

OK, Eddy, why don you start out by telling us, have you ever talked about this before?

No. I do talk a lot, for the last 18 years, about what happened to me between 1940 and 1945, as a non-professional speaker who doesn't accept any fees-- I emphasize that. But I never, except with my wife and two children, never talked publicly about what happened from our liberation till, say, today. And I feel I have to talk about it.

I don't know if I can succeed, because it makes me-- it is kind of reliving again. But I feel there is a continuation of the Holocaust. The Holocaust will always be in me if I like it or not. It will always affect my life and is affecting my life.

And why don't you start out by saying how you think it affects your life.

During the interview, it will come out how it affects my life-- emotionally, physically, where the anger comes from, the pain comes from. Because when I was liberated, I never realized till many, many years ago-- I lived for 32 years-- actually, yes, in 1940, when the Germans occupied my country, then Holland, till 1972, I lived in a state of shock, but I never realized. All my feelings were gone. I could not feel, actually, real enjoyment, couldn't feel any pain. I was numb. I was told I was in the freezer for 32 years.

I've been slowly but surely in a process of defrosting. I can talk about what happened in the camps. And I will try to talk about what happened after the camps.

Yeah. What started this defrosting process? That started in 1972 in a way.

You mentioned something about your 12-year-old son helped start this.

Yeah. Now we jump to 1972, OK?

Well, we could either do that or we could go back and start.

I'd rather start from the beginning.

OK, let's do that.

But whatever is better for you.

No, that's fine. Let's go ahead and--

Is he taping now?

Yeah, he is.

Oh, I'm sorry.

No, it's OK. Go ahead-- so why don't you start talking about what happened at liberation.

I was liberated-- by the way, I was born in Amsterdam, Holland. My whole family was murdered. I was liberated by the United States Army 104th Infantry Division, nicknamed the Timberwolves. But when I was liberated, I didn't know who liberated me. I only saw American soldiers.

I was, from April 1943 till April 1945, exactly two years, at five different camps as a teenager. I was never a teenager. I don't know what it is to be a teenager. Because from 1940, when the Germans invaded my country, then Holland, I was 12 years old. And I never had a normal childhood. I don't say that to have sympathy, but that is the facts, part of my life.

It also said by professional people, that survivors who were in the teens-- and not many teenagers survived-- in their life,

generally speaking, have a much harder life than people who were already adults when they went in the camp. Because the growing years, from child to adult, I never experienced.

But I was 17 years old in age, but I was a very old man on account of my experience in the concentration camps. I was one year in Auschwitz-Birkenau. And that, by itself, was enough. I was 70 pounds, 7-0. I was a cripple. I am a cripple. All my ten toes are cut off. Again, what I'm talking about is not for sympathy or pity. It is facts, it's history.

Also, during this interview, there's a possibility that people don't like to hear it or don't agree. But as long as I tell the truth, if people can't handle it, it is not my baby.

I also feel very strong that I have to do the interview as a message to people and particularly to the younger generation, born after World War II. 50% of the population of our country are born after 1940.

So I was liberated in the concentration camp Dora, near Nordhausen, where the V-1 and V-2 rocket factories were underground. That was actually a subcamp of Buchenwald. Near every big concentration camp in the area, you had little subcamps. Go on.

Oh, OK. So you were in a displaced persons--

No, no, I was liberated from a concentration camp. The American soldiers opened the gates and experienced hell and death they never were trained for.

What did you observe about the American soldiers and how they reacted?

I mean, I was completely numb. I said before, I was numb, in a state of shock, from 1940 until '72. I didn't have any cause for celebration because my whole family was murdered. I didn't feel any enjoyment nor emotion. I was dead inside, no feelings.

And now the American soldiers. On April 11, one American tank in the concentration camp with three members of the United States Army. And I was fortunate, with the other survivors, in 1986, they had a reunion, my liberators, in South Sydney in the airport Hilton. And it was the first time after 41 years, that we could say thank you. And the people who liberated me, the first tank, the only tank, were still alive. And they remembered. Then we cried and laughed together. It goes without saying.

Then, the next day, on April 12, Americans came, all American soldiers. I remember I learned English in high school. I was only a couple of years in high school. And most people, the few people who were in the camp-- we were all, by the way, skeletons-- the American soldiers, the first thing they did, the goodness from their heart, the giving, they gave us all military food, the canned goods, the canned food. But our system couldn't handle it. But they never experienced so much inhumanity. Skeletons.

There are many who survived who died on account of the food. But Americans are not to blame. Later, they realized we had to stop it. Because it's something foreign for them. They were trained to fight the soldiers, there were not prepared for what they saw when they opened the gates.

But I was too ill to eat. But I do remember that the Americans had Lucky Strike cigarettes. And everybody want to have cigarettes. And I was the only one who could speak a little bit of English.

So the American soldiers gave me cartons of cigarettes to give to the other fellows. And when I did light the first cigarette, I fainted. I remember I fainted. Because I couldn't handle it.

The American soldiers-- you asked me-- they were very angry. They were in a rage. They wanted to give all the inmates who could walk weapons to go after the Germans. Some of the inmates who could walk went to villages and killed Germans.

One could say, hey, that's crude. Innocent people. But around every concentration camp, all camps in the area, were villages. And they knew.

Like I said, it's inhuman. You can't kill people. But it was again a kind of revenge. I couldn't participate. Maybe otherwise I probably would have.

What made you unable? You were physically unable?

Not physically-- I couldn't walk. I didn't have any toes.

OK, so it was physical.

Physical, yes. The American soldiers told the inmates, when go in the village and you see some of the murderers, they changed clothes. They had civilian clothes. So some inmates went in the villages and recognized the murderers. So the American soldiers said, don't touch them, bring them in. And they brought him in.

And what they did was, just after the liberation, a short amount of liberation, they told the ex-inmates, OK, beat them up. And finally the Americans shot them to death. No trial, nothing. But they saw there was no time for trial.

And then the commander-- I think it was the ex-governor of New York, Carey, C-A-R-E-Y, many years ago, he was governor of New York. And I think he was in charge. He said, stop. We were not allowed to get out.

Then we went to Buchenwald, the main camp. Now, you want me to continue to talk?

Mm-hmm.

I never saw a doctor. I can't remember. I'm talking at liberation. I can't remember ever seeing a doctor. Because the war was still continuing. It was April 11.

Many of my liberators were killed afterwards, between the 11th of April and the 8th of May, the end of the war. The war wasn't over.

So we went to Buchenwald, but it was liberated, I think, also April the 11th. Now, in the camp, you were always bald. And before the liberation, I was very, very ill. My toes were cut off. And I had other illnesses apparently. I don't remember what it was.

And I never had my hair shaved, the head shaved. So my hair was growing. And it was not allowed. And I remember-- now I go back to before the liberation-- the barber was a Belgian inmate. He said, hey, Dutchman, come down, because you know, the haircut.

I said, I'm too ill. But then they'll beat the hell out of you. I said, I don't care. I'm too ill. I could not physically-- and I could care less.

So when I was liberated, as a young child, I had a lot of wavy hair. I was always proud of my hair, I remember. What I have now is still mine, of course, but not as much.

So when I was liberated, I had a little bit of hair in a little wave. So when we arrived in Buchenwald, they put us in barracks. This is after liberation, I'm talking about. And then they had German soldiers, POWs. They had to take care of us.

And they were very-- of course they lost the war, thank God-- but they had a kind of fear. But I never realized it till many years after the war, but I remember, very well, one of the first things I did-- by that time, I only spoke German. Now I can't, and I don't want to. Then.

So I ordered them around the way they ordered me around. I said, bring me a comb and some soap, whatever you can find of water. I want to wash my head and I want to comb my hair. And I want to see a mirror. This is the first time I saw myself.

So they brought it to me. And I hold up the mirror. And I never forget. There are things I never forget. And I told them-- let me clean it up-- you idiot, higher, higher, the mirror, I can't see it. Are you kind of a nut? But other language. The same words they used to me, I used to them.

One can say, why do you lower yourself on their level? No, but for two years, I only heard-- the nice expression was, you dirty Jew, you Jewish pig, you are not human, the little ants are better than you are We were not human beings. We were human garbage in the camp.

So and I understand it's very hard for people to comprehend, to understand, what it was all about if one always lived in peace and freedom and slept in their own bed. I understand. But they have to try to have some kind of compassion with people like myself. And I'm not the only one been through.

And then I remember they put us on a plane. I went back to Holland, to the southern part of Holland. It was May 14. I have a tremendous memory of dates. Now, May 14, a special meaning that date. On May 14, 1940, the war between Germany and Holland was over. Holland was completely occupied. On May 14, 1943, My father and mother were murdered by the Germans in the extermination camp Sobibor. How ironic I arrived back in Holland May 14, 1945. I hope I make sense to you.

Yeah, it does.

We went by plane. And I remember I was-- I don't like to fly. But it was a military plane. We were on stretchers. And we went to the southern part of Holland that was liberated in 1944. They were already liberated. The rest of Holland was liberated May the 5th.

Anyway, when we arrived in Holland, I never saw. Because again, and I repeat myself many times during the interview, I know that already, about any kind of shock, no feelings, no expectations.

I remember there were people from the Red Cross, and ambulances. And they brought us to-- there was nobody to say, I remember-- welcome home. Nobody. Later I think I realized why. But it was many years later. Then I didn't-- I only remembered what happened, and no reasoning, nothing, and no feelings. I hope it makes sense to you.

I'm not sure. Do you mean that you just felt it--

Many years later.

You didn't feel it.

Then, no, I didn't feel anything.

But when you finally did realize why you thought it happened, why was it?

Oh, a lot of anger came out. But it's much later in my life. But what I'm telling you, I'm now back actually May 14, when I arrived in Holland, 1945.

Right.

Do I confuse you?

No.

Please tell me. Because again, I never talked about it before.

Yeah. No, I understand. And nobody was there at all.

No. And I'm actually visualizing what happened to me, even though I didn't see myself. And I'm sorry, what did you say? There was nobody there, no. Ambulances.

Then they brought us to a-- I talk about "us," not only Jewish people were liberated, underground fighters, people from Holland who were real, very ill. I think others went by train, but I'm talking only what happened to me.

They brought us to an emergency hospital. It was a school used as in hospital. I never forget when they put me in a bed-- and I couldn't walk. I was on a stretcher. I was a real bed, real pillows, pillowcases, real sheets.

I remember, all of us, we only talked German. And I-- I'll just talk to the nurse. And I told her, in German, schwester-- something like that. That means nurse. And then she said, you are in Holland. Don't you know how to say it in Holland? Because apparently, in the camps, you're so brainwashed, or a robot, whatever. I don't know if I ever talked Dutch in the camps. I can't remember that part. In the camps in Germany and in Poland, I'm talking about. I also was in camps in Holland.

But anyway, again, the only people who visited us were, every day, two nuns came. And they knitted for me a pair of slippers. They never talked about religion. They were real good human beings.

But I realized later why they did it. Apparently they want to give something from themselves. They knew-- not from me, maybe from the doctors-- I didn't have any toes. I was the youngest in the big room, maybe 40, 50 guys. And I was the baby. And I also remember the nurses always tucked me in. They tucked me in in the night and gave me a kiss on the cheek because I was a child. I was 17 years old. And I remember the other inmates were jealous, gave me a bad time.

But by the way, I never knew-- maybe, thinking back, I had three sisters. One was married, had a baby-- and a husband, of course-- and was murdered, and two other sisters, but I was the youngest. And the other, I think, two sisters who were not married always spoiled me.

So maybe the sisters who spoiled me in my mind were, in my unconsciousness, were my sisters when I was a little child, before the war, who spoiled me. Does that make sense to you?

Yeah. Yeah, it does.

And then something happened. They brought in, in the big room, kind of a big room, a classroom, actually, but they had changed it to put beds in, whatever-- oh yeah, we got German cigarettes. But German POWs who were working downstairs, we heard, were smoking Camel and Lucky Strike. So the adults-- not myself-- from us raised hell. Oof did they raise hell. (GRUMBLING) The bastards, I mean, they-- and we have the Germans.

That was right they changed and stopped. They got the Germans and we got the good ones. I didn't raise hell, but I remember that it happened. There's so much anger then. But I never realized till many years later what they did to us, the Germans, that is. I mention Germans, not Nazis, because I only know about Germans. The people who did it to my family and me never showed the ID of a member of the Nazi party, whatever it were. The Germans-- I want to emphasize that, the Germans during World War II.

Then, one day, they brought in a young man, maybe my age. His whole body was open. And we found out he was a Dutch young man who volunteered to fight the Russians. And he was kind of dying. And we could care less if he raised hell. Get that traitor off the room here. And he was always crying and whatever. He was a volunteer and fought the Allies, the Russians, whatever. So we didn't want to have a part of him.

Later we found out he died, and we enjoyed it very much. Sounds inhuman, but he was one of our enemies, regardless of his age, because he went voluntarily.

Yeah, he was a real volunteer.

Yeah. Why? [GRUMBLING IN WONDER] But the insensitivity started there. Why to put such a person in the same room with all-- Jews and non-Jew alike, physically handicapped, we were all physically handicapped. You don't put such a person together with us. Do I make sense to you?

Yes, it makes sense to me.

But again, of course, the doctors and the nurses didn't realize what we went through. Now, then, one day, a young lady came. And she was a Jewish young girl. Apparently she was maybe my age, a couple of years younger, in hiding with her parents. And she made me-- and I saved this. It is now 45 years old. "Netherlands Buchenwald," with the flag from the Netherlands. And she wrote on the back, "please remember me," and her name, "Ruth Winter," as the climate, winter, and her address. And I saw her, I think, once.

I didn't know how she knew about me. I don't know. Oh, it was announced on the radio. I'm sorry. It was announced on the radio when survivors came back in Holland, and names. And we heard our own names being announced. Maybe that's how she knew. I don't know.

And I will never throw it away. It's very touching.

People who visited us were people from the neighborhood. And one day, a lady came from the Dutch Red Cross. I can laugh about it now. What she brought us was pencils and paper, (FACETIOUSLY) just what we needed. Pencils and paper-- insensitive. Besides the two nuns, nobody of any-- no rabbi ever showed up, no priests, nobody. Only the two nuns came and stood for a couple of minutes, every bed, how are you doing? And then, for me, they made the slippers. And I needed slippers because I couldn't walk on shoes. I couldn't walk at all then.

But here is maybe my anger slowly coming out. And that's all right. I let it come out. Why not? It was here long enough.

Then, one day-- my mother had sisters, and everybody was murdered except one sister, who was married with a non-Jew. He was a principal of a high school. By the way, during the war, he was not allowed to stay principal. They kicked him out because even though he was non-Jewish, his wife was Jewish. They had one daughter. And one day, she came with a girlfriend-- how they knew that I survived, I never asked, I don't know-- to visit me. But thinking back about it and looking back to that time, I don't think I had any feelings. Oh, they were sweet. They came, I think, by bike. Or they got some transportation. I don't know. Tremendous distance from Amsterdam to the southern part of Holland. It was very sweet, but I didn't feel anything. I hope it makes sense to you.

But nothing-- no hugging, no kissing, no holding hands, no tears, not from my side. It was dead, completely dead. It's hard maybe to understand or to comprehend that a person can be completely without feelings.

I think probably it is hard for a lot of people to comprehend it. But I do comprehend it.

Yeah, and I was told, many, many years later, it was a part of my survival in your unconscious. Unconsciousness, you block everything out. So completely in the freezer. And a big fence around me.

But anyway, then I had my 18th birthday in that hospital.

Before you move on, did you ever see your family again, your mother's sister and her daughter?

Oh yeah.

You did. OK.

Oh yeah. As I said before, people did not visit. It still amazes me. Some of the fellows could walk. By the way, we did

not have any clothes. We still had our inmate outfits, mind you. So they went-- they were allowed, in daytime, to go walk around in that city. The city is-- ever heard about the big Phillips Corporation? P-h-i-l-i-p-s. It is a giant nowadays. In that city, Eindhoven-- you want me to spell it?

Yeah, go ahead.

E-i-n-d-h-o-v-e-n. And they were allowed to walk. And when they saw people walking in the pajama kind of outfit, they gave them presents and everything. Oh, yeah, the population was fantastic. And they brought it for us too. But people-- officially, nobody visited us.

But anyway, then I left. I couldn't walk, or hardly walk. I had to learn to walk again. Because when you have toes-- I think, I don't even remember anymore-- I presume you go that way when you walk. But I walk on my heels. There's a foot. So I had to learn to walk.

And you still walk that way, right?

Oh, yes, to keep a balance.

Does that cause other physical problems, like with your back?

No, my feet. And the older I get, the worse it gets. But if you ask me later about it, I'm more than happy to tell you. I don't want to be rude, but otherwise I lose it. And again, I never talked about it before. So it is not that easy to keep the story straight.

OK, I'm sorry.

No, no, no, that's OK. My feet didn't want to heal. But they were amputated, my toes. But there was still junk coming out. But I learned how to put bandages on. We had doctors who looked at it. Yeah, once they found a little-- because my toes were amputated with a pair of scissors, not a regular amputation. And I was conscious. It was in the camp, of course. So they took a pair of scissors, cut it off.

Apparently there was still bones left. So once I remember a bone was growing out, out of the amputation. And then the doctors looked at it and pulled it out. Yeah, that happened once.

So then I had to learn to walk as a little child. Thank God for the beautiful nuns. They made me the slippers. Otherwise I couldn't-- no shoes, of course.

So I walked, in a way, held by nurses, on slippers, on my heels. I was scared to death to put my foot down. I walked that way. Now I walk that way.

I went in an ambulance, and I went to my aunt and uncle and their daughter to live. Now, let me first tell you, the people meant well. But I was 18 years old. Under the law, in Holland then, you're a minor till you're 21. In age, I was 18, but experience of life, maybe I was 150 or 200 or 500, I don't know.

So they thought, here is Eddy back, and he's 18 years old. And we'll treat him as any other 18-year-old, as their own daughter. But that didn't work out.

Let me explain what I mean. Here we go, the insensitivity of people. They're not bad people, let me emphasize it. And my aunt was a sick woman. She had diabetes. They treated me the same as, say, their daughter. You know, you're 18 years old. You have to be home by that time and whatever. And they meant well. But here, who came back from death and hell, I don't want to be boxed in. I want to breathe. But they didn't realize that they cut off my breathing. Not to hurt me, but didn't know. They saw an 18-year-old kid. I didn't stay there long because they couldn't handle me.

But while I stayed there, they never asked-- they did ask me, did you see any one of the family, aunts, or uncles,

whatever? I said no. They never asked me-- actually, in the hospital, nobody asked me. And that was the beginning of my anger building up that came out after '72, pain, and anger, and rage. No-- my own family, my aunt or uncle, they never asked, Eddy, do you mind to talk about it? Maybe I would have said, no, I don't know want to talk about it. Oh, OK.

You mean, do they do you want to talk about it, not do you mind.

Whatever.

It just confused me. I'm sorry.

No, no, they didn't ask me, Eddy, do you mind, we'd like to know more. Do you think you can talk about it? Will you tell us what happened to you?

They didn't want to know.

No, no, no, no, no. It was never asked. Later I realized, on account of my counseling that I have, why. And it angers me tremendously. Maybe I don't make sense to you.

They did not ask me any questions. They didn't ask me, what happened to you, whatever. They didn't even ask me, how come you don't have any toes? They knew I didn't have any toes. They knew that. OK.

Then, I didn't realize it. I wish they would have asked me, not only them but other people. I would maybe be a different person now. Thank God now, if you take the Vietnam veterans-- thank God, they deserve it-- the delayed stress syndrome, they get treatment, and they recognize psychiatry, whatever. I never heard about psychiatry or go to a doctor. So everything stayed frozen.

Now, on account that I was a handicapped person, I went to the disability department to ask for a disability payment. Now, let me make it clear. I never in my life asked for money because I think people owed me money or they owe it to me on account that I'm a survivor. No way, I'm too proud for that.

But I thought, I was a Dutchman then, right, I was a kid when it happened to me. When I came back, I was still a kid. My uncle by the way was appointed by the court as official guardian. My aunt and uncle told me, your father left money behind. Well, I didn't know. You have to pay us, every week, 20 guilders-- say \$20, but you have an exchange, of course. But you don't work, of course, because you're sick. We take that from the money. And when you're 21 years old-- we wrote everything down, and we're honest people. Don't misunderstand. I hope I make myself clear.

So they charged me \$20 a week as a boarder. And they took it from the money they had from my father. OK, do it make sense?

Mm-hmm.

And when I was 21, it was all honest and good people. But again, no warmth, no hug, no nothing. It was cold. Maybe I was cold too. I don't know. Maybe in my unconscious, I drove people maybe away. I don't know.

Was this new after the war? Before the war, were they warmer when you were around them?

I was only a kid.

So you don't remember?

No, I remember them from before the war. But I was not the same child. They thought they would see the same child that they knew 11, 12 years old. They expected the same apparently. And a person who came back from the death and hell was a very old man at age 17. If I would be in their shoes, maybe I would have acted the same way they did. Do I

make sense to you?

Yeah, it does.

Does it answer your question?

Yeah. Did you find it just as insensitive that they would charge this board from you?

Not then. Again, I was in a state of shock, no feelings. I could care less. I didn't have any feelings. It didn't touch me. Much later--

Did that bother you later then?

Oh, yeah. A lot of things. But I will talk about it later if you don't mind. No, no, I was still a robot in a way. But I never recognized myself then as a robot. I was told years later, during counseling.

So I went to the department of unemployment. And I wanted to have an unemployment disability. I'll never forget, it was an elderly gentleman. I told him my background and why I could hardly walk, only in slippers. How it went, I don't remember. And the man started crying. The bureaucrat was crying.

And he said, I want to prove to you that you can't get any money. He wanted to prove to me. And I remember he opened the big book. He said, under article whatever in the year 1900 whatever, if you never paid in, you can never collect. And he cried. He said he was an underground fighter and he saved people. It hurt him so much to tell me, nothing for you.

Again, I didn't have any pain. Then, at the beginning of the war, my father and myself gave to our neighbors. I helped my father carrying-- it was in 1941, beginning of '42, '41, '42-- carrying all kinds of stuff to neighbors who we thought were honest, decent people, in case that when we come back. It was silverware but also my bike.

So after the war, my aunt-- and I was walking on slippers-- I didn't have any shoes. I never heard about orthopedic shoes, nothing. I went with public transportation. So we went to see the people. And then I saw a beautiful carpet from my mom and dad on the floor. First of all, after they took us away in 1943, before the Germans came to plunder it and sent it to Germany, neighbors-- it happened all over the place-- went in the homes of the Jewish people and grabbing whatever they could. I don't say they're bad people, but this is what they did.

So I saw the carpet. So I asked him not even about the carpet. I want to have my bike back, I want to have the crates back. Then there was a big fight-- not physically. The oldest son, who later became a member of the clergy, mind you, worked part-time for the police. And he threatened me. Here I'm just back from hell and death. If I don't leave their home, they will go, they will get the police. They'd arrest me, put me back in jail.

Here I am just 18 years old, emotional a cripple, one can say, physically a cripple. Besides being a cripple, the experience-- I only came to get what was legally mine. Finally he gave me only my bike back. But he took off the tires. Would you believe that? The tires of the bike.

There were very religious Christian people. Now, I have to jump a couple of years later. I'll come back to that later. In that same period, '41, '42, I helped my married sister bring all kind of stuff to neighbors for safekeeping. A lot of Jewish people thought they had neighbors they could trust. I also went there because I was close to my married sister, especially on account of her little baby, who was murdered when she was 1 year old. But I always loved her very much, even though I was only, when she was born, 14 years old. So I went to the neighbors of my sister's. And here's what they told me. Before, when your sister brought the stuff, they give us instructions-- don't give it to anybody except to us when we come back.

I said, I brought it over with my sister myself. Because I know you. I know your name because we visited. When I visited my sister, we visited you next door. Very religious people. I never got it back. Then I talk now about people who took advantage. But then my father, who had a wholesale business in fruit and vegetables for many, many years, a

wholesale business, in Amsterdam, had clients of course. And as a child, I was always working-- and really working-- with my father in the business.

He'd say, you can visit, but you have to work. On account that I helped him-- It was till 1941. I was born in 1927. So as far as I know, it was always on the wholesale market, not the retail. You'd start in the middle of the night.

Anyway, I always had to carry heavy crates. Maybe that helped me survive. Somebody told me, years ago, that I had such strong arms that I could do work. I don't know.

But he had two clients who I knew very well. And in the old country, you would never say, to older people, by their first name. You never call them Joe. It was always Uncle Joe and Aunt Mary, for instance. Never by first name. Oh, you're kidding. No way.

So I remember them as Uncle So-and-so. So they saw me growing up. And one came to me one day. And he said, Eddy, your father gave me money. And I want to give it back to you. I didn't know about it. I was only a kid. My father never told me about it. I said, that is beautiful. Do you have children? He said, I had a son, and he was killed after the war. And he started crying because I wanted to give something as a thank you.

He was not a religious person. He was non-Jewish but not religious. Then, about the same time, another client of my dad brought me-- had the jewelry from my parents. I didn't know what they were hiding. They were non-Jewish people, both. As far as I remember-- I got to know them quite well-- never went to church. So going to church, maybe there are people who don't like-- how could you say that? But going to a synagogue or church doesn't make somebody good or bad. It is inside of people. And I experienced that.

And I emphasize, nor a synagogue, nor a church. I believe, for myself, if God is around me, I don't go to a place to worship. I don't have to. But being a churchgoing person, two families, they stole. The other two never went to church. They were honest. Later I realized that going to a synagogue, a church, doesn't make anybody good, regardless how much donations they give to the church or synagogue.

But anyway, so I got my bike back. I hope I make myself clear-- my bike back without tires. But I didn't have an occupation nor an education, only two years high school. I couldn't go to school. I have to make a living. But I didn't have an occupation. Then I went to the Salvation Army and had second-hand shoes, because I had to have shoes. And I put in cotton to fill up the shoes where the toes were supposed to be. And all kind of layers in so I could-- I had to walk very careful because I could feel the stones through the soles. But I had to walk.

No organization-- the government of Holland then, the philosophy was the Jews came back, but they were not political prisoners, were not underground fighters, there is no law for them. OK?

Later, it all accumulated-- and maybe now I make myself more and more clear-- but it happened after the war. It was building up, but I never knew it was building up, because it was not there, the feeling. It was still building up. Do I make sense so far.

Yeah, I understand. I mean, you can have lots and lots of feelings and not feel any of them.

Nothing. Right, I didn't feel anything.

I wanted to have the business from my father back. In '41, a Dutch German sympathizer came and stole Jewish businesses, not only from my dad, from other people too. So he stole the private money, the business money, kicked people out. He was a robber. We would call him, today, a robber, a thief. And he became a German sympathizer on account of making money of the stolen Jewish businesses. So after the war, I want to have that business back. But I was not trained on anything about doing business. Let me emphasize that. And I thought, I'm the sole beneficiary of my family. I could prove that. That my family was murdered. But it's not easy. Now, I had to take a lawyer. The Dutch government created the Justice Department-- Reinstatement of Justice. I always call it Continuation of Injustice.

One of the reasons I talk about it today is about justice-- not about money, justice. I fight for justice. I will not accept injustice. There are no conditions I compromise with justice.

Because I know what it means to live under a system where you don't have justice. I fight for my rights. Because they took everything the rights away. They took away civil rights, legal rights, and human rights, and my human dignity, during the war. So I made up my mind, when I came out of the freezer, to fight for it. But apparently I start fighting then, but I never realized it. If I would have been open then, I would have been another person today.

But anyway, I had to go to a lawyer. And yes, they gave me the business back. Then what happened? To Dutch German sympathizer was punished in court to go to jail, many of them. But slowly but surely, they helped him out because, quote unquote, they were "ill." They became "ill." Got a piece of paper from a doctor. OK, and they were released.

And they had their own businesses. But the Dutch government appointed people to run them, to be in charge of the business. So the thief who stole my father's business and private money was allowed, after he was feeling better mind you-- he was never punished. He was never required to pay the money back, never. That's why I called it the continuation of injustice office. So it's more justice for the wrong ones. More and more I realize still today, it gets stronger. We, the innocent ones, we become the guilty ones. And the guilty ones became the innocent ones. Do I make sense what I want to say?

Yeah, except I'm a little bit confused.

Maybe I will make it clear. The Dutch government appointed-- they were put in jail, right, punished for what they did, the Dutch German sympathizers. After the war, they went to jail, say, a sentence of three years or whatever. But after a couple of months, they were freed.

Because of the doctors.

Yeah. And money of course.

Now, were they sent to jail because you prosecuted them?

No, no, I didn't, because I didn't know the man then. Apparently others did. Maybe he did, in other city, the same what he did in Amsterdam. Because he came from another city, from Rotterdam. You ever heard about Rotterdam? The big port, the biggest port in Europe, I think.

Yeah, my grandparents sailed from there.

Right. They go to England. I left from Rotterdam to go to the United States. That's right.

Now, so that man was allowed to work in his own business again, the similar business my father had. But he was not a free man to do business. He was not in charge. He was only a manager. He was not the owner. The Dutch government appointed somebody, an owner, say, for two, three, four years, as part of his punishment. But he was manager.

And this was-- what, formally, was your father's business?

OK, maybe I don't make myself clear. He had his own business in Rotterdam. I'm sorry, I didn't say that. The man who stole my father's business had his own wholesale business in Rotterdam. But he stole businesses in Amsterdam.

And incorporated them into his business?

I don't know. But he stole it. No, no, no, he kept it and he ran it in Amsterdam during the war, and in Rotterdam had his own business. Everything flourished because he made a lot of money, besides stealing a fortune, not from my dad, from other people too, business, money, and private accounts.

Do I make sense to you now?

Yes.

You sure?

Uh huh.

If I don't make sense, it's my mistake, OK? So anyway, he was allowed to go back to his own business in Rotterdam. But he was not the owner. Somebody appointed by the court was the owner.

After the war-- that's kind comple-- How do I explain it? During the war, there was no free trade in Holland. Every wholesale dealer got a percentage from what he had before because there was hardly any food. There was not actually free trade, because retailers were more than happy to pay whatever to get some food for the people. So a big organization was formed in the war. I found that out after the war. So he-- you didn't have to do anything. You got so much business. And automatically, the next morning, the retailers came. You didn't have to say, hey, you want to buy beautiful cauliflowers? No, (URGENTLY) can I have it? No, I can only give you so much. You know, it was no business. There was hardly any food, especially at the end of the war. But they made good money.

So the Dutch thief made money on account of what my father sold. They took what did you sell from '35 to '40, for instance. From that, total, what you sold, you get so much percentage as your part and your part, to be fair to all the wholesale dealers.

Do I make sense?

Yeah, they just give you the same proportion.

Correct. And I think they took the income tax or whatever you pay. It's complicated. I found that after the war. What did I know?

So after the war, when I came back, there was money accumulated in my father's business that was then stolen, owned by that Dutch-- I say bastard. I hope that is acceptable. But he made money on what my father sold from '35 to 1940, before the war.

So after the war, after going through lawyers again-- I hardly had any money to pay lawyers-- I got money that was accumulated from 1945 till 1947, after the war. I'm talking now after the war. There was still hardly any food. The same organization still existed, but not in a free country. Holland was liberated '45.

So they gave me an amount of money that was due me as a beneficiary of my dad on what he sold between 1935 and '40. And he, the bastard, the thief, made money from 1941 to '45 also was my father, because he stole the business.

So I got the money. It's not a lot of money, but money. Then I got a letter, it was unbelievable in my mind, in my opinion, from the man who was in charge of his business in Rotterdam. Mr. Wynschenk, you owe this corporation the money you received after the war, in '47-'48. I said, what? This money due what my father sold 1935-'40.

I couldn't believe it. And I said right away, no, I'm not going to pay a penny. I have to be the thief who stole everything from my father and my mom-- private money, business money, stole everything? After the war, he continues to plunder?

I went to a lawyer. I said, I'm not going to pay. He said, here's what you do. Pay him \$10 a month, and then stop. And then you get letters. And then you pay him again. I said, I don't want to pay.

But I was not strong as I am today inside. I was threatened, mind you, if I don't pay, they would take the furniture away. I was married in '49. History repeated itself. Because the Germans took our furniture away. In '49, they want to do the

same, but it was the Dutch government. The guy was appointed by the Dutch government. Maybe he was, during the war, also a German sympathizer. I don't know. I never met the man.

Now I'm going to tell you what people don't like to hear maybe. I was just married in '49. And it was happening-- yeah, about 1950, whatever. I hope it makes sense so far.

I knew where the business was in Rotterdam I lived in Amsterdam. I never met that bastard. I never met anyone. I found his address. And I told my wife, I'm going, and I'm going to kill that man. She said, you can't kill people. No, you can't kill people, but I said it. My father-in-law and my wife talked me out of it. But I went. And he never met me. He was general manager in his own business, the thief.

So I never forget, when I walked in there, I said, where is the thief and war criminal-- I'll spell the name for you-- B-i-j-l, pronounced "bile." And I went at a time that was a very busy time, on purpose. And people came to me, you want to talk to Mr. Bijl? I said, yes, where is he? And I yelled. Didn't realize it was already my anger coming out. I didn't realize that.

So they brought me to an office and they introduced me. And the guy wanted to shake my hand. Uh uh. I said, do you know who I am? He said no. He said no. And I said, I am the son of Moses Wynschenk. You stole everything from my father-- business, money, private money, and now you want to have all the money back? I said, you're lucky because my wife and my father-in-law talked me out of it. Otherwise I would have killed you right now. Because in a way, you helped kill my family. My father worked for 25, 30 years in his business. And by stealing his business, it was the beginning of my father's end. I remember that. I realized that many years later in life.

He said, right away, Mr. Wynschenk, quiet down. And he said, now, wait a minute, this is not the war anymore.

I was very aggressive. I yelled. I remember that.

He said, I am not free. And it was true. I'm only a general manager. But in a couple of years, I am free. I promise you, if I'm free, I'll write you a letter that I don't want to have your money. After we say, he kept his word

Now, justice. I had to pay him. I never got back what he stole from my father. If it's a dollar or \$10,000, I don't care. The stealing, the plundering. Because they stole everything from us in the war, again and again. But the stealing continued after war in a free country, Holland.

Now, I started to get my father's business back. I had to go to court to fight it. And I opened a business. But I could hardly walk. And I failed. I went bankrupt. Because I was 18, 19 years old. I never did any business. I helped my dad as a kid. I didn't know business. I thought I knew, but I didn't. And I hardly had any money. Now, I paid all the debts, and then closed up. And I remember, I named the business still the same as if my father would have been alive-- not my name, in honor of my father and in memory of my dad. But I didn't have any occupation. And there was no-- it was strange-- no organizations, be it Jewish or non-Jewish, where I could go to-- and I'm not talking about money-- to ask for help, for job or whatever. The only thing I got after the war was one package of the Dutch Red Cross. Then on account I hardly had any clothes, the American Jewish people-- and I had a close friend after the war who was with me in the camp. I lost sight of him, but we met again. My age. And I found out last week that he passed away a couple of years ago. I am now 62. So maybe he lived till age 59. He lost half a leg and half a foot.

And I remember we went to a Jewish organization in 19-- oh, let me see-- '48, '49. They had all clothes from American Jewish people. Now, we hardly had any clothes because we came back naked. Only our inmate outfits. So we went there not to expect an expensive, tailor-made suit. But they had rags. In the camp, we walked in rags. Again, we did not expect beautiful clothes, but decent. My wife, myself, we would never give, to Salvation Army, junk. We'd give decent clothes, or we'd throw it away. Because human beings are human beings. Maybe because my wife, myself, experienced in life, in World War II, what only a few people survived. So we were outraged. But I needed clothes.

So I-- and my anger was still not there-- I picked out an army coat, from United States Army. But they painted it dark blue. It was warm, heavy. Ugly, but beautiful warm, heavy. It was a good coat. The rest was rags. Apparently, in our

unconsciousness, we didn't want to have any rags anymore.

Again, we did not expect expensive, beautiful clothes. No, decent. There's a difference between decent and rags. The American Jewish people listened to that, they say, oh, what does the survivor expect? Do we give them diamonds? No. If you give, you give with your heart. But don't give rags.

Do you want me to continue to talk? Do I make sense? You can feel now the anger was building up, but it never came out.

I was in boarding homes. I was under 21. My aunt and uncle put me from one boarding home in the other boarding home. Why? I don't know.

I never asked them because they made the payments to the person in charge of the boarding homes. I was in about six or seven boarding homes in about 4 and 1/2 years from '45 to '49. I never realized how much pain I had from that, until many years after the war, when I opened up. I come back to that every time.

Because since 1943, I never had a normal home life till they took us away. My normal life stopped 1940. My aunt and uncle never had the common sense to say, listen, we have some money from your dad. Why don't you go on a little vacation? Go out with girls. I'd never knew what girls were. No, I mean, the child had stopped. You come back 17. I don't know what holding hands or kissing or dating was. From 12 years old, I became an old man. So I pay a price for it, I know. Nobody can change it. But I never had the forming years. The parents nowadays say, in a normal life, oh, my 17-year-old, he drives-- or she drives-- me nuts. I never had it.

I mean, I never had a sexual relationship. I didn't know what sex was. You interview me, and I want to be open. I have nothing to hide. And thank God nowadays we can talk about sex. But I didn't know.

So my aunt and uncle should have said, OK, why don't we make a reservation in a summer place, whatever, in summer of 1945, when I came back, and stayed for a couple of weeks. And we have money from your dad. And we pay for that. No, there was no rest in between. There was no-- to recoup my-- to be human again.

In the camp, apparently, I fought for survival but I didn't realize. After the war, I had to keep fighting for survival. And I always said, the Holocaust, for me, will never stop. Would stop when I die. The Holocaust is still in me.

Somebody said, you can take the Jew out of the camp, but the camp never out of a Jew. Maybe other survivors don't agree or don't feel it. But I agree with that because I feel very strongly.

So I never had edification. I needed special shoes, orthopedic shoes. I had to fight with the Dutch government until 1953-'54. I had to sign a paper that this time we give you-- you can go to orthopedic shoemaker and we pay for this only once. The rest of your life, never come back. And I never asked for money, never asked for favors. But I needed orthopedic shoes. I could hardly walk.

I hope it makes sense to you. It's not for pity or sympathy, but it's a fact of life.

Now, the Dutch government-- and I give them credit-- made a special law for the underground fighters who were in concentration camps, caught by the Germans, who came back. They were treated fantastically, deservedly so. Many came back maybe as much of a wreck as I was, and the after-effects, whatever. I was in the hospital after the war together with many of them. And they deserve everything they get. But for Jewish survivors, there was nothing at all. It's hard to comprehend or understand.

I hope it makes sense to you. There is bitter, yes. Now anger, yes, a lot of anger. Not oh, let me give the guy \$1,000 a week. I'm not talking about it. There are other ways. For instance, if I could go back to school and the government had said, OK, we'll give you 20 a month or a week so you can pay the boarding home, then maybe I could finish my education. Because without a high school diploma, it's hard to get a job.

So I failed in my father's business. I just was out of the camp, 18 years old. How I even tried it, for me, it's unbelievable that I even tried it when I look back at it.

But I didn't have an occupation. So I worked in a factory, in a leather factory. And I have to stand the whole day on my feet. But I did. And my feet were swollen, and my amputation was still not healed.

But then, in the old fashioned way, you didn't get a paycheck, you got a little brown bag. So you earned 25 guilders or \$10, whatever. They put it in a little brown bag. And on Saturday, they gave you that money. You worked five hour days. It was the same as American then. There was no checking account, nothing.

So I was not allowed, because I was a minor, to handle money. I was in a boarding home on one side of the city, and my aunt and uncle lived on the other side. I had to borrow money for public transportation, mind you, to bring that little brown bag that I earned. They turned around, they gave me 2 guilders and 50 cents pocket money. If I wanted to go to a movie, I didn't have enough money.

Then I started realizing that there is such a thing as girls in the world. But you can't take a girl out for a cup of coffee. I didn't have any money. So that was building up in me.

Then I did something. I had a tremendous good boardinghouse, but I couldn't handle it anymore. The pressure from my aunt and uncle, they treated me, still under 21, as a little child. I couldn't breathe. I was choking.

I went in hiding. After the war, I went in hiding. I made a big mistake. I made a lot of mistakes in my life. I had money accumulated somehow. And I had a cab. And I ordered a cab with an open roof that-- you had it, and for everybody to see I don't know why I did it. I left. Everybody could see that I left.

I went to the railroad station in Amsterdam, and went to a friend, a survivor, who lived in another part in Holland. In hiding, mind you, in hiding.

One day, the police came. What apparently happened, the guardian, my uncle, went to the juvenile police, and said, he's gone. So they were looking for me. I didn't commit a crime, but I was in hiding. I went goodbye.

And I remembered-- So I had to come back. And then I had a long conversation with the inspector of the police. And when I talked, the man cried. He said, I can't blame you. I can't blame you what you did.

But here I wish I would have tried to go in hiding in the war. But after the war?

Also, many years later, I found out that somehow, someway, people who wanted to be good to me, I pushed away. Some people wanted to be warm and good. Later I learned, through counseling, it was normal-- even though it was not nice-- that I didn't realize it.

Because goodness in people I lost-- in the camps, if certain people want this you want to have some extra bread or whatever, there was always, hey, why? What is behind it? Why nice? The Germans also used a tactic all over the place, whoever comes in railroad station at 10 o'clock in the morning gets extra bread. In the Warsaw uprising, in 1943, remember?

Mm-hmm.

They use it all over the place. So people were good to you, apparently in my unconsciousness, hey, wait a minute. That's not kosher. Go away. So I pushed-- I can never make up for it-- but afterward, a lot of good people away. And I didn't realize why I did it.

I was still in a camp. I was told, you were still living in camp. You're still in a camp.

Now, do I go too, too slow or too fast? Or do I make sense?

No, you make sense.

Do you have any questions?

Well, I'm kind of interested in how did you manage to do those jobs when you didn't have any toes.

I didn't have any choice. I had to make a living.

And how did you get, eventually, support so you could support yourself?

I don't know what you mean? Till age 21, I was a child under the law, right?

Right.

So I could not buy a shirt or a handkerchief. They bought everything. They meant well, my aunt and uncle. In their mind, they did exactly what the law told them to do. But there was no love or understanding.

Now, maybe I would have done the same if I would have been in their position. So people say, hey, you walk funny. And I remember saying, I don't have any toes. Nobody ever asked-- yeah, but it happened after the war, people asked me, I am so-and-so, Jewish, I heard you are a survivor, did you know my uncle, blah blah blah, the normal questions. I'd have to say no.

Nobody, Jew and non-Jewish alike, in Holland, ever asked me, over all the years-- I lived in Holland from '45 to '56-- do you mind talking about it? Can I ask you a question what happened? Nobody.

I was told the good Jews were murdered, and the bad ones came back. Apparently you survived because you did terrible things in the camps. Oh yes. You came back, Jew, but you better shut up. You're lucky to be alive. Don't make any waves. That was the non-Jewish who told me that.

You're kind of shocked, right?

I'm very shocked.

I can see it. Yeah, I was shocked then. Now I feel angry.

By the way, in a way, it is still the same here, and different, but I'll tell you that later. But anyway, that was my country then. Again, I never asked, please help me with money, no, no.

I want to have a chance to live life. Then they bottled me up. Justice-- I never, never, ever got justice. Till today, never.

So nobody asked. Maybe, and I repeat myself, maybe I would have said, I don't want to talk about it. That's fine. But looking back so many years, if they would have asked me, I would have been different maybe today. I would start talking about it slowly but surely, the same as we talk, and if we did about eight, nine months ago, I would maybe inside be a different person.

Nowadays, people hear, ah, Holocaust survivor. Still talk about 45 years after the war. They don't know. Thank God they don't know, but don't kick me. Don't minimize me as a human being. I'm very easily angered. Of course I am. I talk about it the same way-- the first time ever I talked about that part that I go to schools and universities or whatever, radio, TV if I'm invited. I undress myself. I was so-- you undressed yourself when you talk. Say yeah, I have nothing to hide.

In 1948, so I worked in a factory. A leather factory. In 1948, when I became 21 years old, 18th of July, 1948. I was a free man. They gave me all the papers. My father gave me so much money. My aunt and uncle that is, and we spent so much on underwear and so much a sock. What do I care? Oh, they had all receipts. They were beautiful people that were

honest. Only, they were not warm. No love.

You know what I did? I quit my job. I became an alcoholic. Because I want to die. By being an alcoholic, I wanted to commit suicide. But what I tell you, I tell the younger generation when they go to school. I didn't want to live anymore. Apparently, I'm my own consciousness, I couldn't handle to be alone. I never had a role model in life.

In normal life, a band can be a role model. A brother, a sister, an aunt, an uncle, whatever. And that is the price, I think, that these teenage survivors pay. All survivors pay a terrible price, but we pay a heavier price. In my judgment, because we were children, we were never allowed to be children. Only in age of a children. So I became alcoholic, and spent money. Oh my gosh, I went out with girls. Then finally as I went out with girls, oh, I was wild. I couldn't care less. Working? No way.

Then one man, he kicked me. Not physically. He kicked my behind. And I fought with him with my mouth. He never asked me, what happened in the past. He knew I came back from the camps. There was the expression, you came back from the camps. And he hit me, and I accepted his hitting.

How did he hit you?

By talking to me. The first time ever-- he was kind of a stranger-- he talked to me.

About the camps?

No, about life. Yeah, not about camps. He knew I came back from the camps. He knew I didn't have any toes. For instance, before the war in Europe, the sport was and is soccer. You know that, right? Here also, of course, but not as big. Here's baseball and football. In Europe and South America, there is soccer. So I grew up a soccer player, and I was not a bad one. I didn't say excellent, but I was a very good one. I was tall as a kid.

Then the man who kicked me said, why don't you play soccer? I said, are you out of your mind? I don't have ant toes. I never can-- how can I play soccer. My feet on aren't even here. He said, can you buy soccer shoes, and let them somehow build a way to protect your feet. I said, but I can't run. Do you know the game of soccer? You have to run a lot. You also have a goalie, right? The same as-- the same as hockey. Correct?

Yeah, I don't know soccer, but--

You have a goalie in ice hockey, for instance, or field hockey. Right? You have to get-- with soccer you have to kick the ball in the nets.

Yeah.

He said, why don't you become a goalie. I never play goalie. I was always forward. Anyway, I said, but no organization would like to have a cripple like me. And he found one, and told apparently my background. I mean, that I don't have any toes, and I lost my toes in the war. That's all he said because that's all he ever knew. And they said, OK, will you try it? So to get to the point, I tried it. And on account that I--

He was so smart that man he touched apparently one spot that was opened that was my youth and soccer. It was my hobby. It was my life. I remember when I came home from school before the war, my mom would say, homework. I want to play soccer. Uh-uh, homework first then soccer. And it was very normal in that time of life. The parents were very conservative but anyway.

I don't think I really enjoyed it because remarks were made. Look, a cripple. The guy who walk and play soccer as a cripple, whatever. And I didn't really enjoy it. I stopped it, and physically, I couldn't do it. My heart, yes. Oh, yeah, but I couldn't do it. Then I stopped drinking. I never touch any alcohol anymore from that time on. Never.

What caused that?

Because he talked me out of it to stop drinking and don't commit suicide. He didn't say commit suicide. Later in life, I realized I was committing suicide. By the way, there are survivors who committed suicide after the war who couldn't handle it anymore. Apparently, we could handle to a certain extent what happened in the camp, not what happened after the camp.

I was going to ask. Do you think it was more often the memories or the way you were treated afterwards?

Afterwards. No justice. No, I got married, and I was a different-- I was still frozen, right? I was still in a state of shock.

So when I got married-- if I would have been today, I would cry. And I would feel pain, because I would miss my parents. I never cried. I didn't even think about birthdays of my family. But I do-- for many years-- now.

It was never talked about. That part was never talked about. I think I told-- this was my first wife. I told her. She knew about my feet.

Oh, another thing that people said. I hope I don't confuse you. You think you had a rough time in the camp, right? So I say, yeah, pretty rough. Hah. You should have been here in Holland, because we had a terrible hunger winter. True-- the winter of 1944-1945. Many people died on account of starvation. Not in camps. There was hardly any food.

So the people minimized. Oh, you think you had it hard in the camp. Now, they didn't know what had happened because nobody asked. You should have been here. Now I can say, I wish I would have been here. So they even minimized and compared with their hunger. But they could go on their bike or walk. And try to find something to eat without the fear of being put in a gas chamber.

All the years, they slept in their own beds. Not the freedom, but slept in their own bed. And I don't say-- one Jew is killed, the underground fighters or whatever. I'm talking about, generally speaking, the people said, you know, you should have been here. You think you had it hard. People tell me now. I would jump on them with my mouth and I would teach them something. Then, apparently--

Well, what would happen inside when people would say this to you?

It didn't come out. It was building up. I'm still building up. But I'm telling you now, it's still accumulating here.

Yeah.

Does that makes sense?

Yes.

It is there, but I didn't feel it.

Did you feel like you were two people?

No, nothing. I didn't feel anything.

So you never split or anything like that.

I'm sorry?

You never split?

No.

Because that happens a lot of times under stress like that.

No. I don't think so. I also went back to the old neighborhoods where I grew up, whatever. I thought I'd go and say hi to the people. Hey, I'm back. Not for sympathy. To say hi, I was born there. And people completely ignored me.

Even when you would say hi?

Yeah.

They would walk by like you weren't there?

Yeah. Physically ignored me.

Did everybody do that?

I can only tell you what happened to me.

Did everybody you met there do that?

Except the clients of my dad. They were nice to me. But where I grew up. I can't remember anybody saying, hey, come here for a cup of coffee or whatever. No. Or they would say, hi, and-- I know now why. I'll talk about it later. Oh, yeah. I know why.

OK.

So I got married. My first wife was not Jewish. But what did I care? I worked in a leather factory, of course. My income was about-- when I got married-- 22 guilders a week. And I got a raise to 27 guilders. The price was low.

But I didn't get an education. And she had a job. And we lived with her parents, so the rent was very low. Then in the beginning of the '50s, I wrote Adenauer. Remember, the first chancellor--

Chancellor.

Of Germany. I wrote him a letter. So I said my name is so-and-so, whatever. This is what happened to me. I only ask because the Germans are responsible. I'm not. I only ask for the payment of orthopedic shoes and a pension on account that I'm a cripple. I don't even ask you for all the mental suffering, nothing.

I got a letter back. I wrote letters. I remember my wife then said, no, they'll put you in jail. I said, listen, I write the truth when I feel it. They put me in jail, I could care less. I sometimes have cramp on account of my feet.

Do you want to stop and walk around a little?

No, that's OK. I got a letter back from Adenauer, yeah. It's terrible what happened to you. But you were a Dutch citizen. You have to go to the Dutch government. I said, wait a minute. The Dutch government didn't do it to me.

I wrote the Dutch government. I got a reply it's terrible what happened to you, but the Germans are responsible. We don't have any laws for people like you. Justice? But it was all the anger building up, correct?

So the Germans said, no, you have to go to Dutch. The Dutch said, you have to go to the Germans. And we don't have any laws for people like you. And I remember at certain times, the anger came out loud and clear. Because when I wrote the letter to Adenauer and to the Dutch government, to the Secretary of State, there was a knife in the letters, if you know what I mean. I didn't hold back. Right?

Right.

And especially Adenauer. I kicked the behinds of the Germans, because that's the way I felt. And after the letter, I would close everything up again. It was very strange.

And my wife said, oh, they'll put you in jail. Put me in jail-- for what? The kind of language, my God. Why? It's truth. It's my feelings. Big deal. Put me in jail. Send me back to Auschwitz. Big deal.

So I never got justice in Holland. There's no law for people like myself, not only for Eddy Wyszynski, but for many people like myself. There's maybe a lot of Jewish survivors left Holland-- Dutch Jewish survivors, maybe. Before I go on, you have any questions?

How was your marriage working out? Your first marriage. Because you said you didn't talk to her at all about your experiences.

I think I did. About the feet, of course. And I presume I talked, but I don't know in detail. I don't remember. Of course, she knew about-- because she was a girlfriend of my cousin.

But wasn't it hard to have a marriage when you were having all this anger building up?

I think. Let me tell you. I'm married now for the second time. But I admire every spouse who marries a Holocaust survivor, be they he or a she. I admire them all. Because it's not easy to be married to a survivor who is not in the freezer anymore and who erupts.

I admire the children of survivors. The survivor-- only one or two. How hard it was for them when they were children to grow up with sometimes an angry parent or to be a witness to whatever it is. Because children of survivors, in my judgment, most of them are victims, too.

Well, they've got a symptom called children of Holocaust survivors.

Right. I wish I could make up for it, but I was not nice enough to my two children, who are adults now. There's no way I can make up for it. And probably bad for his wife-- it was not always very pleasant at all. Later. I'll talk about it later. I wish I could make up for it, but I can't.

But my second wife, Marianne-- we are married now seven years. We're different. She knew what kind of person I was. Still, I admire that she had the guts to marry me. With the pain.

I just want to say that I don't think that. You're probably not the hardest person to be married to, because you're open to the idea that your past has these effects on your life.

The past has a tremendous effect on my life.

Right. But what you don't seem to be doing is-- I'm always right. And you don't know anything. I think that that makes a person much easier to live with when they are-- the way you phrased it-- coming out of the freezer. I just want you to know. I don't think that you're probably the worst person.

No, not the worst. Thank you for the compliment. There are maybe one or two walking around that are worse than Eddy Wyszynski.

I'm sorry. Can we get that off the tape?

We keep it on, Joan. Leave it running. I'll call the lawyers, send you a lawsuit to explain it.

Well, you know I mean. I think that it's just taken so much courage for you to go out and start talking about it.

That's something different. But later, I'll talk about the rage and the anger and explosions. I call them explosions.

OK.

But I thank you for the compliment. But I don't agree with you. I don't agree with you what you just said.

About what?

That it's not that bad or whatever you just said. Easy, it's not too hard. Yes, I think it is hard to live with, to be married with a survivor, be they he or she, who's out of the freezer.

You think it's more difficult than being with one who still has their emotions under control?

Of course. I had it for a long time. Sure. I didn't feel anything from 1945 to 1972. That's 27 years, right?

Right.

Please remind me to talk about it later-- about the rage and the anger and the explosions.

Yeah. Could you turn this off for one second?

All right.

So we got married in 1949. Of course, I didn't have any family. So there was nobody from my side. And I never felt any loss-- no pain, no tears. Because I was still-- everything was numb. State of shock. In the freezer.

But I wrote the German government and the Dutch government. But I didn't come to first base. So I was again, a person without any rights. No justice happened. But they took away-- the Germans in World War II-- our rights, all my rights.

And of course, only injustice being done. In a different way, but still they continued the injustice. No rights. Because if I would have gotten my rights-- but do I have to pay the thief who stole my father's business after the War? I owe him money. If I tell people that I deserve money, they would say yes.

I have his name. That's facts. I remember the name of the man who-- now I remembered, the Dutch government appointed guardian over him for a short time. He could only be general manager. And the name was misspelled for you. I remember, my gosh. D-I-R-K-Z-W-A-G-E-R.

He was a fanatic. He was after me. I never met him. And I don't know why.

So he really worked hard to get this money that--

For-- yeah. For the group. Yeah. And understand, Peggy, that I don't believe in justice.

I can understand that.

Until today, I don't believe in justice.

Yeah.

Hard for people to understand or comprehend. And again, I don't have sympathy. But that's life. Still today, never got justice. I fight for justice.

Did you ever actually pay any of this money?

A little bit, at the advice of a lawyer. But I didn't want to. I wanted to get the furniture, because my father-in-law said, if they come for the furniture, don't worry about it. It was my furniture. You rent here first apartment, don't forget. I said, thank you, but no way. Nobody ever will take furniture away from me. I said it. So in my unconscious now, because then I went back to 1943. Does that makes sense to you? Does that makes sense?

Yeah. That you went back to where they took your furniture away.

The Germans. So nobody ever, over my dead body-- never. It's hard for people to understand. And thank God they don't understand, because they don't know what it is. But that part after the war had to be told. It had to be known.

Not only for me-- not for sympathy, for understanding. The people should accept, be they Vietnamese who went through hell or World War II veteran or soldier who fought the Korean during the police action, Holocaust survivor. Accept them the way they are. And in my judgment, till today, people don't. And I'll talk about it later. They don't.

That was one of the reasons that I made up my mind to be interviewed about this after the War. Otherwise, I would never have done it. Not only for myself, but for other people.

Yeah.

If one person who watches this program-- or two-- will change from pushing people away. With my background, other similar backgrounds. But accept them. That it is worthwhile what I go through now. I hope I make sense to you.

Anyway, I wanted to leave Holland. And I wanted to go to Canada or Australia, but my wife said no. Then I'm in America. There was a new law, signed by President Eisenhower, who made it possible for-- normally, when you come to the United States, you have a sponsor. And you have to wait three, four, five, six years or whatever. An organization sponsored me. There was a law made for victims of World War II. I'm not talking about Jewish people-- victims.

All victims.

I'm sorry?

All victims.

Yeah. Who want to come to the United States. And you have to go through the process. The police check you out in Holland. And have gone through everything. And you have to be in good health, whatever.

And before I came to United States, you have to go back and forth. It was understandable. And I had to go-- they called me. with a note that I had to come to the police station. I thought, I didn't know what I did wrong.

But they needed questions about me. A question about if I was a communist or whatever. But I didn't feel any pain about it. But I wanted to leave Holland very badly.

But later hurt me. And maybe people will watch this program. who don't like in particular Dutch people. There were war criminals in Holland who were responsible for the death of, for instance, 100,000 Jewish people. That's 100,000. And Germans.

They were in jail. And they got the death penalty. And the Queen of Holland then-- better that came out last year that I tell you now. The Queen of Holland then, Juliana-- now Beatrix. So they're the mass murderers. One, I experienced some things from that person myself. Person-- no, he is not even an animal. He was inhuman. He was responsible of over 100,000 Jews lead to their death-- Dutch Jewish people.

And the date was set that he was going to be executed after the War. War is over. And the Queen said, if you execute him, I will not be a queen anymore. That came out last year. Now, what happened apparently--

That wasn't Pieter Menten, was it?

No. Not Menten, no. Menten was a little war criminal. Oh, he died, by the way. You know that, right? He passed away.

Yeah.

No, it was in German. There were several in jail. Several went back-- for medical reasons, were released by the Dutch government, mind you. For poor health. One of them-- L-A-G-E-S-- was released while I was already living in the United States. And a doctor or doctors convinced the Dutch government that he had cancer.

Oh, he was a war criminal. It's hard for people to comprehend. Oh, he's responsible for 10,000 people who died-- or 50,000, or 30,000. Or he shot himself 15 people, whatever. That's nothing. Being sarcastic now, of course.

And they convinced the Dutch government that he was dying of cancer. So they let him go to Germany. I think he's still alive. He fooled them. Cancer is terrible. Dying of cancer is terrible. But that kind of people don't belong on the street. They should be against the wall. Or at least for life-- no parole, nothing. But there's a lot of politics behind it, because Germany put a lot of pressure. Germany becomes stronger again-- an issue. They put pressure on the Dutch government.

Also, from what I read, Prince Bernhard had a deal with the German government. And he actually tried to betray Juliana's country, from what I read.

No, I never heard about that. He fled, but he was on the--

He fled, but it was a secret. The book I read it in was a book about Pieter Menten.

Oh, Pieter Menten. He was a war criminal and a thief, of course.

Right. And Prince Bernhard saved Menten right after the War, that he stopped the--

I'm sorry. I never heard about it. But I can't accuse. It's kind of funny-- it's sad. The grandmother of the current Queen Beatrix was Wilhelmina. During World War II, we had Wilhelmina. Her husband was a German. Julianna married a German-- Bernhard. Beatrix, the current queen, married a German Waffen SS man.

Really?

Would I lie? I make a statement here. There were big riots in Amsterdam. Can you imagine? Waffen SS, there were a special unit. Hitler's special units.

His name is Claus-- C-L-A-U-S. Can you imagine? You're flabbergasted, I presume. That's the truth. Of course, he became a citizen when he got married. But still, he's about my age.

You know what?

But he was not a regular in the regular army. No. Waffen SS is something different.

That was army, right?

Yeah, but they were murderers. SS. You seem them in the camp, SS. There was a Waffen SS. The Waffen SS, for instance killed American POWs. in the Battle of the Bulge. You remember in '44? You heard about it? You read about it? The Battle of the Bulge-- B-U-L-G-E-- in Belgium. Near the Ardennes.

Yeah, it was the last attempt.

Correct. In winter, '44 if memory is correct. And the Germans had American POWs. So against the Geneva Convention,

they undressed American soldiers, put them in civilian clothes, and tied the hands behind the back, and shot them to death. Crimes against humanity and against Geneva Convention.

The Waffen SS killed them. And one of the members-- I don't say he did it himself. But a member of that Waffen SS is the current husband of Beatrix. Can you imagine. I'm not surprised.

Now, in '56, we went to America. And then still everything was frozen. I never felt sorry that I left Holland. I came in Philadelphia, where I was sponsored. I stayed a year in Philadelphia, never talked about it. Started from scratch, of course. Didn't have any family-- no friends, nobody. And we came with the attitude of America didn't need us. America doesn't have to adjust to us-- we have to adjust to them.

A lot of kind of funny things happened. But we didn't have money for a car, of course. No furniture, nothing. We came with \$70 or \$90. But a lot of immigrants came with nothing. That's nothing special. And the organization who sponsored us, we went there because America-- about jobs. First thing we ask-- how do you go about jobs?

Now, my first job wife was a fantastic office worker. She could blind type. You know blind typing? You type, but you're only-- I think 70 or 80, 90 words a minute. She was fantastic. In different languages. But I didn't have a good occupation for the United States. I worked in the letter factory.

And the Jewish organization, the Jewish Family Service of Philadelphia, who co-sponsored us-- I said, we would like to have a job. Take it easy. We said, no, we didn't come here to take it easy. By the way, we arrived here the 28th of April, 1956. We left Holland April 18, 1956. We left Holland the day that the late Grace Kelly got married with the Prince of Monaco. Right?

Yeah.

So I always made that joke. We came back by boat and I became seasick. I always made the joke-- one famous person left Philadelphia. Grace Kerry came from Philadelphia, right?

Mm-hm.

And another famous one is going to Philadelphia. And Jimmy Durante could make it with his long nose, so I can make it, too. I always make that joke on the boat. The other boat was not on the sea yet. Because I became seasick. But anyway, then it was not that funny. But anyway, we told the people in Philadelphia, we came here to start a new life. How can we find a job?

Again, we were never asked and I was never asked about the background-- never. But I was still in a freezer in '56. We didn't have a place to stay. In Holland, there were no-- and still, I think, you have a waiting list. You can't rent a place like here. You look around for an apartment for rent, whatever.

So we lived with my in-laws in Amsterdam. And then somehow, because my father-in-law was very ill and became ill. He couldn't handle the noise from young people. And doctors checked it out. And then we got an apartment on our own. We were very lucky.

In Holland, you don't have signs-- vacancies. Philadelphia's a very big city. Now I start laughing-- here is what we did. We go to find a place to live. No idea where to look, to go.

We never heard about real estate offices. We don't have that. To the government, you have a waiting list. How many children? You have three children. Oh, you wait about three, four years. And you could see maybe your in-laws could take you in. Because there's shortage of homes, apartments.

So downtown Philadelphia-- did you ever go to Philadelphia? You start counting by 1st street up to 60th Street. 1st Street is near downtown, if memory is correct. So we were looking for a place to live. We remembered, we saw big signs. No money for a car. We had only a couple of dollars, so no public transportation. Because we have all the saved-

up money.

The Jewish organization paid one month's rent, then we found an apartment. That's true. \$50. They did not help us to find a job. We don't know anybody. Later, I found out that in Philadelphia, 10% of the population is Jewish-- and businesses, whatever, at least.

the anger-- I felt similar with Holland, somehow. When she knew that I'm a Holocaust survivor, that I was being pushed away. I didn't feel it. Later, it came out. Don't come close to me. Keep distance. I'll tell you later why, in my judgment, that feeling existed and still exists.

We look for a job. And they told us, look in the Yellow Pages. In Holland, you don't have Yellow Pages, but that's the way I found the job. Looking into the Yellow Pages and going to all the factories who do similar work to what I did in Holland. And my first job, I made \$1 an hour. That was a lot of money then in '56. \$1 an hour, gross. And my wife made \$1 an hour, gross.

In the meantime, we needed a place to live. And we saw all signs of buildings-- vacancy, vacancy, vacancy. And I'm not making it up, Peggy. People say, you have a good sense of humor. They say, that maybe helped you survive, maybe. I told my wife, the people are cuckoo here. She said, what are you talking about? Who is going on a vacation and put a sign in the window? The burglars can go in.

Because vacancy-- in Dutch, you have the word "vakantie." It's only spelled a little different-- vacancy. In Holland, you spell T-I-E. This is so similar. Oh my. And I couldn't get over it. And we walked from block one to block two, till the 50th block. And I have a hard time walking. Thank God, no hills. It was flat.

And I could not get over how stupid people in America are to put a sign and go on vacation. You don't do that. And I was not that upset. I say, are the people here cuckoo? Are they stupid? I would never do that. We never did it. Not realizing that vacancy-- what it means.

So then we didn't know what to do, where to go, because where do you look for a place in another country? Somebody told us, go to a real estate office. We said, what is a real estate office? So we went to the real estate office. And then I said, will you explain to me why people put the signs up for vacation? He said, vacation? The guy broke up.

And then I learned something. I felt embarrassed that-- my God. In my mind, maybe I insulted American people. I didn't mean to. My God, these people on vacation put a sign. Oh my God. But then with his help, we found a nice place.

But we walked the block till 55th Street, in the 50s. I'll never forget. We could have had an apartment maybe in the first block already, but we didn't know that there was an opening.

So we stayed about a year in Philadelphia. And we saved money. And we couldn't handle the climate anymore, because the humidity was too much. We didn't have a car. Whenever we went shopping, we went by public transportation. We had a nice landlord. They would pick us up when we went for grocery shopping once a week.

I always made a joke about it. My first wife's birthday was March the 7th. And we arrived in Philadelphia at the end of April, 1956. Correct. So in '57, we made up our mind. We are going to leave Philadelphia. Let's go to the West Coast.

We didn't know anybody. We didn't know any people. We heard about an elderly couple, but they never-- no family, no relation to us. How to go? So we saved money to buy a car, but I know nothing about cars.

In the meantime, nobody ever asked me whatever questions about it. They thought I walked funny. That's all. What is the matter? You walk funny. See, I don't have any toes. Oh. That was the end of it. I never volunteered to talk about it. Nobody asked me. Because I felt it was mine. Probably.

So I made a joke. I told my wife, OK. I buy you a lipstick for your birthday or we buy a car. Of course, the cost of a car is different. And we only had money for a second, so we bought a second-hand car with the help from somebody. \$500

or \$700.

We were members of, say, the AAA. Their name over there-- sister organization of AAA. We filled up. You want to go to San Francisco. Again, Holland is a very small country. Very small-- compared with America, of course.

So we look at the map from America. You go from here to here to her. No idea what a trip. And the distance.

Yeah.

So we bought a car and I went for my driver's license. And I passed the first time. First shot-- driver's license. Then we bought a car and we bought a car near downtown. And I said to my wife, we go right downtown over small streets and--