all there were, every day there were new prisoners, new Jewish prisoners what come in the camp. And one day, my own cousin came in, they arrested him in Greek. And he had relations with a non-Jewish girl. They called it then the rassenshonde, you know. It was a special lobby. The Nuremburg laws came up. They forbid any --

MAX: Jew have sex with a gentile.

HERMAN: -- sex, you know, with non-Jews. No marry or anything like this. And they did this, enforced this policy in all the occupied lands. So my cousin came. And they were put in a barracks, in a special barracks. And 8:26:00 →

And right -- we were still in isolation, they would outside, and they make sport with them. They had to roll, and they went over them with the motorcycle, with the bicycle, and they just killed them on the spot.

B 00:28:42:00 So my cousin was just killed in front of me outside for being a -- how did they call it, I can't -- → 29.01

29:16 → MAX

N Jews could not be lawyers etc. If you get caught, they put you into jail.

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about 10 kilometres or more to the disinfection apparatus where the Nazis were very scared of any ----- in the camp. And we had to take all of our clothes off, and that was put through those machines, and you stayed naked outside, it was summer or winter.

And then many prisoners got pneumonia from this. The same, of course, with the baths. Our bathroom, we no bathrooms or anything like that in the barracks except toilets with a long stick, where you have 50 prisoners sitting on there. When they would come in, of course if they feel like it, they push you right in there, you know, which was pretty deep.

But the baths, the shower was to be taken across the other side of the camp, which means approximately 1 kilometre, and you can imagine the wintertime, when it is ice covered, you walk naked. You run over there, and you run as fast as you can. And not many prisoners survived very long these kind of different things.

FEIBELMAN: What time did you get up? Tell me a little bit about your daily schedule.

HERMAN: Well, our schedule, we got up in the morning, if I remember, about 6:30. And then we got a half a litre of water soup, which of course each prisoner, most prisoners like to stand in the back, because on the bottom was the heavier stuff.

And sometimes, if these guys who would distribute

the food would shake it up a little bit, so some little bigger stuff, like cereal or whatever would come up on top. But most of the time he left it on the bottom, because then the ----- - barracks, who run the camp, who run the barracks would get in line and intend to get that ----- stuff, which of course have a lot of vitamins, a lot of stuff, but the other one is strictly water. This is heavier.

But when each one tries to stand in the line, it doesn't work. This is when the block elder and the other guy who runs the other section come with the sticks and hit you like the dickens. And sometimes they say, you don't get nothing to eat, either. You know.

And we were supposed to pick up the food and kettles from the kitchen, which for each barrack is approximately 10 kettles, five for each section.

And a lot of times when we walked picking up the food, S.S -- and there was one special one, whom I later met in Auschwitz, his name was Model, one of the most brutal ones, when he would see you picking up the food, he was by this time in Sachsenhausen in charge of the laundry, he would call you, bring some special prisoners and steal your food.

Sometimes all of it, sometimes part of it. And there was nobody of the S.S. who would even say one word. Could even say one word. And he would give the food to the prisoners, or to these other gentile sections he would prefer for the Jews.

And so many of them got these ----- some days nothing to eat.

FEIBELMAN: And what would happen next in your day?

HERMAN: Well, like I said, after the food, we have to all roll call. In the roll call, everybody is counted. And then we would go to work.

Most prisoners work of course in the factory, by this time the new camp at the brick factory was not finished yet. So we would work, we would march out there, about 15,000 prisoners would march to this huge factory, through the streets, under heavy guards. Back and forth. We would walk there approximately at 8:00 in the morning after everybody is counted and arrive there probably 8:00, 8:30, something like this.

And then we worked four -- it depends, in the summertime a little longer, in the wintertime shorter, because they wanted you back into the camp during daylight, because they want to save as much light as possible.

So in the evening, we walk back to the camp. And a lot of times, the gate was very large, if they opened the full gate, but it depends who was on duty on the gate. Some of the S.S. was much, much more brutal than others, much more brutal.

So then they opened only the small door, and you were supposed to walk in a line of 10 prisoners through the door, straight, at attention. It was impossible to do, how you can walk easily if the main gate is open. It's impossible, through

the smaller gate, at the maximum two can fit in at the time. So naturally you pile up, they are going to hit you. And then of course you get so much punishment there until you even reach the camp again.

And then you are counted. And they call it the roll call. Now, if everything has gone fairly well --it always depends. Every day was a different mood for the commander of the camp and for the prisoners as well.

If the war had gone pretty well, if they received any setbacks, if there was anything, it would be let out strictly, but most of the time against the Jews.

And then of course, once in awhile, a prisoner tries to escape, and these were gentile prisoners. There was no way for any of them to be long away, two days, three days, four days. But then, as soon as they come back, the camp in Sachsenhausen had to stay until they find them, sometimes days and days. They was completely different than Auschwitz, you see. When the prisoner comes back, they torture these prisoners. And then right in front, they built a hanging post. And the whole prison got to stand there at attention until, of course, the throat for that long, you know, they are dead.

And the other order is written, you know, right for the whole camp, you know, that by the Reichfuhrer S.S. Himmler, this prisoner who for escaping is sentenced to dead by hanging.

But by the time most of these guys are hung, they

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are already half dead from the torture they received.

FEIBELMAN: What was -- what do you think saved your lives?

HERMAN: Well, I can tell you one thing. When we were ordered, we did not even know that we go to another camp.

And one day, I think it was, wasn't it September 1942?

MAX: October.

HERMAN: October, maybe. I were all ordered to come to the bathroom, all the Jews. And we were also ordered to take off our clothes, put the belts and all the utensils on a separate table.

Now, we were permitted, by this time, of course, we were in the camp three years, and some of them even longer, and we were permitted by the leader or by the commandant of the camp, to have a belt. Some of them could even carry a small pocketknife, because, you know, they had problems with the teeth and so forth, and a handkerchief and so forth. Little utensils you were allowed to have on you.

And we figured, if we have to give all this up, and we saw already then the Nazis were shooting thousands and thousands of Russian soldiers they brought into the camp against the wall.

First they tried, ask them if they would be willing to fight against the Stalin regime for Hitler, and most of them

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resented it and they didn't know they would get shot. But they shot them all against a back wall. There was no gas in Sachsenhausen.

So they shot them day and night. And the camp was smelling like, from human meat, it was just awful. You couldn't breathe, because they burned them then in the incinerators. 02:09:38.0

So while we were all naked there --

(Voice talking about water)

What makes us survive is we were, first of all, we were very tough. 02:09:52.00 → We were hardened by the years already in the concentration camp. And we were very optimistic. You see, well, 02:10:08 → Max is a very religious person. I am not so religious.

I have a different feeling. What I think, the main thing what made us survive is, first of all, we were extremely tough, hardened, extremely hardened by the years in the camp, by the punishment we received.

And we had hope. We still had hope. 02:10:30. → I was always a tremendous optimist. I never believe that I was going to get killed in the camp, even though there was no way to hope for it. But I just had the feeling that there must be a way. Maybe the Allies would come first or maybe whatever was, I didn't know. There was no reason even to hope. But I had the hope and the feeling that I was going to survive.

In fact, my hope was even later borne out by a fortune teller. I gave him -- he asked me for a piece of bread,

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ILLER

if he can tell my fortune. And I don't believe in this, even though my mother was a great believe in this, yah? But she was more with cards than with fortune.

So this fortune teller told me approximately three months before our escape, he said, you are going to leave the camp soon. He said, you are going to stay alive. You are going to be very sick when you are in the middle age, and you are going to far away and you are going to become wealthy.

He tells me all these things. I say, are you crazy to talk to me like this? I said, you know, we can get killed for even just talking, especially about the escape.) 02:11:43'.02

He said, I see something in your palms which -----
----- two of us. And three months later we -- there was no way, Max even talked about nothing, you know, about an escape yet. And then we were free and we made it. J

But I want to go back now to the camp.

And in the camp now, we were ordered to leave all our stuff on the table. And we had some among our comrades, there were some political prisoners, Jews, who were former socialists and communists, who already served time, years in the prisons. And they were the first ones in the concentration camps.

02:12:34:00 → And one of them said, I tell you guys. When we have
VTINY L to give up our utensils, which we were ordered by the commandant,
the Nazis going to kill us, they going to shoot us like they

shoot the Russians, against the back. And we don't want to die like animals.

I tell you, he said, we going to make a try mutiny. And this mutiny going to be, he said, in 20 minutes, the main gate going to open. And the 20,000 prisoners going to come in from outside. And this is when we are going to attack the Nazis here and run to the main area where we will be counted. The roll call.

But they going -- if they shoot us, let them shoot us right in front. Maybe we do somebody -- at least we die like men. And we agreed. And the Nazis were impatient already, inside the camp. Let's go, let's go, you know, try pulling the gun. And he said, when I give you my order and I give you the whistle, then we do it.

So we attached three, four Nazis, we didn't even -- we just pushed them down and they were -- but run, we were running out, some of them had pants on, some of them without pants, half naked, so we run out by the hundreds.

And now the prisoners come in. And they guy in charge, the leader of the camp, he was not the commandant, he was the second or third in command, he ordered the gate shut instantly and ordered fire at the machine gun to kill all of us.

And in no time at all, maybe in a split second, just as the order came, the gate opened again and the main commandant comes in. And he says, "What is going on?" About five, six

Nazis are laying on the ground, not hurt or anything like that, but just they tried to pull the guns, and the guns were floating around their heads and all.

And the commandant says, "What are you doing here?"

And he said, "Commandant, the Jews tried to mutiny."

He said, "You schweinhund, you know, you son of a bitch, you are telling me those half starved to death Jews can have a mutiny?" he said. "You are surrounding these people here by 25 machine guns, you have 10,000 crack S.S. troops across the camp, you have hundreds of S.S. at your disposal, and we have 5,000 voltage if needed at the wire. And you telling me," he said, "you bastard," -- right in front of us -- "outside, all the S.S., out as fast as you can. Open the main gate." And the prisoners, without being told, this is what the commandant ordered now, run as fast to the barracks.

And half an hour later, all the prisoners are in the barracks and everything is empty. And just we and the commandant at the place. And the commandant says, I will never forget this in my life, he said, "Build a half circle around me," he said. "You know," he said, "I have no problem to have you instantly shot for what you done. But he said, I give you my officer's word" -- and he was an overstormenfuhrer, like a colonel -- he said, "As long as my name is Col. So and So, I will forget the whole thing. You will go on transport. I am not permitted to

Mutiny

tell you where you are going, but if -- provided you go orderly of transport," he said, "I can easily put a little note to the next camp you are going to and let them dispose of you. But I will not do this. But I need the promise from your that you will go orderly on transport. I will return everything ordered to return to you. You will get ration."

02:14:06:00 → And then we were put into cars. But what he didn't tell us, that we were packed into --

MAX: Boxcars.

HERMAN: To boxcars where they transport animals.

And we were pushed like herrings in there, so quite a few of them even died, you know, they needed medical and all kinds of -- and they took us from Sachsenhausen to Auschwitz, about five and a half days, which normally takes no more at the maximum than three-quarters of a day.

But they stole a -----, the ----- was needed for more urgent things than the prisoners. And they pulled our trains, our cars, on a sidetrack. And we had to wait until they finally found another -- so this way, hundreds of them got killed. ----- Auschwitz.

But this commander was true to his words. We came to Auschwitz to the main camp and we were received, we only stayed there a very short time, only a few days at the most, there was not word said about it. Because if it was, we would never even have reached the camp. Never reached the camp.

02:17:15:00
 MY COMMANDER
 SPARED JEWS

→ So this man, this commander was in an honest way.

He saved our life. Maybe he did not want any problems, because if he would have to report it to Himmler in Berlin, his job would have been gone. He would have ended up -- in fact, all the S.S. would have ended up on the eastern frontier. He would have put a reinforcement instantly. Because if one thing the S.S. couldn't take in Berlin, Himmler, was an escape with a mutiny, especially by Jews.

By any prisoner, but especially by Jews. Because the Jews were supposed to be the most coward ones who wouldn't dare to raise a hand against an S.S. So this commander couldn't very well tell Berlin, because everything had to be reported, the Jews tried to mutiny. So this is how we were saved, probably unintentionally, but we were saved.

MAX: Saved from one camp to the other camp.

HERMAN: Right.

02:18:18:00
 MAX: That was the saving. Now, when we came to Auschwitz, we marched into the camp. And we were put into barracks, just a couple, three days. And one day everybody had to go out again. And then was the famous Dr. Mengele. And he was pointing a finger, you go to the left and you go to the right. The left and the right.

And I see, some of my friends were put on this side. And I for some reason was put on the other side. But we didn't know which side is what, where does one side go, where does the

other side go.

So I smuggled myself around Mengele, took a great chance and went over to the other side, because I wanted to be with my friends. I was not caught, luckily. And as it so happened, this side then was shipped out to the Buna (?) camp, to build a new camp, where we then worked at the I.G. Farben Industry, which was within walking distance of maybe 15 minutes.

02:19:23:22 So in this work, we were productive. As long as you were able to work. You were not able to work, they ship you right away to Birkenauer. If you had diarrhea, that was the most common sickness was diarrhea, and that was the end, right away, because this would have infected all other people, the sicknesses.

02:19:34:00

And so there it was a little better than Sachsenhausen in one way is the leadership of the inside the camp was mainly Jewish people, because there were very few gentiles.

So you had friends who was a copper, a nice guy, who was a leader of a barrack, and you knew him. Because we considered being already three years in the camp, you are the old guy. It's like in the army. You come in today, you got to do the dirty work. If you are in a few years, you get already a little easier work.

02:20:31 And then what happened to us, so life was somewhat a little easier in Auschwitz to us than Sachsenhausen. The difference between Sachsenhausen and Auschwitz, is Sachsenhausen

↓ 20:50:18
 you work until your last breath comes out of your heart, your beat. And in Auschwitz, if you are lucky, you are not going straight to the gas chamber. And if you are put in to work, you have a chance to survive in the camp.

Outside, to get a release, there was no way. There was no releasing prisoners, Jewish prisoners from Auschwitz, because their goal was of destroy the Jews. And that's what they did.

So I worked in this I.G. Farben Industry, and a friend of mine was a foreman, his name is Leo Brenner, who also survived, he lives in Delaware here. And I was his assistant, and we were doing -----pipes with -----

2:21:33:00 heating. And I met a Polish civilian guy who was working during the day there, and he went home in the evening. As a civilian. He lived about 18 kilometres from there, he went by bus back and forth.

JOSEF'S
 OPD3AL And that was about August '44, when he came to me. We were very friendly, he brought me cigarettes and sometimes something to eat. They didn't have much themselves. Even so, they were free people. And he told me a story, and he said, Max, I overheard a very, very bad conversation yesterday between S.S. guys. And they were telling each other that the Russians are coming already a little closer, the Americans have landed in Normandy, and they are taking in the countries. And they are talking about soon they will open up the machine guns at the

towers and just cut us down like animals.

And so I said, well, what can we do? He says, I can take you out from the camp. I says, you must be kidding. I says, where to? So he told me he would take us to the underground, the Polish underground.

At the minute it shocked me. But on the other hand, when you open your ears, when you hear something that is freedom, the possibility of freedom, you pay any price for it.

So I said to myself, the Polish people are not that friendly towards Jews. And if one guy goes, they easily can be killed. Maybe two guys, not that easy.

So I asked him, would he take a friend along for me. He says, yeah. He was a very, very daring guy.

So I came back. Herman worked inside the camp. He had access to go in and out, because he was in charge of the roofs in the camp. He was a roofer for the camp, and he could go in and out and pick up material.

And so I told him, I got an offer like this, he cannot refuse, you don't get an offer like this. So he was a little skeptical, because it is unheard of, escaping. So he said, he wants to come out, he wants to talk to you over the fence.

So he came out one day and we stood together.

(In. Int #3)

BY MAX:

03:00:00 →

Then Herman came out, and we talked three ways. And I asked him questions, what is going to happen, and he told us that he has a contact with the underground and he will bring us there.

So we planned the day, so Herman comes out, so we picked the day, make sure the moon is out, because we had to walk a little bit.

03:01:13:12 → So we picked up a day, it was the 19th of September,

* we were put into hiding from Josef. The Polish guy's name was Josef Wrona. He put us into hiding in this workshop and he dug a hole and he put us into this hole. And he covered us up as glasswork, about three, four feet underground. 03:01:39:11

And before, I forgot to mention this, when my friend who was the foreman, in order that nothing should happen to him while I escaped from his commander, I put him into the hospital three days before, so then I took his place. So I was the foreman at that particular day.

So we came out, and we got into hiding. And 6:00 in the evening, we stopped working. And each commander, and there was umpteen of commanders there, they gathered together. Then, if everybody is there, then they marched back into the camp. And all the guys, when my commander was there, except the foreman was missing, which was me.

HIDING
IT
WORK

The whole factory was empty, and one commander didn't come in. So they yelled and screamed, what happened? What happened? So they said, the foreman isn't here. And the S.S. came out then, and we all heard that conversation, because we were right next door. We listened through the walls. It was wooden walls and slots so we could see through.

So then they took the commander in, and then came the S.S. out with dogs. And they looked us up, and were looking for us, and they couldn't find us.

→ 03:03:07:02

BY HERMAN:

But I think we have to go back a little bit before, because when Max told me about the escape, I was stunned. Because I told Max, how do you think you are going to escape from the camp? I said, I know that you know that there is very little chance for us to survive in the camp. But in an escape, unless there is a little chance, I wouldn't be so foolish as to throw my life away. Because we seen too many of them escape.

In fact, there were three good friends of ours, and they worked inside the camp. And in approximately, I think it was about June, 1944, they approached me, they worked in the camp just like I did. I was a roofer and they were concrete workers, breaking concrete workers, three fellows. If I want to escape with them. I said, how can you escape? I mean, how do you think? Oh, he said, we have a tremendous plan worked out. There

ATTEMPTED
FAILED
ESCAPE

are two Poles who are going to join us, and we going to get some pepper --

I said, are you guys crazy, I said? This plan can never work. I hope I can talk you out of it. There is no way, we have way to survive, and we have connected some Poles, they all speak Polish, and -- I said, this cannot work. And sure enough, they tried to escape. ^{03:04:29} They never got as far as maybe 500 feet outside of the wire itself, and they were caught. The Poles who were supposed to go with them turned them in to the S.S. The S.S. was waiting there with the machine gun for them. And they found the pepper on them and all this.

→ 03:04:51:00 So they were of course tortured, put in a bunker, and hung. We did not see the hanging any more. They were in a bunker. In fact, I still was in the camp. I was begged to open the window for them. And I was the only who had access. Of course, I risked my life but I didn't care. I took my ladder up there, being a roofer, and opened the window on one side, it couldn't be seen so easily, so they can breathe.

03:05:17:00 → And Max told me about the escape, I said, I would like to meet this fellow. And of course I had permission from the roll detail leader to go and talk to the inspector, because the whole camp was maintained by the I.G. Farben Industry. Even so I worked in the camp, still, we all worked for the same company.

03:05:40:00 →

So we set up a date and I go outside and talk to

Josef. And Josef tells me, just basically what Max told me. He is going to find and then he is going to pick a nice spot and so all we walk approximately once, everything works well, we are going to be getting away for between 24 and 32 hours in an area where Max works. They are going to make room in there. And then we are going to chance into, which we already arranged, the mechanic suits, and walk approximately 1 to 2 kilometres outside.

Then we will be picked up by a car and brought to the underground. I says, it sounds good, I am for it. [→] 03:06:16:00

But now we needed a few things. But before this even had been, I was commanded eight months earlier from Auschwitz to a new camp, building a new camp in a city called Glivitz, Glivitz under German. A new camp was supposed to be built by the German railroad for the eastern front, maintained by a special prison camp.

So I come out to this camp and then the friend of mind who was the valet to the new assistant commander, he says, why don't you come along, it's going to be a change, and all this stuff, you know, because I didn't really have to go. Because they could have picked another roofer. 03:07:05:00 →

I said, yeah, I come. [So I come out there and work on the roofs. And then one day, I see three girls wearing a Star of David. And me being pretty daring, and the camp wasn't finished yet, the gate was not finished and they were worked around there, and I worked on the roof.

HERMAN
MEETS
MARION

And I go down there with another roofer, and I couldn't see what they were doing. They were lifting up a heavy barrel. And I said, are you Jewish? Because it was the first time I seen worn the Star of David. Because when we came in the camp in '39, it was not in order for Jews to wear the Star of David yet. That came up later.

03:07:43 →

And my wife, this girl tells me then, well, my mother is gentile, my father is Jewish, but we have to do, we are raised Jewish and we have to do forced labor. Our forced labor consists of picking up the debris from the different army and concentration camps. You can imagine the debris. But the pigs, the German pigs, eat all of it except glass. You know, they eat all that stuff. And she was so pretty, and her sister was there and another girl.

03:08:05 →

And I said, when are you coming back? So she told me the day, for instance, a Wednesday. So every day, see, every time, they come back, I make sure I work in the area. And I told her ----- what happened in the camp, we had -- I had some information that they killed a lot of Jews already, and you know, we know not exactly figures, but it was already over a million.

And in the meantime, this guy who I met already in Sachsenhausen, this brutal S.S., Moll was his name, he is now in charge of the gas chamber, you know. And he just got a special medal, which I saw in the Nazi papers. He got a Iron Cross from Hitler and an extra star, which made him an overseer, from

gassing, the millions, the two millions Jews, I don't remember it anymore. But his name is Moll, M-o-l-l.

03:09:00:00 →

So I am working on the roof, and the inspector comes who is in charge of this new camp construction. And he says, well, you the first roofer, I want to give you the order, you do this and these and these roofs, and I will be back in about five, six weeks and inspect them and give you new orders.

I says, fine. He comes back after five, six weeks and very little is done for two reasons. First of all, the food wasn't so hot. And second of all, we didn't even get the supplies we was supposed to get.

So he tells me, why didn't you do what I tell you? He says, but he is always in civilian clothes.

And so I made a remark, I (unintelligible) civilian, you always seem very nice. And I said, you know, you can be glad that we can even stand on those roofs with the rotten food we get here.

So he says, are you Jews lying to me? And he puts his hand in his pocket and he picks out a slip. And he puts up the slip and he reads this to me. And there were about six, eight items of food which we were supposed to get in addition, from the standard German railroad company who is maintaining this camp for the skilled workers. Because it was also a top priority camp, just like our other camp was for -- always for the war.

And I kind of laughed. He said, you laughing at the

deepest quotas, (unintelligible) under the coat is a black uniform with three stars. He is an S.S. officer.

He says, you mean to tell me you laugh and you never get this kind of food?

And I said, I have now over four and a half years in the camp and I have never seen that. You know, like 30 grams of butter every other week and 300 grams (unintelligible) every week and extra, all extra in addition to our food was six, seven items.

He said, now I realize what I have done. And I said, but I beg your pardon, please make no pardons for me. So he walks, boiling mad. And I see he goes toward the kitchen. And the kitchen, of course, is led by an S.S. leader who takes care of the whole kitchen.

So he goes in there and there is a big argument, but I went nowhere near, because I worked on the roof. But my friend, who is the valet to the assistant commander now, who is in charge of the camp temporarily, he heard this big disagreement, big discussion in there. So he wouldn't walk direct in there where they are.

He stays on the outside. But he heard something about a Jew, a prisoner, that you believe him, and all kinds of stuff, you know. And then this guy, this S.S. inspector asks to see where this special food is kept. Because when you divide 30 grams butter times, at this time there must have been 2,000,

3,000 prisoners in the camp, we just building camp, it is still a tremendous amount. Everything times 3,000.

It always comes in to hundreds of pounds. He said, I have no authority to show you anything, and then you show me papers that make me show you anything. You don't belong to the camp. And that guy was boiling mad.

And now he said, you will hear more from me, when I get to Berlin.

Now, my friend walks in and this guy is on the phone, S.S. leader. He calls Bergenau, Moll. Because Moll is the original commandant of this camp. He is also temporary commandant, to be the gas meister there, you know, they changing over constantly.

And he said, listen, Moll, what I heard from my friend, because I had no idea, he said, Moll, we have a prisoner here, he is an old prisoner, he is commanded from another camp. He is a roofer here and did this guy make us problems. He tells this inspector from the Lindt, from the Reichhaus (unintelligible), you know, about all the food they were supposed to get.

And this food is for him and Moll. Sold on the black market or whatever, you know, butter was gold in Germany.

He says, you got to take care of this guy before he gets back. Or before he even gets to Berlin. I don't know, whatever he said.

So my friend tells me, you have only one choice, one chance. Indeed, I don't even know if this chance is good, he said. They will be transferred back to the main camp. I don't even know if this will help you, because you are stupid, he said, how can you talk to S.S.?

We are prisoners, and this is S.S. And they sticking to themselves, not to us. But now I have to ask this temporary leader to get transferred back in the camp. And what can I tell him?

I cannot tell him any -- you know, I am not supposed to know anything about gas, even though we know about gas. But you are not, if you talk about anybody, especially S.S., you are dead. You do not know that gassing existed.

But he liked me because I was a good worker and I never had any disciplinary action against me, you know, and I am excellent worker.

So he said, why do you want to be transferred back in the camp, you know? And I dragged and dragged, what am I going to tell him? I cannot say I am hungry or anything like that, he will order extra food over there, well, you know -- but I said, commander, I am supposed to be gassed.

He said, what? He said, what do you know about gas? Do you know, I can take my gun and shoot you readily?

I said, I know you can. Who told you this? And now I had to hope. I said, my friend Heidi would back me up. So he

called him, and he said, what transpired here?

And luckily, he told him. He said, I was in the kitchen picking up your food, and he -- that guy, he trusted like a son. You know, he was made from a Jew to an Aryan, that was a special action in the camp. You know, these are all different things.

And I said, he said, commander, I picked up your food, and here I heard the chief inspector getting into a big argument with the chief of the kitchen.

He said, come. And we both, and this guy is six feet some tall, and you know, we are short. And he runs in the kitchen and this S.S. leader reports, now, this is now the commander, even though he is temporary, but the commander.

And he tells him what they are cooking, you know, garbage and so for the prisoners and the (unintelligible) for the troops. He said in German, (unintelligible), shut up, he said, I am not interested in what you are cooking. He said, I tell you one thing. If anything happens to these prisoners while I am reporting to the main camp, because unfortunately two prisoners run away, and tried it this evening in the camp.

I mean, they didn't try to run away, they just tried to kill themselves, a couple of days later they were found again.

But the commander has to report to the main commander, and most of the time they don't send them back. They say, the prisoners, if you cannot guard the prisoners with the

troops you got, then you should be on the eastern frontier fighting the Russians.

So this guy in the kitchen, he said, if it's the last thing I do, I get you and Moll with me to the eastern frontier. While we are present.

Now, this is the real S.S. talking, and he tries to protect me. But he is going at night, and I figured, you know, the camp wasn't ready yet.

And I said, if they coming now and call you, you have to go. But if you make one step outside the door they shoot you, because you escaping, trying to escape. Luckily, nothing happened.

03:15:54:26 → HERMAN TELLS MARION TO WRITE
So a few days later the girl I met comes again, and I said,

"I'm ordered to be transferred back to the main camp. I wish I can receive a letter from you once in a while or a card. And tell me right away if I have any false hope, if you will write or not."

She said she will write.

I am back in the main camp, back on my job. Max tells me about our escape, and I agree to this. I never -- I forgot this girl already because I haven't heard nothing from her. And one day before, one night before our escape, I get an order in the camp to appear before the camp Gestapo, which is the most dangerous thing that can happen to a prisoner. You are only called before them if something extraordinary bad happened,

because they are above everything, because it is the top security. They are only responsible to the commandant himself.

But while I still talked to this girl I met, she asked me, when I come back before, when we still could talk, there is a (unintelligible) from the area and they think they came to the concentration camp, to Auschwitz, if I can find out about him. His name is Werner Pick.

And now, when I come, as soon as I came back to the camp, I asked my friend in the secretary's office. And he became diarrhea, and when you get diarrhea, any contagious disease, you will be shipped in the gas.

03:12:30:19 → So now, the card comes one day before our escape, and Max comes in the evening. I said, Max, I got to go to the political (unintelligible) tomorrow, you know?

He said, did you talk to anybody about our escape? I said, you crazy, but you know, somebody can dream about it, and some friends or our comrades got to report you, or they hang him too. Because then they are --they know about your escape.

03:17:57 → Anyway, we both, of course, were shaking. I got there and the S.S. leader tells me right away, who is Werner P.? And I saw a card. I didn't see what it was, you know. And I said, Werner P. used to be a comrade of mine, but I could know he was transferred to another camp, not the reason, but he was transferred to another camp. This you can know.

He asked somebody from his office to corroborate, and it was true. If I need any more information, I will call you. I mean, I was so lucky, but anyway, he -- but now our escape was set this day.

03:18:36:00 →

And I walked out of the camp to the guards many times by permission, but we needed one thing. Max smuggled most of the stuff out. He goes to work in the morning with 1800 prisoners. The chance that they be searched is very slim, unless there is a suspicious to search a special command.

03:18:54:00

But me, going singlehanded out of the camp, I can always be searched. But what we needed more than anything was a first-aid kit. Like we are the old prisoners, we have lots of connections. Other prisoners. And there was a prisoner in the camp who was the secretary of the hospital, a prisoner, his name was Stefan Hyman. Unfortunately, we didn't meet him any more. He became East German ambassador to Hungary after the war. I said, Stefan, I need a first-aid kit. You don't need a first-aid kit unless - he knew right away what for.

03:19:19:12 →

He said, oh, you are looking for a change of air? I said, yes. Though I think, I don't know if he asked me who is going with me, whatever, maybe he didn't, he don't want to get involved.

He said, I am going to get you a first aid kit, but not until you leave. You can come two hours before you leave, one hour, but he said, I don't have to tell you anything else.

So I pick up the first aid kit and I picked up a pocketknife, you know, anyway, he said, I don't have to tell you that I don't want to see you back alive.

I said, you will never see us back alive. Not by choice, because we know what is waiting for us here.

→ 0320:10:28

Now I am coming to the gate, to the main gate. And in the morning, approximately 10:00, I picked the time because the -- we appeased the big S.S., always go inspection. You know, our camp was in charge of about 25 or 30 supporting camps around this area, where this commandant from our camp and the leader of the camp makes inspections.

So they leave the second and third S.S. in command. So now I am on the gate, and of course, the first aid kit was put in my pants, you get bigger pants, and all the other things I smuggled out, trying to. There are two, three, and I didn't even like who was there, but you will have no idea who will, because of them are nice and some of them are easier to deal with than others. So I stay about four feet away from him, and I said, the way, you know, hat off and attention, prisoner 7196, which is the permission to go into the factory.

He cannot give me permission. My permission is granted by the role detail leader, which he has on a huge sheet. But to make him feel better, you ask his permission. So he looks up the card there and he looks me over there and he says, are you coming back?

I mean, it was something that, luckily, I didn't get shot, because always he couldn't know, he wouldn't know, and I couldn't tell him. I said, and he had only one star and two stripes, which makes him the lowest, you know. I mean, not the lowest, but not very high.

So it was a common practice by the prisoners to promote them with an extra star and made them feel better. So I approached him and I say, having one more star, like he is the (unintelligible) now, you see.

03:22:16:00 →

I said, (unintelligible), why wouldn't I come back? You are all so nice to us and we have good food here. And so he said, but don't come back some late. You guys are supposed to be counted at least a half an hour before the main commands come back into the camp.

→ 03:22:30:00

I said, yes, sir. But then from my experience, sometimes they make you believe and you walk, and after the walk being 300 or 400 feet, they call you back. And then he said,

END OF TAPE 3

BEGIN TAPE 4:

because this I don't think is much of interest anyway, the russians coming --

MAX: No, no, we didn't say that, no.

HERMAN; Yes, I'm sure we did. It was all cut off.

ANN: Oh, I remember that. After you escaped and they came to the house where you were? And they wanted to watch.

Josef came, food, mechanics suit.
Evening, he returned.
Crawled toward fence. Guard saw them. Left.

Kept crawling,

Josef snipped

Wires.

04:03:28:21

MAX: Oh, yes --

ANN: Yes, and I want to, afterwards I want to go back and also ask about some of the things in the camp. Wait, let's go.

BY HERMAN;

She didn't care about me. The only thing I was saved was, because if I would have gotten shot, the bullet always, they would have gotten into her. You know, you can't shoot somebody if another prisoner --

MAX: Maybe, maybe there's a ghost for your body.

HERMAN; Never. Never.

ANN: So Max, we will start with you again.

MAX: With the escape?

ANN: Yes.

BY MAX:

So we selected the time and the place where Josef was hiding us,. and Herman came out and he went into a barn, sort of a little barn or barrack. And Josef had prepared for us, he dug a hole and he jumped in there and he covered us with (unintelligible). And he gave us some coffee, a thermosbottle of coffee, and food. And then came, we heard the commotion outside, all the commanders marched in except my commander, I was working and leading at that one day.

So then the S.S. came and took him, and the S.S. came with dogs and looking for us and they didn't find us. So this --the factory, the fence was not electric loaded. During the day, they

had the S.S. patrolling the fences. In the evening, when we all marched back into the camp, then they went away.

So it was not a prison factory. It was a factory for many, many people who worked, not only us, there were Ukraines, Polacks, they even had English POWs, who were taken in as prisoners of war, they put them to work there.

So then they didn't find us, so they marched in and we stayed there the night. ^{04:02:19:00 →} The next morning, Josef came and he brought us something to eat. And we had a mechanic suit, put on the mechanic suit and a hat, because we had a cap, we had no hair. So then Josef said, he is coming back in the evening when it gets dark.

So in the evening he did come back. He dug us out from the hole. And we crawled on our bellies out towards the fence. As we were on our bellies crawling, there was all of a sudden in front of us stood a guy. Must have been some supervisor of some kind, not an S.S. man, an S.S. man in uniform or anything. And he just looked, I guess he must have been afraid we were three and he was only one. So he just went away. And we kept crawling through the fence. And we reached a fence, and Josef had a pair of pliers in his pocket. He snipped the wires big enough that we all three got through the hole. → 04:03:28:21

As we are outside, and then I noticed somehow Josef, the change on his face, I think he realized now what he did. And he got scared for his own image. So he tells us he will march 50

ARU
FENCE

metres ahead of us. He will not go with us, and we follow him.

That already irked us a little bit, but we had to rely completely on him. So we going a little bit, and all of a sudden a bright light comes up. And there was a few automobiles came by, and we were hiding behind trees. And we saw in the first car was the main commandant from Auschwitz driving by → 4:04:15:21

ON ROAD,
COMMANDANT
CAR

So the cars disappeared and it got pitch dark again, and Josef was leading us to a country road. And then we ask him the question, we were supposed to be picked up by a car or truck, and he says, no, it did not work that way. We will walk to his house, which was 18 kilometres. And he kept marching in front of us, and we in back of him. And little roads, not like highways we know here. And left and right, little ranches, and the dogs are barking, people woke at nighttime.

So we march and march, and all of a sudden way ahead of us, 04:05:01:02 → JOSEF GETS STOPPED we saw Josef stopped. And some guy was in uniform with a rifle over his shoulder, and stopped him. And looked him up with a flashlight. And we saw Josef reaching his hand into his pocket, and he must have produced an ID of some time. And he told him, go ahead.

So we stopped, we didn't go then. So then Herman said, what are we going to do? So I says, what do you mean what are we going to do? We got to go on. And what about if he going to stop us? So we talked like little kids, we going to kill him. With what? With our 10 fingers, so -- because Josef kept going,

he didn't stop. 04:06:09:00 → ^{THEY} GET STOPPED BY SOLDIER

So we go on, the same way. And sure enough, stop, who is there? And this soldier comes towards us. He was from the aircraft, the antiaircraft station was there. So he takes a flashlight, he me up from top to bottom, and he takes the flashlight and shines Herman up from top to bottom. And he says, maybe, due to the mechanic suit we wore, are you working down below in the factory? And we said, yes. He says, keep going. If he would have asked us for the ID there, that would have already been the end for us.

So now Josef kept going, and then we start running and running until we finally caught up with him, and we three hugged each other and kissed each other. We went over one hurdle, a big hurdle. And he found us again.

So then the same thing happened again. He marched in front of us and we marched in back of him. And march. And from then on, he kept looking all the time back. Left and right, forwards and backwards.

04:07:20:00 → COP ON BIKE / WATER

We marched and marched and by looking, all of a sudden way in the back I see a tiny little light. And when you see a light, then you keep looking more often. This little light gets always a little bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger, and it came so close that we saw that there was a cop on a bicycle. And those country roads, they have those runoff ditches on the sides. And we throw us on the sides into it, and luckily they were full of

water. So we duck under the water. Head up and head down, head up and down.

And that cop got off the bicycle just where we were, right there. And he takes his flashlight and he shines around the area, and luckily he didn't see us. He went back on his bicycle and he drove back.

So then we kept walking and walking, and we finally, way in the morning hours, we reached the house where Josef lived. At that time it was (unintelligible), a city, a little city, a little village of (unintelligible). And he had a house in the front. There was something like a country store and a barn in the back, and this is where he put us, in the barn. We went ^{04:08:15:00 → UP TO LOFT IN BARN} upstairs and you know barns, they have a big opening where they throw up the bales of hay, and with a ladder to get there.

And the first thing Herman did, he pulled in the ladder so nobody has access through the ladder. There was access to go upstairs to the barn, you had to go inside and crawl through a chicken coop and then through the coop you reached the top. And there was a false door there, and this is how -- so I guess we must have slept for 48 hours straight, that tired.

JOSEF GOES
TO WORK

→ 04:08:53:05 And Josef had to work the next day, like if nothing has happened. So two days later -- and then my friend Leo Werner, I communicated with him through Josef. He sent regards to us and then a couple, three days later, Josef comes home and he tells us ^{→ 04:09:07:00 → HIMMLER LETTER} that Leo told him the night before they all the inmates had to

come outside on a roll call, and a letter was written to them in case Schine and Dumar are being caught, they will be hung up in front of you here, signed, Heinrich Himmler.

That was the letter from Himmler. And I don't have to say we are lucky, never caught, because otherwise we wouldn't be sitting here. So then after a few days we asked Josef, hey, what happened, you are supposed to come to -- going to the partisans. And he says, no, Max, the partisans got beaten in deeper into the mountains by the Germans, they had to retreat, and he lost the connection with the partisans.

So I says, what is going to happen now? He says, well, you will stay here. I asked him once the story, why you really doing that?

So he told us a story, I think it was a little wishy washy, the -- over Auschwitz area the English airforce flew there and they dropped bombs and they also dropped medical and food for the undergrounds in the mountains to pick up. And apparently one time they misjudged to dropping off, and the English airforce dropped off a bunch of radios, those radios where you pick up shortwave and longwave. And apparently, so he says, he picked them up and some of the underground members saw him handing it over to the German police. And they sentenced him to death for this, but not during the war, after the war.

So he pleaded with them, no, he is not, he didn't give it to them. We really didn't get a clear picture from him, which

was immaterial to us. So he says, I going to prove you that I am not a traitor. So the deed he did is take us out. That was his version to us. He took us out because we been in there for many years, we had a lot of knowledge what was going on in Sachsenhausen and in Auschwitz. So this is what we believe, the reason why he picked us out.

04:11:41:00 →

But when you think about it, the Polacks are not friendly towards the Jews, he knows we were Jewish people, he did not get paid for this job he did. He fed us for four months in his home, and I don't have to tell you, food was a rarity and everybody was on ration. They had very little to eat except potatoes, I guess, that was the biggest food they got.

And on top of this, his mother lived there, he had a mother and sister and a brother. His brother was 14 and his sister was 16. And they all knew, they saw us, they knew we sleeping upstairs. Because not every evening, but once in awhile we went downstairs in the evening, then we ate there and we washed us a little bit, as much as you can wash yourself, there are no baths or showers, there was none existing there.

04:12:40:29 →

So then one day, I popped the question to him. I says, Josef, I know a girl in Berlin. Would you mind writing a letter to her? Can I send a letter? No, here, give it to me, I put it in the mailbox.

04:13:07:00 →

But we felt extremely insecure in the barn. And for some reason, we got a little bit suspicious of Josef, too. Suspicious

we got because he promised us, we knew the place we were at, at the haybarn, is nothing permanent, and it cannot go good to stay there on a more permanent base. And he was stalling and stalling.

So we said, you got to find a different way for us. He said, I can find other ways, but the other ways involve papers. You need photos to get any false papers made. And we had another friend from the camp who escaped one month before, but he had connections with a German who worked at the camp as a civilian who brought him out.

But we knew his address, and Joseph communicated under his name with him. And they arranged one day that this -- this is how I remember it, that this German must have brought our friend out, brought him a civilian suit and some food from Berlin. And he said, if he wouldn't mind taking us to Berlin, but we also need papers, you know.

But now, we had this thing, we both had the same figure then. So Max put this suit on, Josef told us where the photographer is. Max has his picture taken, and told the photographer, my brother will pick it up in a few days.

Max comes back, I put the suit on, I did the same thing. Take the bicycle, go there, told them my sister picks it up, you know. ON the way coming back, a German gendarme rides next to me, and he addresses me in Polish. and I spoke only five or 10 words Polish then which we picked up, not enough for

conversation.

I told him, I speak German. Oh, he says, oh, you speak German? How come you speak German, you are not in the army? You are young enough and all of this, you know? So I told him, I am an officer in the German army, and whatever I read in the paper, you know, some of them died and so, and I says, I am at the eastern frontier, I am on a furlough. But I don't live in this vilage, I live in the next one, I told him.

Oh, he says, he believed it so he said, thank you, in German, good luck, comrade.

And I talked with this guy, and this is what the brother, the genius remembered. He wrote us in Polish and we translated it, I didn't even know he witnessed this. Now, when I talked to the German gendarme, I misplaced or I misjudged our area where our haybarn was. I took it wrong apparently two, three times.

And the Germans imported many Ukrainians to spy on the population and give them police power.

They worn a headband, an armband, which says assistant police, carried a gun, and they had identification. He had his

jacket open and he called me in broken German, but enough German to understand. Halt, he said, stop. Identification.

Fortunately, I was ready for most situations. I standing between my bicycle and while he had the gun, he did not pull it. The hoster was closed. But I put my hands in the pocket and simulated the gun. I wish I had one, because obviously I would

TOPPED
BY
UKRAINIAN

04:15:56:26 →

have shot, because that was the situation which I thought I couldn't get out. And I said to him in German, in High German which I only spoke then, and I said, you SOB, you dare to ask a German officer from the eastern front for papers? You Ukrainian pig, because I know what he was from speaking, you know, and I know whom he brought in.

04.16.52.15 And he said, I beg your pardon, I made such a mistake.

Please don't shoot me. And he took off. I didn't where he took off to, so I couldn't dare, it happened directly in front of our haybarn. He was in the back. And Max upstairs heard the entire conversation, not the words but the noise going on.

But the brother of Josef witnessed this, which I didn't know. He took off and I waited a little while until I go in. And I go inside, and of course I told Max what had transpired. He could hardly believe. He said, did the guy see you come in here? I said, obviously, if he would have seen he would have contacted the S.S., you know, and they would have circled the place right away.

So anyway, a few days later, they picked up the pictures and we asked Josef for an idea that we had, also, Josef, in case of an emergency, Josef, where are we going to go? There was no help coming from Berlin, we got the letter or a little card every couple of weeks or every week a postcard from our friend in Berlin. The sister would write. And Josef said, in case of emergency, at the end of the village lives my future father-

in-law. His name is Dombrowski. We already forget the name, but he refreshed our memory, the brother.

And I said, does Dombrowski know about us? He said, yes, he will help you. Of course, we thought maybe it's good enough. Of course, in the meantime, Max wrote this letter.

BY MAX:

So I asked him if he would mind sending a letter to me to Berlin, because I knew what my wife is today, I knew her before I was arrested. (unintelligible) Jewish youth group, and we met in different places. And I had an eye on her at that time, and there was kids. But somehow the address was printed in my brain for all those years.

04:18:55:00 →

So he says, yes. So I wrote a letter to her, and she answered immediately. She was happy to hear from me, not as a boyfriend and a girlfriend, just somebody is there from the group left over so far.

But anyhow, to circumstances in Berlin, my wife went to a place and the Gestapo was there. And they took her, she went inside, and they confiscated her handbag. And in this handbag they found a letter from me with address from Josef's place.

104:19:25:23 →

So two days later in the morning, Herman wakes me up. And he says, Max, Max, look down below. So we could see through the wooden slots from the barn up there, there was eight S.S. and the three dogs. And the leader of the gang says, go hunt, look for them. And again, I have to tell you, they didn't find us or we

gestapo
finds MAX'S
letter to
Herta.

X
↓

wouldn't be here. They had no access to come upstairs, because Herman pulled in the ladder when he got there four months ago. And they didn't know the trapdoor that you had to go through the chicken coop.

GESTAPO
COME

TO
BARN

04:20:00:00 → But also, the mother of JOsef and the sister and the brother, they were there. And they threatened them by pointing the guns at them, where are the two Jews Josef took out from the camp? They easily could have pointed, they are up there, and they never gave us away. They were kids.

So then all the officers they looked and looked and didn't find nothing. I told Herman, I says, well, that's the end of our life, and he said, no, don't worry, don't worry. He was a little more optimist than I was. I mean, when you see them down there, what do you think of? That's the end of you. So after awhile we heard them saying, oh, there must be another Vronner in this village. Let's go. 04:21:02:00 →

So they went away. A little bit later, I don't know how long, all of a sudden the brother and the sister come upstairs to us, running, Max and Herman, you got to get away from us, you got to go away from us. The Gestapo is here, they want to shoot everybody. If they would have found us there, they would have shot that whole village there. They would have taken everybody, no question. ← 04:21:24:11

So then we remembered four months ago when Josef us when we asked him, you are not here all day, you go to work, what happens

if something happened during the day, and that day was now. So we went to this place and we found the place, and we knocked on the door. And Polish we couldn't speak, I couldn't converse in Polish. So a guy opened up the door, and he was afraid. We spoke German. He figured we were Gestapo or something, even so we were dressed like bums. The rats ate up part of our mechanic suits already.

So we told them that we are supposed to come here and wait for Josef Vronner, and when he heard that name Josef Vronner, he remembered there must be some similarity in it involved. So he took us in. And it was a family with, I don't remember, three or four kids, a husband a wife. And in Poland, you know, everything happens in one room. Sleep and eating, and it gets 7:00, 8:00 and 9:00 and we don't hear nothing from Joseph.

So I told the old man, I says, why don't you send one of your kids over and see what happened to Josef? So they send the son or the daughter over there, and came back in no time, it was a short walking distance, and he said, well, Josef is in bed and sleeps. I said, you must be kidding. What a guts this guy has. So I said, send him back and tell him if he doesn't come, we will come back to his house. To scare him, maybe.

So they went back, and he came back, he says, he is coming early in the morning, four or five o'clock of so. IN the meantime, what we heard then is, when Josef went by bus to work every day, back and forth, and just before his bus stop came, he

looked at the bus and he saw eight S.S. men there with the three dogs. And he knew they come only for one reason, for me. So in the bus must have been all full of Polacks. And he climbed through the window in back of the bus out, and the S.S. went into the bus and asked everybody for their IDs, and they didn't see no Josef Vronner in there, and they stood in the bus and took off with the bus and left.

So then Josef came the next morning. And he says, well, there is an uncle, some way he will bring us, and he has access to the partisans. In the meantime, HERman got very sick. He had high fever and the shivers, and it was high snow. And we walked and I had to drag him and push him. And I barely made it with him.

So we come to that place, I says, this is it. He says, wait outside. I says, you must be kidding. We cannot wait outside. So they also had a barn there. So he says okay, go inside. So inside there was a barn full of bales of hay and people working in there. They cutting up the bales. And we were hiding behind a bunch of bales, and they were taking one after another one. And they almost reached to the one where they would have found us there. Then Josef comes in and he takes us out. And he says, Max, even this guy lost the contact with the partisans, because they were also chased deeper into the mountains.

04:25:11:25 → He says, this is the end of the road. So I said to him, do us just one more favor. Bring us to the nearest train station

JOSEF CAN'T HELP

MAY ASKS FOR 2 TICKETS TO GLEIWITZ

← 04:25:25:16

62

and buy us two tickets to Gleiwitz. This is where (unintelligible) wife, this girl he knew, it wasn't his wife then, lived.

BY HERMAN:

This is where, after so many years, we remembered a little bit different. And this is where Josef will come in to clarify it. The way I remember is, Josef was supposed to come. He never did. Only his future father-in-law came. And when his future father-in-law came, he says, Max said to him, where's Josef, he was supposed to come with us. He said, Josef cannot come any more. The S.S. surrounded the place and shot him, killed him.

This is how we knew, how we assumed he was dead, because this is why we thought he was dead. I never believed it, because we were not too far away. I figured, if they would have shot Josef, they would have got ahold of us instantly, we were only a few kilometres away from there.

But now, the man -- we could not go back to find out, obviously, and we ask him where the railroad station is. It was approximately four in the morning. But Max says, there is no way to go for us any other place any more, because we have no more help from Josef, we don't speak the language, we have no papers, we look worse than ever before. We may as well kill ourselves right here.

And even so, I had the flu or whatever I had, luckily I got fast over it, I said, Max, if we go up and hang ourselves on the

rafters, I don't even have the strength to go up there. We don't even have a rope, we have to look for a rope quite awhile. So we both started to laughing, like you have a laugh, like your last laugh.

But I said, Max, I tell you what we going to do. We going to close off our lives right now. What we do is, if we are lucky enough to get two tickets and reach this city Gleiwitz, where the girl I told you I met in the camp, if she is still there, still alive, if we should be able to get some help, we take it. If not, we jump off, right there, off the roof.

Should we have any problem to reach any of it, we will fight ourselves against anyone until they kill us, because we know there is no way to get back alive. We agreed on this completely, because in the camp we knew what was waiting for us.

04:28:04:00

Now, we were very fortunate because we got the tickets and we got to the train station. And we saw it, five o'clock in the morning, this is 90 kilometres, we should easily reach the city in two hours. In two hours, we hadn't traveled 30kilometeres and it had begun already to be daylight. They look(unintelligible)

and finally, this main city where we wanted to go, Gleiwitz, we would be there after ten o'clock. We come to the city, we walk,

we ask a couple of people on the street where this particular street is, (unintelligible) , it was -- today it is

(unintelligible) Polish. They give us a direction and now we

04:28:37:24

Reach
Gleiwitz.
Ask direction
to street.

walk down the street.

64
HERMAN SEES
FRIEND ON ST.

And earlier, when I went the first time, commanded from Auschwitz as a prisoner to this camp, I brought another prisoner along with me, whom I taught to be a roofer. And we walking down the street now, and here I saw three, two prisoners in uniform and behind them two S.S. guards, and all four knew me very, very well. And I said, Max, this is Oscar. And he almost reached, us, when I almost thought he discovered us. He would never giving us away, even so, he knew I escaped and he even told the girl I met, Marian, he said, we escaped. But just seeing us, (unintelligible) and our luck was he had such a thick glasses. So he told us, the guy to cross the street, given him a signal to cross the street short before us.

04:29:05:15
→

04:29:52:04 So now we reach the street and we come there. I didn't reemember the number any more, but the anti-Semites put the Star of David in front of the building, and I figured --

END OF TAPE 4

TAPE 5:

BY MAX:

If you remember back the day our escape was planned, and Herman was called to the camp Gestapo, and the same day we escaped. So our thoughts were figuring this: The car came from Marian Schlesinger, and we escaped that they might check with them. So

we didn't really believe that if we ever to Gleiwitz that they ever be there, still there. That was part of the reason why we finished up our life.

So we were lucky enough to get tickets and go on the train, but we had to transfer, the big transfer point station. The train did not go straight to Gleiwitz from the village we had left at. And we got off this train station, that was a station, a heavy transfer point for the German soldiers going down to the Russian front. And every civilian person was checked by a special S.S. Elite, they walked on the train station back and forth. And they had a special shield in front of them. And we had to wait for the train. And we looked like the biggest bums. And we kept walking, and tried to avoiding them. They stopped this person and this person.

And then all of a sudden we hear over the microphone, the train is rolling in within the next few minutes. ^{05:02:22:00 →} And at this time, those two guards, S.S. men, they come straight to us. They must have been maybe 10 or eight foot in front of us, walking right towards us. And like I says, God sent somebody again. There is a guy crossing our path between us and then, and they stopped him and asked him for ID. And that gave us a chance to go away. And the train rolled into the station, and we got in on the train. There's another hair of death we escaped.

→ 05:02:56:00

BY HERMAN;

05:03:00:00 -

So now we are in front of the building, and apparently the anti-Semites must have put the Star of Davids in front of the building. So we figures, Jews must be living here. So we go inside. So Max says, you must be very diplomatic. I said, I cannot be diplomatic, I have to see first if they are still alive, because always (unintelligible) could have happened.

So we walk upstairs, they lived on the second floor, we knock on the door, and Marian's sister opened the door. And she said -- and I said, can we talk to Marian Schlesinger, please? That's the only person I knew. She said, my sister is at work. Already, a stone fell off my breast. I said, can I talk to your mother, please? Just a minute.

So she goes in, and the mother learned a profession, she had to work as a secretary for a huge company. And she was just a couple of days sick. And she figured, the name of the company was Augustine, he sent somebody, some mechanics to find out how she was, because she was a very valued employee. The mother said, let them come in. So we both come in. And she said, you don't work for Augustine. What are you doing here? How do you know my daughter?

I said, well, I worked in the -- Mrs. Schlesinger, I don't know what's wrong with you, you know, she was laying on the couch, already she was sick. Oh, she said, there's nothing special wrong with me, I got something in my foot, because I

figured she might have a heart condition, she might get a heart attack if I tell her who we really are. I said, I worked in the area, I still didn't tell her I was a prisoner, I worked in the area from Auschwitz. She said, young man, you must tell me the truth or leave my house right away. My daughter never worked in the area from Auschwitz.

05:04:51: →

Then I said, I figured now I have to tell her, then I said, I was transferred, commanded from Auschwitz to build the new camp in Gleiwitz as a roofer. And then she knew already about me. And she said, oh, you are the roofer who was singing on the roof? I always used to sing, you know, all these camp songs and all that. And my daughter talked about you and everything. I said, yes. She said, is the police after you? I said, no. I mean, the police was after us 24 hours before, you know, but not now. anything was possible. ← 05:05:22:23

Funny

It really was our only help, because obviously there was nothing else left for us, you know. But the wonderful thing is this person, like I told you, the mother is Gentile, the father is Jewish, and she was the one who really had to say yes or no. She never hesitated one split second not to help us. ← 05:05:44:29

Instantly she said to the father, he should do these and these things. The father was a lawyer, you know, and then he had some clients which he defended previously, and although, but he said maybe it would be better if Augustine, the guy she worked for, was a socialist, and they know he did a lot of the Jewish

people, even so he was a German.

So he asked Augustine, and Augustine said there is no question I give them ^{a job} protect them too. But they need papers. Without papers I cannot have them. So the father went to another guy, client, he -- before, and he name was Sauer, Adolf Sauer, he was a former representative of the German Reichstag. And a Communist. And the father defended him, so he got a few years jail and then he got out. So he said, Sauer, you know, you owe me one. He said, what can I do for you, Schlesinger?

He said, I have two guys who escaped from Auschwitz. He said, Schlesinger, say no more. I am hiding 18 Jews since the beginning of the war. I have room for two heroes like this any time. ← 05:06:56:29

So this Sauer with his connection knew a German industrialist, his name was Schmoslich, and he talked to Schmoslich, but the man was busy. He had a so-called job, even though he was a multimillionaire, to do something for the war. So he was the chauffeur for the commander of the police in eastern Germany there.

So the man, he says, the Russians, by that time it was now the middle, almost the middle of January '45, he said, 05:07:30:23 Schmoslich, the Russians going to come soon, and your villa and your riches will stay with you if you shield these two guys, because this is just what the Russians are waiting for, for guys like these, and especially when they are saved.

He says, no question, they can get to the villa. So they arranged in the meantime the girls, this girl I met, of course, she became my wife, got two sisters, they cleaned us up. At first we took showers, but that was so dangerous for them to be there, for us, because there was another family living with them on the floor, using the same toilets. And we had to sleep all in one room, stay in one bed, practically never leave the room. It was even pleasure for us, even the most pleasuring time, if you can call it, of anything, because we had a lot of discussions.

So anyway, my wife didn't come home from work yet, it was all during the day. *05:08:39* → So he consulted now this Schmoslich and that it was arranged with the bus, we go to this special area about 30 kilometre outside of Gleiwitz in a villa. And the father, the father who became eventually my faather-in-law, he said, you know, we living on food stamps, and we going to split everything with you. We don't have very much, but you will not starve. So whatever we have, we split.

So now we come to this villa. And the lady, the owner of the villa, Mrs. Schmoslich, says, anything in this villa is at your disposal. She showed us around. There was so much food there. And we already thought of ways where we can send food to the Schlesingers, to the people there, because the four could have lasted five more years, they had enough to eat. They had a huge, huge ranch with hundreds of glasses of food, you know, set already in -- everything you can even think of was there.

*Schmoslich
arranges for
them to go
to villa.*

So anyway, we were there, and only with the housekeeper we lived there. And he told the housekeeper, he said, we are two mechanics who are working for him, and we are going to do all kinds of installation, but don't tell anybody in the city or in the village, because no work, private work has to be performed during the war or everybody gets in trouble.

She said no, she will not talk. So we lived with the housekeeper, who was of course a little older, you know, and we lived wonderful for approximately eight to ten days, when you heard all kinds of movements going. It was now about 25th, 26th of January, '45. And there was only another huge shepherd, who was also underground, guarding everything. We could never get friends with him. And the door, the bell rings on one gate and she, Josephka was her name, she goes out. And she comes back to us, and she said, an obersturmführer of the Gestapo, his name is Soltow, he claims to be a friend of the owner, and he is on his way of the (unintelligible) and he needs shelter for overnight. His motorcycle broke down.

Max says right away, don't let him in. I said, what are you talking? You must let him in. The guy will shoot his way in, let him in. And I say, how old is he? Oh, she says, he's probably in his sixties. I said, let him in. But I told her, I said, we ^{gonna} ~~cannot~~ sleep again in the barn of the chauffeur, they have no chauffeur now. And in the morning, we are going to come circle the villa, that we haven't been here before, we just

GESTAPO
COMMANDER
ARRIVES
AT VILLA

05:10:29:09

coming from the city. don't tell him that we are here, lady.

She said, no, she probably must have known something now was not completely kosher.

5:11:25:26 → So in the morning we come, we come into the villa, and here sits a man, (unintelligible) on the table, and a gun here and a gun here. Of course, we were trained in the concentration camp to have a thousand eyes. So Max walked to the right side, I walked to the left side, just close to the guns. anything goes wrong, we are possession of the guns, not him.

AST W/
ESTAPO So the guy speaks to us in Ppolish, but we don't speak Polish. So we say, German. We give him the same story as before, you know. The only thing is, we didn't tell him that we are soldiers this time. We tell him we are working for Sauer. And we said, Sauer is a good friend of mine, too. He is an S.S., this is a communist, but things like this happen. Not every S.S. was a killer, youknow, and not every guy works in the concentraation camp. Some of them worked in the administration. And some of them even were help us, even this very unlikely, but it is possible. Even in the assassination of Hitler in '44, a bunch of S..S. was connected with. So not every S.S. was a killer, you know.

So anyway, when he says he still has to go back to this town because he has to notify his family, and then I said, now we knew, we also need someone, we also have to go back because we need papers. He promised to bring in our papers. and Josefka

says, without papers you cannot stay here any longer. And he says, what, these are (unintelligible) my friend, I (unintelligible) exactly what we wanted. I vouch for those men.

Because we figured, if the Nazis come back, he might help us. If the Russians come back, we couldn't care less. But now he says, we need something, we got to back urgently, so I said, I go with him. He puts his guns up, and I took the bike and we got a bike so we going. So we go approximately 2 kilometres and now you see thousands of prisoners being evacuated from Auschwitz to the west. And the S.S. shoots them left and right.

And my eyes starting to tears, getting tears in, you know? And he says, what's the matter with you, are you crying or what?

Oh, I says, the wind is very strong in my eyes, because I knew, these were all comrades of ours. And we were by no way free yet, because in the next few minutes, we could be just as dead, you know.

Anyway, he stops the first tank, a German tank, and he says, I want to go to Hindenberg, a city close by, where his family apparently lived. You go to Hindenberg, he said, the Ivan is waiting for you. Ivan was Russians. So he was all upset, and of course I was already shaking, I was waiting for the Russians.

So we come back to our villa, and we said, Mr. So and So, you should destroy all your papers you have, everything, especially photos and so forth.

How can I, he -- I said, you should. If the Russians come,

like Ride
Gestapo

↑
15:13:45:15

they are going to kill all of us. I mean, we couldn't care less for him, we just -- he came by and we figured while he is here, we might need his protection. But what the Russians would do with him, or who he is, we don't know. We couldn't care less anyway. And I said, if the Russians come, I said, we can help you. He said, how can you help me when the Russians come? We speak a little Russian. This guy spoke fluently Polish and Russian, but we had to tell him something.

05:14.51:26 →

Anyway, two days later, a tremendous bang, and Max plays the piano a little. I said, Max, you better start playing the Internationale. Because the Russians, you know, are singing. So we rehearsed. And here goes, she bakes a cake, it was her birthday, I don't have to tell you that we eat very, very well these eight or 10 days we were there.

And when we were finished with lunch or supper or whatever it was called, and I go out one more time, because I saw funny movements. You don't know what is going on in the world like this, back and forth, tanks were coming at white heat and all of sudden I see tanks close by all covered up.

And I say, come back, Max, I said, to me it looks like there may be Russians coming over that way, you know, it looks very funny.

So I go out one more time, and there are three Russians looking like -- like my people, six and half feet tall and speaks in Russian to me, you know, and I don't understand a word, he

Russians
come.

said (unintelligible), you know, open the door. And I said, just as I picked up a few words already in Polish, so I said some Polish, Sauers, you know, I come right away.

And he in already. And we are at luncheon, here the guy is armed to the teeth. And he said in Russian, he said, of course later, we picked up all kinds of Russian, you know, why we didn't open the door. (unintelligible), you know, and in German, a watch is (unintelligible), and (unintelligible) and (unintelligible) ,you know, and pickle is Gerke, you know, Gerke. So the pickle and the (unintelligible) is very similar in the language, because you don't understand. We didn't understand it. So Max says to me, my name is Mannie, you know, Mannie? I later named, called myself Herman. So he said, Mannie, give him gulden (golden?) He wants, you know, golden. I said -- then we make a conversation by ourselves, while we had our hands raised.

He doesn't want gulden, I said, he wants something else, I didn't know what he wanted. So I give him -- so Max said, give him, give him. So I give him the pickles and he wants to shoot me, you know. But then he sees Max's watch. ^{05:17.00.08} He takes Max's

watch. And I have a watch too, now this guy don't want another watch, you know, I put my watch right in my back pocket, stupid, because I figure I stole my watch myself, why should I give it to him?

He asks me (unintelligible) he didn't find my watch. So

Russian
takes
Max's
watch

then we open up our arm and show him number, you know, numero, and we got to explain concentration camp, largro. And another Russian comes in and he says, (unintelligible) S.,S. The Russian had the order, you know, the S. S. had the block group tattooed under the left underarm. I don't know if you know it or not. Only the S.S., because in case they get injured or shot during the war, there is blood instantly computerized available to them by their number.

05:17:52.07 →

SHOWED TATTOO NUMBERS,
MISTAKEN FOR S.S. MEN

On the S.S. has this. And the Russian knew, thousands of *by Russians* Russians got killed in the concentration camp, even the first Russians were gassed in Auschwitz, I guess you know that. The first people who were gassed were Russian soldiers in Auschwitz to test how effective the gas would be. So the Russian knew there would be no prisoner, especially no Jew, survival.

They knew probably the Jews were tattooed, but they also knew they would not be survived, because if they Nazis killed the Russians, they surely wouldn't leave the Jews alive.

So now they had the order to shoot anyone with a number, unless they make large formation prisoners. And we tried to -- and they used a piece of board on the wall and threw the knives at us, and we ducked back and forth. And finally, a lieutenant came, and we had tried to explain, you know, Jew, Jude, you know, any way what we could.

And he said, oh, you a (unintelligible). That means, sounds like something nicer, you know, oh, you (unintelligible)

in other words he says, Jews are good. He must have been either a Jew or a Jewish sympathizer. 05:19:02:03

And he told the guys to leave us alone. So a few minutes later the door opens up, and you know, hundreds of soldiers, they use the big tanks, parked against the building. Not alongside the building, against the building. And each time, they ripped to pieces all (unintelligible) naturally, just for purpose, you know.

05:19:20:24 →
Russian Jewish General So here, a Russian general comes. Because why would we know? This lieutenant who was so nice to us, we go to him and he told us, (unintelligible) general. This is the Jewish general. He looked like from Hollywood. Leather coat and, you know, but really a gorgeous looking man. And behind him, all kinds of high officers carrying equipment upstairs, opening up the headquarters.

So we tried to get to him. How we going to get to him? The stairs were all guarded by soldiers with machine pistols. So finally there is a lull after awhile, you know, they took the (unintelligible) and threw them up and everything. So finally a door opens, and we make one step and the soldier now on the step says in Russian, you know, Stoie (unintelligible), say or we will shoot.

So when the door opens up there, what's going on, why is the commotion, you know, we shout up there in Yiddish, you know, we are Jews. We hope that he understands Yiddish, that only he

could understand. Speak out of German.

So the general opens the door and he says to us, you know, in Yiddish, you understand Yiddish? (unintelligible) Juden? You know, you are Jewish? And we says, yeah. And he asks us to come up, he orders the troops to let us by. So we tell him everything that has transpired, the he will find many, many of us with numbers to be not shooting. And the S.S. has a block tattooed under the left underarm, not to confuse us.

And so we told him everything. But what happened now is, he was very friendly to us and protected us. We ask him, we want to go with us, he should give us guns and we can fight with the Russians. Under no circumstances, your orders, we ask him how long he stay, he said he might stay a few hours, maybe a few days, but changes that we are going to be going on very, very soon.

And all of a sudden, another officer comes up and brings this Nazi up with the papers. This Solto (sic) destroyed everything except probably one picture with his uniform. And the Russian find him, and they almost shot us. Almost did shoot us. We had a hell of a time to talk ourself out. Max can explain a little bit more about this.

BY MAX:

Well, before the Russians came, we went through his papers. And we found a membership card from the S.S. from way back in the

RUSSIANS KILLED
SAUER

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1920s, so he was an old-timer. And we wanted to destroy everything, and we went through his papers, no, he needs this and we had a fireplace going, we kicked everything in anyhow.

So we got rid of everything apparently, until that one moment when that Jewish general calls us up and he said, whatever we told him is a lie. He doesn't trust us, because he found that old man downstairs and we must be the same.

↓
05:22:43.29
So it took us with crying and convincing him that we are really the ones who we are, and explaining to him how this man got here. So they didn't fool around. They just took him in back of the house and let him have it.

└─ You know, they took the law in hand right away. So then all of a sudden after a few hours, they took the phone lines down and they had to move on, because the Russian troops march very fast into Germany, and they had to bring fresh troops in.

And we wanted to come along, he says, no, we are civilians, and you cannot do that. So he give us some identifications, pictures we couldn't have. He used our numbers on the arm in the document with the names and number so and so.

So they left, but then the next one came, wild people. We showed them the ID, they didn't know how to read, they turn it upside down, and one wanted to tear it up.

Anyhow until about four days later, and we took a chance and we took bicycles and drove back into the city, to Gleiwitz. And we come to the house and there is nobody in the apartment, they

05:23:40:17

Biked to Gleiwitz

79

all were sitting in the cellars. They didn't even know that the war was over.

So that is actually the end of our escape and the war was over. We stayed then in Gleiwitz, and I got a job. We met another Russian lieutenant who was in charge of the slaughterhouse, and he put me into work on the ranch. And they stole the cattles from the Germans and they brought them to me. And I had a lot of girls working, milking the cows and making cheese and butter for the Russian hospitals.

AX
returned to
Moscow.
returns to
hiding 2 wks.
And then one day my boss calls me in and he says, according to the statistic, you have a thousand cows. Now you have to bring them to Moscow. I says, what do you mean? How do we go there? He says, you walk there.

But he was a nice guy, he told me, you know, Max, once you be in Moscow, you can never go out there no more. He says, you better take a hike. And if I wouldn't have a wife and two kids in Moscow, I would go with you.

So I go back in hiding for two weeks, which was very familiar to me. And then in May '45, when the first trains were rolling, not passenger trains, they were all freight cars, then Herman and I, we took a chance and we went back to Berlin.

BY HERMAN:

Yes, but before, before this, we had no idea, we thought -

- we knew that the Russians occupied Auschwitz and took the

05:25:06 →

Escape #2 From Auschwitz.

80

concentration camp now and imprisoned many Germans. Especially Nazis. So we thought it would be a good idea, go back to Auschwitz and get some papers that we have spent the time. We didn't know.

25:42:08
So we go back to Auschwitz, and then we told them, the Russian commander there, that we escaped from Auschwitz. He didn't believe us. And he imprisoned us there. So we sure enough had to escape the second time from Auschwitz. Of course, it was not complicated at all, by comparison to the Germans, you know.

But to getting back to the end of the first story, is -- it was not only Josef who saved our life, it was also my future in-laws who saved our life. Because we really had no other way to go, after we had to leave Josef.

That's how Josef actually and his family believed there was no way for us to survive.

He hoped that we would have been surviving, but there couldn't be any believe, because nobody could travel the distance in the shape and position we were in. It was even a miracle to walk at night, 18 (80?) kilometres to his haybarn. How we got stopped and still made it.

But going on daylight, the way we looked then, during daytime, the trip with different railroads, over 98 kilometres and arriving into the main city of Germany then, which was Gleiwitz, without being even hardly even stopped, this is the

greatest miracle of all.

ANN: What did you look like then?

HERMAN; Well, we were pretty skinny.

MAX: We were very skinny.

HERMAN: Weightwise, I don't even remember how much we weighed.

But I think we have pictures from taken right after the war.

MAX: There we looked like civilized people.

HERMAN: Yes, but also so skinny. I don't think anybody believe it's you.

MAX: Well, compared to today, yes.

ANN; Let's go back a little bit, about life before the camps.

Can you tell me about what kind of family you came from, brothers and sisters?

HERMAN: We were a very large family. Of course, we were all born in Berlin. We were an extremely poor family. My father left very early back to Poland, when the Nazis came to power, and my mother actually was the ^{Sole supporter} ~~source~~ (unintelligible) . And things became tougher and tougher. And too, being a Ppolish citizen, which we all were, we had no permission to learn a trade in Germany, nor could we hold any decent job. And this made it even much, much harder. So things were extremely tough for us.

And of course when the Nazis came to power in 1939, I was just about 16 years old, no, '33, I was 11 years old. So things got worse and worse, and we actually tried to emigrate a couple

of times. I went to preparation, to (unintelligible)

BEGIN TAPE 6

BY MAX;

It's nice for you to offer me something to drink for me in my house.

ANN; What's your schedule?

MAX: When do you have to go?

HERMAN: My wife makes a seder today.

ANN; Oh, really. So you do all that today. Okay. We will try

--

MAX: Well, you don't have to travel an hour away from here.

HERMAN: No, but I don't want to be late when the company arrives.

MAX: What time they come, at eight?

HERMAN; No, at four.

ANN; We will do it, we'll do it. Where were we?

MAX: The life, former life.

BY HERMAN:

Well, of course, we had enough to eat and to drink. My mother was working and I had all the sisters, they were working, and I was also working. I always was working on incidental jobs. I was always looking for making money. I would never care what I do, as long as I make money. And we needed the money. And I was quite successful at this.

ANN: What kind of jobs?

HERMAN: Well, in fact, when I was young, in 1932, before the Nazis came to power, myself and the other two brothers of me, we walked down, there was a special place where it was used for activities. And right behind it, next to it, was a huge German theater. They called it the ^{VOLKS THEATRE} (unintelligible) . It was in Jewish hands then. The director and also (unintelligible) . And we were walking there and three directors came out and stopped us. And talked to my big brother, you know, he's, big brother, he's three and a half years older, but he's taller than I am.

And he says, if he has a voice, he said yes. So he took him inside. But after half an hour he came out again. So they picked me. He said, can you sing? I said, yes. So he took me inside. And here they asked me several questions, if I have a memory, if I can you know take things by you know.

And they introduced me to one of the top German actors. His name was Hans Albers. He was playing in a theater play then. The name was Peer Gynt. And asked him, I was supposed to play his son. So my other had to come over there, she came with my oldest sister there, and they signed the contract and I got all kinds of money. They got it, which of course was sent from heaven.

And it lasted, I think, a couple of months. And I got to play (unintelligible) , so I was the son for this short

period of time of this most famous German actor, as long as it lasts.

ANN: Herman, what about school? Jewish, regular?

HERMAN: Well, I spent most of the time in the German school, and at the end, then I had to go, I was forced by the Nazis, I think the last year, I spent in a Jewish school. Just probably the last year.

ANN: Do you remember any incidences of anti-Semitism where you were before you were in the camps?

HERMAN: Oh, many of them, sure. First of all, there were a lot of -- Berlin is such a big city, and the section we lived in was the Rolke (phonetic) area. And of course, all these people had many children, all these families. And first, many of them were socialist and communists. And when the Nazis came to power, and they promised them heaven, overnight most of these people became runners for the Nazis. Uniforms, and all the promises of everything.

And of course, with the Nazis, instantly they started hating the Jews. So even the many Gentile friends we have became anti-Semites the next day, the next morning. And of course there were lots of fights were erupted, and you know, and they hit us and whatever, you know. But it was not in the brutal way, of course, like it became later.

Because of course the Nazis earlier, the early years were not in power yet, you know. But once they came in power, it

became worse and worse, you see?

ANN; And how did you meet Max?

HERMAN; Well, Max, actually, they had Max, they lived very close by. And they had a furniture store. But Max actually knew my brother much better, because they were the same age. And they were in the soccer club, Jewish soccer club. And they played billiards together and all kinds of stuff.

So I was too young. I could barely look over the window then, you know, and see what they were playing in there. I wasn't allowed to go in there, you had to be 16 or 17.

MAX: You were a little minor.

HERMAN; But then, I knew him better, Max was an apprentice baker. He worked for Greenbaum, and this an all Jewish neighborhood that we moved into, practically, I would say 90 percent Jews. So they had those transportation, and you know, they had to transport the bakery goods on a tricycle, you know a big tricycle with a big box in the back, and they load the thing up. And I worked in a bicycle shop for years, making all kinds of money.

And we maintained their bicycles. So this is how I knew him. And Max always rode a special bicycle, it would go like this, you know.

ANN; And what happened to your family?

HERMAN; Well, unfortunately, most of my family got killed to. I had -- I got one older sister. She got saved, she went to

Shanghai with practically the last transportation in I think in September, not in September, I think in June '39. And she survived. But of course she died about eight, nine years ago in Berlin.

And then my brother, of course, survived. He went to Israel in I think '35, '34, '35. So the parents got killed, my younger brother got killed, my sister got killed, so another sister she got to England, and she died shortly after the war. So most of the family, aunts and uncles, all got killed.

ANNE: I wanted to ask you about, do you feel like the friendship with Max has sort of been what kept you going through the camps?

HERMAN; No, I don't think it had that much to do with it, no. In fact, I was actually picked by coincidence for Max, you know, there was another friend who was supposed to go with Max. He told you that Feidach, who went to Berlin, another friend of ours, he was kept one month before us.

ANNE: Let's see what else. Oh, yes. Talking about the conditions in the camps, what was it like, the food, the clothes, the hours, the rollcall -- tell me briefly about what conditions were like for you?

HERMAN; Well, if you talk about sanitary conditions, they very -- you see, this is the big difference between Auschwitz and any German concentration camps. What am I tell you, any of these camps in Poland.

The German concentration camps were strictly

disciplinary camps, where they were ready to torture, kill the people. But there was utmost looked for cleanliness. There was such a cleanliness that you would be inspected. It couldn't be, they checked your ears, they checked everything, that you had to be clean.

They saw to it that you had plenty of soap, even you didn't have hot water, but plenty of water to wash yourself. And so this was -- because the Germans, they are so scared, the Nazis, they are so scared of any pestilence breaking out through uncleanness.

And this is why we had to go quite a few times a year to the disinfectant kammer (?), where even though they find a little lice, the whole camp would be disinfected.

And this was of course torture for the whole camp. And the SS relished this, because they could kill a lot of prisoners doing this, you see? And they hit them and do all these extra things.

ANNE: And what about the food?

HERMAN: Well, the food, foodwise, they just give you enough to eat that you would just barely survive. I think we were given something like 1200 or 1300 calories a day, but that's not enough to die and that's not enough to live.

But then, as the Germans overrun Europe, there was so much food they stole from those different countries, that the SS, the whole Reich, they are so engulfed in their victory, and

they thought the war going to be over in a few months, it is just a matter of a mop-up situation.

They have knocked out every country in less than a month of so. They ordered that the camp, by that time, the isolation was lifted and we were all put to work. They ordered that all the canteens to be filled from the outside with bread and marmelade and syrup. And you could eat unlimited whatever you wanted.

And they gave you more free time, and the SS for a time was forbidden to enter the camp after the rollcall, because it was all victory for them.

And the prisoners who were starving, most of us, you know, when you get food in such amount, and especially things which would practically fill you up instantly, you know, syrup makes you very filling. And bread, marmelade, all this stuff was given to you. And most prisoners had money in their accounts. And the people who didn't have money, the others would turn over some money, because the food was so cheap, which was prepared from the outside.

And most of the prisoners gained 10, 20, 30 pounds. But the unfortunate thing is it lasted such a short time. Because all of a sudden, I don't know, there were so many different incidents that happened.

And one day we came home from work, to the camp back, and the canteens were empty and you were slaves in the camp, in

the barrack, they were completely emptied out. And you already knew, the day it wasn't open any more, it started then with the small gate, and they were sitting with steel pipes and everything, and hitting the prisoners, all of us, so badly, not the gentiles, us.

You see the gentile prisoners, they never subject to what the Jews were subjected to, because the Jews were in the concentration camps to be exterminated. The only difference was, in this German concentration camps was no gas, but they would kill prisoners brutally by hitting you for any reason.

One time the Nazis heard out something else, you know, while I was already a roofer, and it was winter there, I will never forget this. And one of the most brutal ones, the name, to name one of -- the name was Muchdeller, you know, he was from Saxony. He was so horrible, we got books, because we testified many times, and him and another was Fichert and another one was Iron Gustaf, his name was. He always had the iron stovepipe in his hand, so he got the name, the Iron Gustof.

They were made up a motor, connected it to electric wire, and called you in. And they give you rubber shoes, red rubber shoes, and when you (unintelligible) for the shoe, all the electricity would instantly conduct you.

And I had to roll these wires. And they were open (unintelligible) push the (unintelligible) door. I saw -- if I didn't have a strong (unintelligible), I would have been

electricuted. I cried, you know, and you know, you burned your whole hand in here, and how! And they call it any time they felt like it, just to have a tremendous kick for themselves.

Now, I don't know when they stopped again, but maybe I had it possible, the leader, you know, they did all these things without the permission of the leader.

You know, the leader of the camp very rarely permitted this. They could kill prisoners for different reasons, but they could not torture in an obsessive way. But to Jews, they could do anything they wanted. Because they always found a reason.

ANNE: Any other examples of the treatment to the Jews, any other things that happened to you?

HERMAN; Well, many times we have the food, which we are supposed -- because every prisoner, by the code of the camp, was supposed to get every day one-fifth of soldier bread. And every day you were supposed to be issued 40 gram of margarine or 30 gram or sausage, something like this.

And you were supposed to get in the evening a three-quarter of a litre of heavy food, which is easily called some kind of a vegetable with meat flanning (?) around in this. And in the morning you were also supposed to get three-quarters of a litre of soup. And the same thing in the afternoon.

But the SS, especially like Molle or Gustaf or Buchteller, these people, when they were more or less in charge,

they saw us picking up the food from the kitchen. And they stopped you and ordered to leave the food right there. And brought another command in from, a gentile command, and get the food. So they get double food, by the Jews get nothing.

So it happened many, many times that we get any food, or you only get the core (?) of what you should have gotten, you see?

And the same with the bread, with anything else. While the other prisoners were never subjected to this. The other prisoners had to abide by the disciplinary things in the camp, but not like the Jews. never like the Jews. Sure, the others got punished too, but more when they didn't do, when they were against the code of the camp, against the rules. But for the Jews, there were two codes, one of them they weren't enforced, and the other one was the regular one the camp enforced themselves.

ANNE; Herman, what was the hardest part?

HERMAN; For me? When I got special punishment. And I got it over the book. And unfortunately, I got several times over this, you know. See, at one time in the camp, I think I spoke about it before, when it happened with the ham, I got so much punishment, there, you know, and I still didn't talk. And of course I thought I saw the end, because it took months and months before my back healed.

And another time, I worked with another -- when you

worked with different (unintelligible) and you see our detail, the roofer detail, construct detail, I was the only Jew in there. And all the others were gentiles, and they did all kinds of illegal activity. And lots of these gentiles had excess, like all their bodies, worked in the kitchen, there were big (unintelligible), they had all kinds. And they had each other.

And prisons come in the camp with the civilians, and all the civilians talk. And once in awhile, they steal some very valuable stuff, these gentiles, and sell it on the black market to civilians.

And in return, they get all kinds of things which help them living like kings in the camp. Because one guy shows me a diamond in the camp. I had never even seen a diamond before. He showed me it, and I said, why do you show me this? I wish he wouldn't, you know.

And sure enough, the Nazi found out about this a few months later. And I got hit, the other guy they killed. They tortured to death the one who had it. But I got so much punishment, you see. But I still told them, I never seen the diamond. I have nothing to do -- because they (unintelligible) also in the same command, that I had also stealing diamonds.

ANNE: What did they do?

HERMAN: Oh, they hit you, and how. I had a head like this. I had eyes like this. They hit you all over. You know, they don't only hit you over the back. They hit you, they step in

your ribs and break your ribs, whatever.

And if you on the ground and if you don't get up fast, you never get up any more.

ANNE: Was there any kind of medical treatment?

HERMAN: Oh, yes. I had in the camp what they call carbuncles, do you know what a carbuncle is? When you get abcessed and you get -- you know what an abcess is? And from the food, what the Nazis do in the food, they put salpetre in there like soda, heavy soda. You know why. So they men don't get any sexual desire, any erections. You see the prominent prisoners, the gentiles, and many of them have plenty to eat. So what is their desire? Their desire, of course, is for a woman. A woman is not in the camp. In other camps, yes, but not in this camp.

So they go after boys, you see. And then when they go after boys, if the Nazis find out, they get a tremendous punishment. They probably kill him too. And they kill the boy too, even though the boy has not choice. He has to submit. So he gets it both ways.

ANNE: Let's talk the -- oh, you had mentioned before that there's a special action that a Jew could be made into an Aryan?

HERMAN: Yes.

ANNE: What was that all about?

HERMAN: In 1943, a commission, you remember that or you were out on a job? You remember, yes?

MAX: Yes.

HERMAN: In 1943, because you see, when I was strictly a roofer in the camp, but like I told you, the camp is maintained by the I.G. Farben Industry, which was Buna, for the war effort, you know, but the whole camp was maintained for them. And by this was all SS too, in the I.G. Farben, big SS leaders and lots of civilians who were all big party members. They had a tremendous input.

But this really had nothing to do with this. One day a commission comes into the camp, consisting of the high officers of the air force, army, SS and the navy. And they come into the camp. And all the Jews are standing in line, we all. And the guy says, you know, Hitler ordered (unintelligible) the permission to decide who is a Jew. You must have heard of that already, because even some of the highest Nazis were indirect or direct Jews. You heard of that too, I'm sure?

MAX: I few, not -- very few.

HERMAN: Well, quite a few.

MAX: Very, very few.

HERMAN: I can name you at least a dozen. When I tell you that Herman Goering himself was adopted by a Jew, you wouldn't believe. He was raised by a Jew and educated by a Jew. His Jewish adopted father, whom his mother married, was a von Epstein. He was a von because he had very little to do with the Jews, never -- even so he was considered by the Germans a Jew. Maybe that's one reason why Goering hated the Jews.

Now, there was a Gen. Feidmasher Moshe, I don't know if you ever heard this name, he was in command of the air force, given him directly by Goering. His father and my father-in-law Schlesinger were students together in Eastern Germany, where they lived, and he was a Jew. His mother was not a Jew, just like my wife's mother is not a Jew. But Goering could decide, but he was never raised as a Jew like my wife was. He was raised as a non-Jew. So automatically he was never a Jew.

But there were many, many others. I read several books, and you see. So when the commission came into the camp, and we all standing in line, and the commandant of all camp said, turn your nose left, turn your nose right, he said, you don't look Jewish. Did you have anybody in your family who was not Jewish? So a good friend of ours, name is Sputz, he says, my grandmother was Aryan. He really was part -- so several dozens of them, even this friend of mine I went with, together with, he relate to the commandant, it came from a Jew or a non-Jew, and his cousin too.

This is how they became the valets. Jews would never be permitted to serve in these kinds of jobs. You know, he had permission to clean his gun. He trusts him outright. Pick up his food, prepare his food, direct from the canteen or wherever.

And of course, these prisoners were the VIPs. No other prisoner could touch those, because they were directly

under the protection of the people. And they were the very, very high ones.

So anyone, this committee comes in and picks approximately, I would say two dozens of our former comrades. And they were ordered to remove their insignia, their Star of David, and now they became a red insignia, political prisoner.

And they were ordered to join -- to leave our barrack and go to a non-Jewish barrack. And with this came also different food and different privileges. In fact, they build a bordello in our camp, which was ordered through the I.G. Farben Industry, because they wanted to prisoners to have more freedom and produce more. Not for the Jews, but including our Aryan, our now so-called non-Jews any more who were formerly Jews.

They had to go, and they stuffed this bordello with the most gorgeous girls. Some of them were even Jewish, from Birkenau. And the commandant and some of the SS would make peekholes in there, you know, peepholes? And watch them. Because most of them, including myself, never had any intercourse until -- before we came in the camp.

So they watched it. And if they acted always stupid, they got 25 over the back. For acting stupid.

ANNE: Tell me about the insignias that you had to wear. What was your uniform like?

HERMAN: Actually, we had three numbers, but only one tattooed number. This is the only tattooed number we had. And

the only reason we got this number is that at the time, if you ever escaped --

ANNE: Do you want to show us?

HERMAN: Oh, sure. Max shows his, too.

MAX: Mine shows better.

HERMAN: Max is better, much better.

MAX: I got more ink on it.

HERMAN: No, I think Max had one (unintelligible).

MAX: I have less hair.

HERMAN: You know there was an order, if it was not there readable, you had to have it made new.

MAX: But this number you got only in Auschwitz. The only camp from all the concentration camps, there was only one camp, was Auschwitz. And there are some who went to Auschwitz on a temporary base, transferred to different camps, they didn't even get the number either.

In Sachsenhausen, we had the number sewn on a white strip of cloth, on this left side and on the pants. So we had the number there, but this is different numbers.

HERMAN: Do you remember the number Sachsenhausen?

MAX: Eighteen something, I don't remember.

HERMAN: Ninety-seven, ninety-six.

MAX: I don't remember.

HERMAN: My numbers at Sachsenhausen were 9716. So in other words, we were just numbers. Animals with numbers. No

names. We had no names. You were only a number, that's it. A list of the numbers everything by number. You got to an SS man, what's your number. Name, there was never a question, what name. Just numbers.

And what do they care. Another animal dies. A human being, not so. But I thought maybe the tattooed number was for escaping purpose, because you could tear off your number on your clothes and just throw it away, maybe that was the purpose.

But then on the other hand, in all umpty other camps, there were no tattooed numbers, because they probably knew Auschwitz was the last station, and that's maybe why. But they kept real statistics. They found so many documents it is unbelievable, what the Germans all left. And I guess they are going to find a lot more now, since they opened up Eastern Europe.

Poland is willing to hand over, Russia is willing to hand over to Israel all the documents they confiscated, because they went to Poland earlier than the Americans went there.

ANNE: Let's talk about conditions in the camp. Can you tell me a little bit about daily life?

HERMAN: Daily life was nothing, only one thing --it was very rough, scary. Every move, you dead, you were afraid you were going to get beaten, you were going to get hit. Especially rollcalls, three times a day. However, there is no -- everything had to be done in a running way. And there was always, you had

salutes on both sides, people was beating you on the face.

There was once incident where right in the beginning there was a little Jewish guy had a big, big belly, and this is what peeked out to the Nazis. They saw him, they picked him out, and they jumped on his belly until the guts opened up. And you see all those things.

Another guy in the back was beaten by SS and he was saying in Hebrew, shma visroel, and it sounds, the bruch (unintelligible), the inmates said, you know what he just said to you? Black pig. He translates schwarz as schwein and schma visroel. And I will never forget this fellow. They came for five solid days, from morning and beat him. And the man just didn't want to die. And they couldn't kill him. Then they give us. They hung him upside down and his head into a bucket of water and drown him. There was no skin left on him. I don't know what happened, that a person could stand that much beating. Five solid days.

And then when you see, I mean, when you see that, when you wake up in the morning, you lay on the floor in straw sacks, your neighbor to your left, get up, he is dead. Your neighbor to your right, get up, he is dead. And you see that daily in and daily out, you are nothing. You are completely unemotional, you don't have no feeling, nothing. And this is how you move on all day long. You don't even know how you can function. I don't know who makes you function. And this is, you

know, they got us what they wanted. We were like animals. We did everything what they tell us we did. Right or wrong, I mean, we were just one bundle of scare --

HERMAN: See it wasn't just the SS who punished and tortured the prisoners. It was much more the prisoners. The prisoners were the most feared people in the camp. You see, as I said previously already, the prison was run, the concentration camps were run by the gentile prisoners. And they could decide of life and death. And from camp to camp, every camp was ruled by a different clique.

For instance, Sachsenhausen was ruled at our time by the political prisoners, and by quite a few criminals. And they were so brutal, they had the power to kill any prisoner they want to. They were able and were permitted and encouraged to do all the work the SS don't have to do. And do forget the prisoners are around you 24 hours a day. The SS is around you at the maximum when they are coming in incidentally, sometimes more, sometimes less.

But then at night, there is no SS in there, but the prison, like your block, and you unlucky, and we had such a horrible guy, his name was Wilhelm Buch, he was very short, but a political. You think, like a lot of times the Communists say they were the best in sympathizing with the Jews, it was so untrue. And I fought them, I told them about it many time already in interviews, how brutal they were in the camps.

After the war, they built all kind of delegations and told them how they protected the Jews, which are so untrue. They killed so many Jews. Like this fellow, for instance, he was so very known, he run around with a whip and he would hit you. You know, we had to -- our beds had to be made like a military. Our shoes had to be shined like a lot of times there was no cream or nothing available. They still had to be shined. You had to be washed. You had to do anything, whatever it was. And without any reason. If you stand at attention and you shake a little bit, he would whip you. He would whip you so badly -- and there was nobody who would care less if he brings you in as a corpse the next day. Or that if you half dead or whatever.

And of course, there was, you were asking before, there was a prison hospital which was even attended by the chiefs, which were SS, SS leaders who were in charge. And I myself, right at the early part, I would think, I come in the camp in September, and maybe three months later, due to the food, I told you already, it created such a reaction in my body, that I got abcesses over my entire neck and head, some of them were like boils.

And I dreaded to go to the prison hospital, you know, to the camp hospital, but somehow I was lucky. There was an SS leader who was a high leader, and he iced it up and cut them all out. Some of them were a little more, not as barbaric as the others. But you could have -- the next time meet another

one, and you go with an abcess in your tooth, he would pull all your teeth.

You see, this was the difference in there, you know. So that's what I am saying. But the prisoner alone, to go to the prison hospital, you need your permission from the eldest of the block, who was the king of the block. And he was one of the highest prisoners of the camp, you know. You need his permission to go to the hospital. Now, he can easily say no. And many times, he refused to let you go. Or sometimes he would pick, when he knows who is there, who is going to give you torture instead of a treatment. And so this became just so awful, and this is what I said so many time, it were much more the prisoners in the camp who did so wrong with the other prisoners than the SS itself.

Of course, in Auschwitz, it was a different story. Auschwitz was strictly an extermination camp, and there you be gassed. There you gassed and the SS is in charge of the gassing, which they automatically put the prisoners in to do all the work. But the SS is ordering thousands and thousands and thousands to be gassed. And there rarely is a prisoner who can save you. Once in awhile, one prisoner can get saved by another prisoner, but it is so rare, because they are risking their whole life doing this. And this is the big difference between those two camps, you see.

And then all these Nazi concentration camps, if you

take Sachsenhausen or you take Buchenwald or you take Dachau or you take (unintelligible), there are dozens and dozens, you see, they are so entirely different from these camps. In Sachsenhausen, a prisoner escapes, the entire camp got to stand, and even if it takes six night and six days until they find him. And while you are standing, many of them will die. In Auschwitz, they couldn't kill us. In Auschwitz, (unintelligible) the prisoners were standing an hour or two, and then they all marched over to the blocks. And then they give it over to the SS, and then they would find them soon. And then the prisoners would stand, and then they hang him, when they finish with the torture. These are the differences.

In Auschwitz, they couldn't care less if you have too much shoes or too old shoes. If you have no shoes, they don't care either. There are people who run around with the wrong pants with wrong shoes, they wouldn't care. Nobody pays any attention. But attention they pay if a prisoner escapes. Then the attention goes. Or if the prisoner does anything illegal. Like in our camp, in Buna, they made illegal guns. They brought parts in, assembled in the camp, you see what I mean? Because they had all kinds of groups, underground groups, which were trying to make rebellions and fighting the Nazis.

Sometimes they get caught, you know, when they get also shot or executed or hung. But these are the only things which differ between the Nazi concentration camps in Germany or

the extermination camps in Poland. These are the huge big difference.

Basically, you get better food in Auschwitz, too.

ANNE: When did you first learn about the gas chambers?

HERMAN: Oh, well, the way it was with the gas chambers is the Nazis are exchanged. They don't let them stay too long. I don't know that they want them to know they should know everything about them. But they rotate them, just like a commandant in a camp is never there too long either. So when they come in, they talk with -- you have now, my friends became valets. A valet you only become if they have extreme trust in you, if you are not a Jew, and they take a liking to you.

Now, the valet is in there. My friend (unintelligible), he is in there. He is 10 hours in his quarters. In fact, by permission from him, he don't even have to be counted. You see, they calling out, and then he not be counted, and nobody cares, because he is already for them. He is inside the camp, inside where the troops are. But he does not need any counting, if they get an excuse.

But he takes part, listens to the conversation. Now, the (unintelligible), they have conversation among the others. They talk about different things. They talk about prisoners. They talk about beautiful girls coming into the camps. They talk about having sexual relations with them, which they have. But then they get caught, they get degraded and shot.

Lot of times, SS come in the concentration camps. We had in Sachsenhausen a special camp build, you remember(unintelligible)? There were SS, some of them were generals in there. They were demoted to nothing, some of them they killed in there.

MAX: She wants to know what gas chambers (unintelligible), how do we know the gas chambers?

HERMAN: This is what I am saying right now. So they listen to the conversation, what the SS talk among themselves about gas and all this. And so what comes into the camp. So the heinie comes back in the camp, and he tells his friends, do you know that they are going to gas all of us? Hundreds of thousands of (unintelligible), and they gassed them.

TAPE 8

HERMAN: I tell you about Joseph, because actually Max can tell you better stuff, because I was the one who (unintelligible), I can give you all the details.

MAX: Now, you went to the church.

HERMAN: That's what she wants to know.

MAX: You went to the church, and he called.

ANNE: Go ahead. How did you find Joseph?

HERMAN: Well, we went as you know last year in June to Auschwitz and Poland, Cracow, and we came practically to the same area where Joseph's family still lives. By communication and through all kinds of unfortunate things, we missed him. I don't think we were more than two minutes apart from where he still

lives at the same little village.

So this producer of KQED, his name is Peter Grauman, really would not give us. So we are now in Cracow. And he says, I want to try one more thing. He says, the church must know something about him and some other people. So I says, I says, I go with you. So we met on the marketplace two priests, junior priests. And I approach them, first with a little Polish, and then maybe a little German or a little English. He said, I speak a little German and my colleague speaks a little English. I said, wonderful, you must help us.

So I pull my sleeve up there, show my number, say it is very important what it is all about. I said, we are coming here to find a man, a hero, who has saved our lives, who took us out of Auschwitz. In Polish, Auswitche. And he said, I go to telephone. He said, I don't have much time, but we make a couple of telephone calls for you. So we are standing there in line, there must have been 15, 20 people there, a little hole in the wall, there is a phone hanging there.

He calls, and you can't even hear your own voice there. So he said, we have no time, we have a big meeting with the chief, with the (unintelligible) or whatever he is, one of the big church people.

I said, please, help us, because we have no other help, you know. Isn't there something another church -- he said, okay, we go to a church. So we running, all four of us, those

two priests, Peter and myself.

And we go to the church, there is a little school where they have a session, and the priest asks the young lady there if he can use the phone, he needs to make several telephone calls and it is very urgent. He said, please, and he makes calls, and he makes a whole bunch of calls. And finally he hit a man by the name of Kubik, Ludwig Kubik. So the guy is supposed to be overseer from during the war, and he said he would see us.

But only asked, we have to be there within 20 minutes. So we have no -- I said, let's go back and get Max. And he said, no, we have no time to get Max, because he told us, we have to be there in 20 minutes. I said, we have to get Max.

So I go and get Max. We take a taxi and go to him. We meet (unintelligible) Kobiga and he said, maybe he knew him but he didn't know. But he was very mistrusting, like he had a right to be that. He said, if the man is still alive, he will find him for us. And he would let us know within six weeks in America. And that is exactly what he did.

And Max can lay down the details, the telephone calls and all this, you know.

ANNE: Was he in the resistance or --

MAX: Yes, he was in the resistance.

HERMAN: He was in high office here, Josef was of course a lieutenant, what he told me, you know. And they were in the same resistance group. They would perform work during the day, in

this case Josef worked in Auschwitz as a civilian worker, which he told us already then, and at night, he would do all kinds of sabotage with the underground, you know.

And he even told me then, you see, you got to remember -- but this is how we have to find out what Josef remembers. He told me, the underground want eventual free the camps. And they need information from prisoners. This is how he approached me originally. Maybe he just said that to make me believe, because also he said, he wants a couple of important prisoners, they should provide the underground with the entire situation of the camps, possibly (unintelligible) were arms and also Capt. Dreider, because the figure that the front was closer to the Russians, the prisoners might be able to be armed by the underground and help fight from one side against the Nazis.

This. But he also said that the underground would pick us up and bring us to the partisans as we walked maybe one or two kilometres out of Auschwitz. But it never materialized. So this is what I remember.

ANNE: Herman, one more thing I wanted to ask you about, a couple of things. One is, obviously, you know, five years at a very young age has changed who you are and how you are toward people, toward religion.

What influence do you think the war years had on you?

HERMAN: Well, my -- the war years influenced me, number

one, that I became extremely tough. I wasn't scared of anything. I knew how to basically, how to manage life. Not be scared of any situation. Of course, other things develop in life which more or less are natural, you know, which makes you hesitant a little bit more, you know, in different ways.

But this taught me, and like I said before, I always have been, throughout my life, an optimist, even where Max saw it, and I myself saw it was very bleak. There was really no hope. But I refused to give up. I just refused. Until I don't have any more choice, I refuse to give up. And this probably more than anything saved our lives. Because when we were up in that extremely close call, and this was really the closest call of all, when the SS comes to look for us, when they apparently had the evidence and they know, they had the address by the intercepted letter, that we were there, because this was the address and it had to be there, that was I think the closest call of all.

And Max said to me, I will never forget that, we are lost. And I said, Max, we are not lost yet. Close that cubbyhole up there. And Max went there and closed it with the ladder I put up before.

Also, at the beginning, Josef instantly wanted to close up that huge hole at the entrance of the haybarn, and I said, under no circumstances. He said, it's going to be ice cold for you. And I said, we rather freeze than if you close it

up, the SS suspicion that something is there. So he left it open.

And when you consider all these little things with the optimism, even there was no, it was little optimism that we have, then I can only say again and again, there is a tremendous amount of luck.

Because the luck was that we were at the right place at the right time. And also was tremendous luck when Max picked me, our escape was unfortunately only partly successful. Because after Josef, when we had to leave hastily his place, it was such a tremendous miracle connected with luck that we reached Larwitz. And we got the help that they were still there and they helped him, because they were just as much the heroes as Josef was.

Because without either one, we couldn't survive. But I think at the end, it was the Schnazinge who really saved our lives, because they had the least reason to shelter us, because they were so in extremely danger themselves.

ANNE: Your family, now who was in your family?

MAX: I had one sister, one sister, and she went to Belgium, France, and that is where she survived it. And my father, in the beginning of 1938, he got a card to appear to the Gestapo in Berlin. And since the Germans are so accurate, they send cards in alphabetically letters. And my letter is D. And the first people who got the card to appear to the Gestapo, A, B, and C, they went out not knowing and they never came back.

So then the talk got around fast, what happened to

those people who went up and never came back. Then my father, just now, 1938 Pesach, he got the card to appear to the Gestapo. And he finished holding the seder. And holding a Polish passport, we put him on the train and he went to Poland.

Also, what happened to me in April 1st, it was a week ago Saturday, 57 years ago, oh, my gosh, was my bar mitzvah day. And it was the first of April. And that was the famous Bachout day, where the SR, not the SS, the SR stood in front of Jewish stores and don't let the gentiles shop there. And the Jews had to put their name in 12-inch letters on the store in the window. That means, this is a Jewish store.

And I walked with my father and grandfather to a synagogue, because I came from an orthodox family and we didn't drive. And one with an armband came over to us and pulled my grandfather on his beard. And he said, Jew, this is the last crap you did today here. And I was a little kid, 13 years old, and I don't have to tell you, the impression I had scared.

The unfortunate thing is, we were able to leave Germany not as rich people but as fairly well people, but we had no way where to go to. We could have gone only to one place. And my mother wanted to go to Shanghai, and I stopped her. Because I had friends going to Shanghai and they wrote a letter, how bad it is, the climate, traffic, climate, and no jobs and no work. And I says, no, I am not going there. And I partly blame me for that my mother is (unintelligible) where we went instead

of going to Shanghai, but that is something you don't know.

So I said, no, I rather go to Poland. And as it so happened, I did go to Poland.

ANNE: You sure did. I want to ask you, before Josef gets here, about your excitement and what you hope to find out from him. What it feels like to finally have found him.

HERMAN: Well, the way I feel is, number one, even so with all our survival, I never expected to see Josef again. This I never expected. First of all, number one, it is a tremendous amount of years passes, 46 years. And when we were last year in Poland, the Polish people unfortunately aging must faster than we are, because of the tremendous hard life they are having. Besides that, many of them are heavy drinkers, and I am afraid Josef is also one of them. So that also cuts quite a few years off the life, you know.

But of course, my highest interest would be to getting filled in in really what happened. Why did he really bring us out? Because we remember two different stories. Of course, it is not important now, why he brought us out. It is just for curiosity, because as we said many times before, if we would have been caught at any given time, it would not only be Josef's life and our lives, it would have been all the people directly surrounded.

And plus, the a larger detail, if we would have been caught up there in the village, the Nazis would have easily wiped

out the entire village, because they knew -- the Nazis hated the Poles too, they knew they all had to be in contact with us to help us stay there for so long a time. Because four months is a tremendous length of time to be hidden, for people like us and people like them.

So this is one thing. Of course, the other thing, like I said, it is, would be very interesting if Josef remembers, or wants to remember, there always can be things that you don't want to remember in life, you know, which we hope not. But on the other hand, it is very possible that he will remember everything in detail, practically like we remember, you know.

I mean, I remember practically everything in complete detail, and that has been brought out by the brother. The brother writes in Polish, which I didn't even know that he was part of it. And he writes in perfect detail, except he writes, I talked myself out with telling this Ukranian policeman, I am going to the library, which doesn't make sense. Nobody would have believed me, that I would go to the library.

MAX: Well, most people forget, like you said. It has been too long ago.

HERMAN: But I mean, he remembers this contact with this guy, and he said, I never thought you could talk yourself out of this.

ANNE: Herman, tell me a little bit about the barn, briefly, what life was like.

HERMAN: The life on the barn, at first, I think the first few days we were extremely satisfied, happy to be away from the camp. But then it dawned more and more on us, in what tremendous precarious danger position we were in now, because we were supposed to -- you see, we would have loved to be at the partisan, being trained as fighters. And even dying fighting wouldn't mean nothing to us. But being there, practically helpless, depending on other people, not knowing -- because one time, I remember an incident, there was so much noise out there one evening, and shooting I heard too, you know, and God, I hope, I hope none of these guys seeking shelter in here, because it was very easy.

They running into our barn and what they would do, the SS would follow them, blow up the barn with us in it. There was something going on. And I think I told the lieutenant, he said, there was some shooting, you know, with some fighters and some SS. You know, they killed them. But if they looked for shelter in there, we would have been -- it would have been the end of us.

So we were in such a position. So after a few days, we realized so much more, that something has to be done. And we started pressing Josef, pressing, but Josef took it (unintelligible), he said, you going to be safe here, you going to be safe here, you know, and then -- so this is what we extremely anxious to find out. Why did he take us out? Today,

it wouldn't make any difference, whatever the reason were, he could tell us plainly.

But like I say, the danger to him and to us and to all around would not be any way minimized for any reason.

ANNE: What about the day to day life?

HERMAN: The day to day life was like this, as I remember. We got, in the evening, we were permitted, every evening at approximately 10:00, they allowed us to go downstairs and take in a hot meal. They were sitting on the table and eating, while all these four slept in one large bed. I still see it before me. There was a mother on one side and the little sister and the brother of Josef on the other side.

At couple of days at night, they had a big -- little basin, that we could wash ourselves. Never baths. By the way, I asked later some police authorities why the dog did not smell us. And he said, I told him we didn't take a bath in four months, he said, this is the only reason. You became part of the environment. You smelled like the dog, like all this crap from the pigs and everything around there. If you would have taken a bath, the dogs would have sniffled you --

MAX: They had no clothes from us.

HERMAN: Clue means nothing, they would have sniffled us up there, because it was open, you see, the barn was open in front, a huge opening. There was a big space between the boards, and if we would have taken baths, we would have smelled different. Now

we smelled like around, like all the stuff, the hay and the crap what was there. And you know how that smells.

So they fed us -- I remember that they fed us very well. Apparently, I don't know then if they owned, they must have owned probably the little farm what they had, because there was also a little store where they sold. In fact, I saw a beautiful blonde in there, I never knew the name. I saw because I went down two, three times and saw her. I don't know if she saw me.

But we were very, very well fed. There was all kinds of food, I guess on the ranches and the farms. And Josef being what he was, had all kinds of access to food. So they fed us pretty well.

ANNE: What was the hard part?

HERMAN: The hard part was of course, an hour was like a day, and the day was like a month. The time wouldn't fly at all. We always had to worry, because we know Josef, of course, back to work in Auschwitz. And he reported every night when he -- every night he came back from work, he came to us and we talked for an hour, an hour and a half, you see. And then later we talked some more, whatever, we talked even more.

But we knew, when he goes to work in Auschwitz, something can happen. Easy can happen. Besides that, we also knew Josef was an -- he told us he was an underground fighter. He could have been easily get involved in other things and be

arrested. So we knew we were so, in such a dangerous position. So unless he comes back, what could we do?

You see, the other knew about us, the brother and sister, they came up, once in awhile we played with them. That is what they are saying now, we counted and all kinds of games we played, which I don't really remember. I know we talked with them, you know, because they spoke German. But they don't speak German any more, except Josef.

But they really had nothing to do with us. The mother cooked for us, which apparently Josef ordered. But Josef was the one, and he was the one who could only guide us and feed us, because we could not go (unintelligible) without Josef. And we didn't dare.

And it was already a tremendous -- when he got the bicycle and we got the suits, and Max went first to the photographer, and then I went, that we took -- because we knew we were in such a situation now that we try to do anything. And to get false papers, we realized we need photos.

MAX: Being on the barn, it is a miracle you didn't get stiff, because we were laying most of the day.

HERMAN: No, sometimes we walked around.

MAX: Yes, around, he had a roof like this, and that's the only exercise we had up there. Daytime we were not allowed to go down, just at nighttime, when it is dark.

So you know anything now, what you done, you don't

believe it yourself. You were able to do all those things. It is just miracles, I guess, just miracles.

HERMAN: To have assumed many extreme cruel, because I don't know, when we were young and we had so much time to think of all this. But then, you know, we come to America, building a new future and all this, it did not dawn so much on you. It didn't.

And you see, after the war, we got together with so many of our old comrades who survived, sure, they congratulate us for having done what we did. It is wonderful that they see us alive. In fact, some of them thought for sure we were killed.

I came to Israel, and I see two, three of them, you know, in '61. And it is not you. My brother, they know my brother. And he said, this is my brother, you know. I know about what you -- you were supposed to be dead. You were (unintelligible) or got shot. They heard we got shot.

You see, just like we heard Josef got shot. Because surviving was impossible. It was impossible. You see, so but that, what I am saying, then we practically shouted off, we know what we have done. But we didn't put anything special to it.

But of course, especially now, since last year, going to Poland, all those memories came back to both of us. And we were so close, around the corner. And now of course, we had that yearning, we were so hoping to find him alive again, you see.

And now, finding him alive, you know, and of course, basically, this is a pretty late stage. But it is not too late that we cannot talk about all these different things. But I think it is wonderful, it is just wonderful. And I hope that Josef is in a condition that he can take it in, the way we would want him to take in, you know, the way we really want him.

We would want to show him a real good time, you know, anything like I say, we really want to go all out for him, what he deserves. Which he -- I don't think he expects. But we really, and thanks God, we are in a position to do it for him.

And we also planning, if things work out the right way, you know, going back to Poland, probably not with him, probably a little later, you know, but sometimes even so, you know, you do good things, you know.

We sent some money to Poland, I don't know if Max told you. But then money sometimes is the evil of things.

MAX: A lot of times.

HERMAN: Because we send money, you know, for Poland, \$600 is a tremendous amount of money. And we were there, you know, for the \$1 you get 2,000 zlotys, so you can't imagine the millions for 600.

We told Josef to give \$75 to the brother, \$75 to the sister, and \$50 to the contact man, you see. To get this money to Poland alone was -- they (unintelligible) you can't even think of. The money came back three times. Not only the cost of the

money, to get it there. But and it was so complicated to get it there. And finally he got it. When he got it, and the brother in the meantime wrote me a letter, Josef wrote Max, the brother wrote me, we promised I got to write them. But now, the brother only read Polish. And Richpolien (?), you know, it's harder.

He writes a letter in Polish to me. It is translated. Now he writes, and I wrote him a letter in German, which he has translated. So anyway, he is -- I said, we are mailing in Deutsch, \$75 to you and \$75 to your sister, and \$50 to Kubik, you know. So anyway, Josef finally gets the money, in Poland it is so, we have no imagination. Apparently anybody there is a regular carrier. They all get the letter and every one can pick up the mail. So the sister picks up this letter.

So here she picked up -- the sister-in-law, not the sister, the wife of the brother. So anyway, Josef wants to give her \$75, and the brother refuses it, because his wife already had the letter and says, they sent you \$7,500 and you owe us \$2,500.

So they are fighting like cats and dogs. Can you imagine it? They thought we are mailing them \$7,500, and Josef said he had so much trouble with them to convince them. And I wrote them in German \$75, you know, in German, you write \$75.

MAX: Well, they dismissed that, it's \$75, we write 71.00. And they did not want to see that point, or didn't see it, they saw seven thousand five hundred divided by three.

HERMAN: Even if we would have, first of all, it's

ridiculous, why we wouldn't send that kind of money. But then, why should they get one third? Josef is the one who really did the work, you see?

MAX: Well, they don't think like --

HERMAN: Well, I mean, but this is the fight, you see? And this is very hard to straighten out, you see. So sometimes I said I hope they are in better shape now when we hear from Josef. But otherwise I sure don't like to get into such a family feud, get to Poland, you know.

TAPE 9

MAX: Get the proper theme for it, the reason and causes and explain it maybe, and then it all helps.

ANNE: Yes, yes. We have had a good reaction to the -- even though it was inaccurate. Very, very positive reaction to the story.

Let's see, Max, we were talking about -- let's talk about some detail things. About the conditions in the barn. What was day to day life there like?

MAX: Day to day life for us, we had, we woke up and laid there, and not played with it, but watched the mice and the rats would come close to us, which there was plenty on there.

And now being so long, I guess the days must have passed one after another, when we were looking forward to when Josef comes home. That was the only one we could talk to.

His sister and brothers, they never came upstairs

during the daytime. And even if they would, we couldn't converse. They did not speak German at all. So we were really hung on to Josef, whatever he did, he was our god there, more or less, and depending on him.

And there was really nothing what we could do extra, what we wanted to do. Sure, we would love to go for a walk in the city or something, but we didn't dare even try to, because we didn't want to take the risk. To get caught there.

The only time, when we said before, we were supposed to get false papers for the ID and we needed a picture. And that was about the only time we took the chance of going down.

As a matter of fact, I remember when the day when we had to get away from there, it felt so funny walking on the street. You know, walking from down to the house and back and forth, you don't feel it. But when you keep walking on the street, all of a sudden it's a different feeling.

And we just lived hopefully every day things will be over, not knowing if and when. We did not get any papers. There was Polish papers, which didn't help us a bit. And radios we didn't have. Even if we would have had a radio, you couldn't understand what they talk. But of course they talk only in Polish. And we were really hungry for Josef to come home and maybe tell us some news, which he found out through my friend Leo. But then later, when I talked to Leo and we call at least three or four times a month here, and he forgets things too.

He doesn't even remember that Josef came back afterwards, after we escaped. And I know he left every day, you know, until the day we had to run away from there. He went to work every day, so he told us.

And once in awhile, he brought some news, Leo would send regards, and he sent us that the three were hung up, the escapees that were caught, they were hung in front of everybody. And this is how we picked up some news from there.

But the barn itself was hard living there. But you don't think of those things. Your mind is not occupied with things around the world. You just closed in with your mind into the barn, what happens to you personally.

ANNE: Max, what was it like the day the SS came? What happened?

MAX: Well, the day when the SS came, I was asleep. And I slept always good in my life, including today. And I have a bad habit, like many other people, of snoring. And Herman woke me up, Max, Max, Max, look down there below. So I looked through the wooden slats, and there was the eight guys with the three dogs.

And I said, oh, my gosh, this is it. And Herman, like he was always pessimistic, no, no, no, so he was the one, I mean, I wouldn't have given up that easy, but he was more optimistic. No, it's not over yet, it's not over yet. And that always helps, you have one which is more optimistic and more

outgoing. I was more of an introvert than an outtravert, always.

So then as it so happened, we heard like the guy, the head of the eight, says, go look for them. And I don't even recall, did they take 10 minutes, half an hour, an hour, we heard him calling around downstairs. And on the ceiling, you couldn't see nothing, there is a trapdoor like you had to go to a chicken coop and move the trapdoor.

But you know, when you think today, they had the proof in their hand that we are there, by the letter with the address. They could have just could have put a torch up the barn. It would have been very simple. They couldn't care less if a few Polacks got killed there or not, unless they didn't figure we are going to live in a barn, we probably be in a house. And since we were not in the house, which they searched thoroughly, where the family lived, we were not in there, not in the basement and not upstairs in the house. So they must not be here.

And then I heard the guy saying, well, they must be another Werner living in this town. Let's go there. And this is when they took off. And then the kids came up and cried, you can leave, you got to leave. They are going to shoot us here.

ANNE: What was the hard part about the barn?

MAX: The hard part? There was no hard part of the barn, because it was paradise to what -- where we came from. Also, I mentioined it before, if you ask me the question, which camp was

better, Auschwitz or Sachsenhausen, I always said Auschwitz. Because Sachsenhausen, you had to live, you lived as long as the last breath came out of your hard, beating and -- as long as you could take it. And Auschwitz, when you were put to productive work, we didn't have the -- during the day when you marched into the factory, you barely saw an SS man during the day. They were surrounding us, but very seldom did they come in. Once in a moon, some big guy walked through there. But that's it.

So many times I would like to be out in the factory than being in the camp. You know, Sunday was -- we didn't work Sundays. Sundays was the worst day of the week, and it is supposed to be a day when we rest for work.

Why was it a bad day? You had to clean your shoes, you had to polish your nails, and you to do this, and you had to do that. And then for good measurement, they allow a few, these SS guys felt like it, everybody out, start singing for a couple of hours. And there was a big conductor there, and the men were singing the camp songs. And Sunday was actually a hated day for us. I rather like to be out in the factory.

ANNE: Tell me about the conditions in the two camps.

MAX: The condition? In what shape?

ANNE: Food, sanitation --

MAX: No, sanitation, Germany, in Sachsenhausen, it was more like an army camp. It just had to be so. We had straw

sacks and we had pillows out of straw, and we had a sheet and a blanket. And you had to make this sheet like a box, square like a box. You got two paddles, wooden boards, and you to form them like a sharp corner edge box. And if now, 25. The blanket has one tiny crease, fold, 25. So that was really an army camp.

And then, hate the Jews. But with the gentiles it was the same way. And there was one (unintelligible) law, and that was it. You know, and that particular thing, everybody had to be neat. I don't think a gentile could have made his bed sloppy. He could not do that either. Because they kept us as an army camp, I think mostly for disease purposes.

You know, it is easy to -- the camp gets a disease, and it spreads like a fire. And we were there to work. And Auschwitz couldn't care less, if the camp is 50,000 or 20,000 people there, there is disease, so they put them faster in the gas chamber than the others. Because they had enough manpower. They come transfers from day and night and day and night, they had enough to replace the manpower easy.

ANNE: When someone came who was new, like a new transport, did you talk to them? Did they know?

MAX: Well, yes, sure, because sometimes they found somebody who you knew from outside. And if you knew -- this was very fortunate for those, if they came to the camp and met somebody they knew who is already been in for awhile, he somehow knew somebody, get a little better job.

And if he get him into (unintelligible) instead somewhere else. So he had a little protection with it. If you come into a camp as a complete stranger, you going through the mill from the beginning on.

If you get accustomed to the life there and you accept it, where we have no other choice, but you could rebel inside. And then that's it for you.

But if you accept it and you see, you behind barbed wire, and it's either or. Either I obey or I going to dig my own grave. If you still have that much thinking of you.

And if some people come in, they see and they get scared, they just give up, I couldn't care less if I keel over the next minute. Willpower has a lot to do -- I mean, I don't even know.

You ask what give me all this power, this strength to think about this and to go through it. I don't know.

ANNE: Did you have any family or friends that you went through with?

MAX: In the camp? I had a lot of friends, they go with me. When we were arrested in September 1939, we were about 1800 from our district. We went by district. And if 50 or 75 have survived out of this small transport, that means a lot.

And there was a lot of friends there. There was older people too, not only young kids like I was, but a lot of young ones, we used to play soccer together, you been to school

together, and you met them. And then it was -- I don't know how could even accept this.

I was the pallbearer. I brought the bodies in, a lot of times, I saw a body which I knew very well. Which maybe was a friend of mine or I knew him from outside. And I just had to look and I was not allowed to make a face or cry or feel bad about it.

But that all went inside. That went -- ate you up. But on the hand, you couldn't let yourself down, otherwise you laying next to him, that same blanket.

ANNE: Were you even beaten?

MAX: Oh, many times, many times. Many times we were beaten. I have a big scar on my head, which give one eye a bad eyesight and which can never be corrected even to operations. And then in the beginning, you had left and right. The whips were -- you were lucky if you didn't get hit from all of them, maybe one or two, it couldn't be helped, we were in rows of five, marching.

And you had on each side, you had protection, I mean, guys (unintelligible) beat so, and they just didn't have little sticks, they hit them from all sides.

And then you are not lined up any more, once a beating starts, you go with your head down, and you put your hands over your arm -- no, your arms over your head. And you are lucky if you protect yourself.

ANNE: Tell me about the day you were arrested. Do you remember that day?

MAX: Very well. I told you before, but we were picked up from home and under the false pretense that we are going to come into a POW camp, because we are Polish citizens.

And we were collected in the schoolyards, and I guess that the wives and the mothers came on, allowed to bring some food, warm -- they told them, bring warm clothes.

You know, just now when you think of it, what liars, bring warm clothes. They knew already where we go, and they knew already that we would never be able to keep them, because when we arrived at the train station in Oranenburg, drop your suitcases, march on.

So why did -- they let them bring so they can keep it, the Germans can keep it. That's all.

ANNE: Tell me about the boxcars. What was it like in there?

MAX: The boxcars was when we were transferred, October '42 from Auschwitz -- from Sachsenhausen to Auschwitz. We marched to the train station, which was a lot of boxcars. And then they opened the doors and jump in.

And people in the good shape could have jumped in fast, because right away behind you was the whip there. And then when everything was in, they couldn't fit any more, then they locked the door from the outside.

Inside, you were almost body against body. And I remember in one corner was an open slot like a little window. There was no bathroom facilities in there, no water. They give us some package of some sandwiches, because they new it's -- we not going to arrive the next day.

And we could never could have left that boxcar until we got to Auschwitz, which took days. And I don't have to tell you, those who were able to walk out or jump down, because the boxcar is high, you don't have a low step there like going into a passenger train, those people come down.

And many stayed inside. Either they were gone already or just were not able to get out any more. And that's what (unintelligible). And they were taking them stretchers and right away into the gas chambers.

ANNE: I am going to ask you about your worse memory and your best memory. The worst memory that --

MAX: The worst memory was when the first night when I slept in Sachsenhausen, away from my mother. Not being with my mother. I was very, very spoiled by my mother.

In Europe, the parents in most of the cases, the fathers protected the daughters and the mothers protected the sons.

And we were only one of each. So I could get away with murder with my mother, and vice versa my sister with my father. But my sister was already left already, my father wasn't

there any more. So it was just my mother and me. We depended on each other.

The first night ever in my life, with the exception of the year before when I was in jail, when I wanted to escape to Holland, that I ever was without my mother.

And even so I was 18, I was not a baby any more. But she was very close to me, and I just cried my eyes out the first night. Then, so how much crying can you do? And then slowly I had to get used to that, I don't have anybody.

And the best night, there is no really good night. There is no good night, escape, there is not a good night, because you don't -- what I going to expect, would I be caught, I didn't know who was Josef, I knew him from the camp, from the working place.

I didn't know him as in private life. I just trusted him completely for one reason only -- freedom. I saw freedom in front of my eyes.

So I couldn't not even say I had a happy day, one way or another. I couldn't.

ANNE: Let's see. What about the influence that those years had on you?

MAX: After the war?

ANNE: Yes.

MAX: Well, the only thing I say, I had a very tough schooling behind me. And I think -- I don't say it was good, but

it -- I think it made me somewhat easier to accept life. When life is not rosy, I am talking after the war, life wasn't always rosy. We had rough times. I had it tough, when I wanted to come to America they didn't let me go, because they discovered I had tuberculosis, which I didn't know.

It was a setback for one year. I had to go to a sanatorium in Germany. And then after one year the American doctor, he was a Jewish guy, and he said, Max, I got my release papers from the Army today, I will let you go too.

I didn't know how he meant this. Was it really, did I feel better with tuberculosis?

And then I came to San Francisco. And the next day somebody knocked on my door, Mt. Zion hospital, I have a doctor's appointment. All my records came with me.

And I know, America had two sicknesses which never could come into America, is the eye, the name I forgot, an eye problem, and tuberculosis. They never. And I don't know why he got in.

So gradually, I had five years I was in the supervision from Mt. Zion hospital, X-rays every three months, five years.

And slowly, it never developed any bigger, it stayed the way it was. So then here this life, of course, everything is in favor for you in America, providing you know how to make use of it. Things that you don't expect, much bigger things, if you

work for it and that happens, it is more appreciated.

But I don't expect things. And this is partly of my tough school. I can live with good times and I can live with bad times, because I have been on both sides. So I think that schooling was not a bad school -- in one sentence of, I mean, it was not good for what I have seen in my life, but it makes me easier to adjust life.

And then every day, I say thank you for still being there.

ANNE: Max, what about Judaism, did it -- how do you feel about religion?

MAX: Well, being raised orthodox, I was until I was arrested. I layed tefilim every day, and it was hard the first couple of years in camp, we knew the date, what date it is. And we knew somewhere around this month is Pesach or it's Rosh Hashonah. And you know, it got to you. You can do nothing.

And there were some orthodox Jews in -- between my transport. Matter of fact, a lot of them. They had made themselves a minyan in the evening and in the morning.

But orthodoxy did not help you in the camp. You had memories of it, then slowly it got away from you until the time after the war when I came back. Then I picked up almost where I left it.

I am not that -- I mean, I am not kosher, which was not thinking of not eating kosher before I was arrested. And I

would call myself a traditional Jew now. And I heard from people saying, I don't believe it any more. If there is a God, why did he let this happen?

I never popped this question. I don't know if I should or should not. But some people they think that way, yes, if there is really a God, now, then I don't believe in Him any more because of what he did.

God is for me not a person anyhow, He is a being of something, He doesn't take care of individual people, I think. You make your own belief, I think.

ANNE: Let's go to the end of the war. We had talked with Herman, and we got to the point where you were reunited with his wife to be.

You ended up, you met the Russian Jewish --

MAX: Well, that was in Ribnik, where we were hidden in the big mansion there, what Herman called the villa. And then after four days, when it calmed down a little, we took the bicycle and drove into the city of Kleibensruhr, where Herman's wife lived.

And I was itching to go back to Berlin, because I wanted to see if I have somebody in my family there. But there was no way of transportation. And in the end of May or so, the first Polish people who were shipped to West Germany during the war as forced labor, and they came back home.

And we saw the trains. So then we took a chance to go to Berlin. And during the time we waited until the train, we

never knew when the time ever will come. So I was pretty lucky and I met a Jewish Russian lieutenant, and he gave me a job. So I was working (unintelligible) and we went back to Berlin.

And I went back to the place where my wife lived, and I was sleeping in a friend's place, which was in a different sector of Berlin. And she says, why didn't you come out here? So she went and took us to the city, or each sector had their own city hall.

And we went to the city hall, and she introduced those two guys just came back from the concentration camp, they gave us an apartment. And we had an apartment there.

Then Herman, not long, he had been back to Glivens to pick up Mariana. So then he came back, and her sister also came along. And then we lived, Herman and Mariana and I, we lived in that one apartment. And my wife lived about 10 minutes within walking distance. So we really got close together. And then Herman's wife, she cooked for the two of us and washed the clothes for us.

And then February '46, we married together, the four of us in Berlin.

ANNE; And then what was the route to get here?

MAX: Then in May '46, American opened the gates for us people. They called us displaced persons. And everybody in Berlin ran to the American consulate. So they had a big yard outside, and we were staying in the yard outside.

And then all of a sudden somebody comes and puts the line of rope in between people and said, this is going to be -- on this side will be the first ship going to America. And this, on the other side, will be the second ship.

So the first ship, they told him, you go home, in three days you pack your suitcase and you go to Bremerhaven and take the boat. They didn't send them to no doctors, nothing. And we going two weeks later.

So we had time, they sent us to the doctors. So I had an appointment to go pick up Davida, we were married already, and to go pick Davida, I swore and I make fingerprints already.

And the consul goes to my records and he stops, looks at me, looks at the files, and then he talks to the girl who was the translator, because I didn't speak a word of English. And he told her, tell him he cannot go, he has tuberculosis. That was a great setback.

So we cried, my in-laws on the way to America, and they knew that we coming, we had the next ship in two weeks. So I run from one professor to another professor, and everybody says, yes, X-rays showed you have something, it has got to be supervised more. They don't know if it's going to go, if it doesn't go.

The American doctor told me I had to go back in three months, and he took a tiny ruler and he showed it to me in millimetres. It shrunk 1 millimetre, and that was a mistake. He

said, if it's a scar, then it would be the same what it was three months ago. Because it shrunk a millimeter, it shows him it is active. That's why he didn't let me go.

So that took about a year. Then, I mean, complications. Life isn't always easy. So then I finally could go. My wife became pregnant. And she was in the seven months pregnancy. And you could have seen something already, no, fifth months pregnancy. So she tried to put a tight girdle on, and we went to the consulate to start all over again.

So she went to the doctor, and he just looked in her eyes, aren't you pregnant? No, I'm not pregnant. He said, lay on the table. So she layed on the table, he put an ear on her belly. He says, that's funny, I can hear it already. So she -- we cannot go.

So what do we do now? When the baby is three months old, then we should come back. But I wanted -- we didn't want to have the child be born in Germany if at all possible.

So I worked for the HIAS, at that time it was called American Joint Distribution Committee, and they also sponsored part of our wedding.

END OF TAPE 9