

(film logistics) 10 seconds. OK.

You mentioned this Jewish man was telling you about how he buried the diamonds? Did he mean that he buried them with people?

No, no, no. The sorting out of the people that came like I came on December the 10th, 1943, into that station which was very close to the ovens. As I said, the people were going to the place where they were going to go to the ovens, gassed, and so forth, which I haven't seen. So I don't know exactly what happened to them. These people had luggage with them. So once they were gone, he was in charge. I got a problem with my voice.

There's some water right there. No way, it happened. So he had to take care of this of the luggage. And naturally, he found this thing. The German weren't around because they couldn't care less. They weren't bright enough to realize that these people could have tried to get stuff with them in case they could barter or some way get food later on. But he saw these things, and these people were already gone. It becomes very unnatural if you want.

A body here, body there, 200 on a pile. It is like very common. You don't pay much attention after a while. You dehumanize. That's all. And this guy was fortunate enough that he was eventually going to go through the same thing. No choice, but he decided, and he told me that, that he had buried in the yards by the ovens different diamonds and whatever. He didn't particularly tell me everything he put in there.

He just gave me an idea what he did, and I recall he was among the strongest yet because some of these luggages or suitcases had food which he could dispose. That was part of his benefit for doing the dirty work. So he was, in my book, strong enough that when that week we were on the train together from the station where we slept in a pile of coal, he was with us against the wall. And when some of these guys in the middle wanted to pull me away from there, and I had no hair, they grabbed me by the ears, and I would scream to the buddies next to me, and they would help me out and push the guys away.

So we had time to talk the whole week on a train, and he told us different things like this. And like I said, that Dutch guy, by the way, spoke French otherwise I wouldn't know how to communicate with him in Dutch in Holland. And what happened to him after, I don't know. It's just one of those things where you meet a lot of people, and they have to understand another thing.

You realize, in 1943-- I mean, in 1993-- 50 years ago. And it's the first time I talk about it into a situation where I give a story of my life, if you want. I could have done this 20 years ago, 30 years ago, or 10 years ago, whenever. It never occurred to me that it was that important until you reach a certain age, and you say to yourself, if you don't do it, nobody will realize, really, what happened. And eventually, two generations, even the next generation might not even know.

I know some young, Jewish people. They know about it, but it's so far back. 50 years ago is another generation. So if, in any way, what I try to explain of my particular life, I think it's something worthwhile to talk about.

OK. You mentioned homemade knives in camp.

Yes.

Can you tell me a bit about those?

As you might recall, I mentioned the factory was pretty large, and there was always scraps thrown on the side. It was not always cleaned up and thrown in some bins. So for the purpose of us, if it wasn't even for the food, you'd get bored all day long, and not to think about food because you're hungry, we used to pick up some of those scraps of metal. Some of them were light, like aluminum. I remember some were white, and it was just like a side of a can.

And so you would pick it up, and the thing that amazed me all the time is that in the place where we had to go wash ourselves, there was water and sand, like I said. So you put some sand in some water, and you went back and forth on a

stone about the size of a big egg, let's say. And you go back and forth long enough till it gets sharp, and we used that.

It's more or less a question of feeling that you have either a knife or something to defend yourself, not that somebody is going to jump you like nowadays, you hear these people in jail, like a revolt in one of the jails and some of the inmates got killed because whatever. That wasn't the same purpose. The purpose we were making knives is because it could be useful for our own use, either if we get something to eat that is hard or to whittle on a piece of wood just to pass the time, not to think all the time about food. That's basically why we did this.

But you had to watch not to have seen by the kapo in the barrack. So we usually kept it on our possession, which was we had two pockets here and a jacket with a pocket on this side, so we usually put it in here. It wasn't a huge thing. We couldn't have done very much. It was, like I said, sometimes aluminum, which was very pliable, and it wouldn't do, really, the job. It helped when we got those beets, to cut the beets. That's about it.

Going back to the early period of the war when you were in Dijon, you say people from Alsace-Lorraine and portions of France didn't like the Germans, but did you have any fear?

Fears?

Fear, rather than dislike of the Germans? Was there any fear?

Well, you have to realize prior to even that the Nazis were in existence, the French had between the Germans always a natural enemy between each other. They had a World War I, they had an 1870 they fought. And when you go to school, that's what you are taught. The natural enemy of the French were the Germans. I'm sure the Germans had the same thing in Germany.

So the question was not so much that we had a fear. When the Germans came into Dijon and we saw some of the Germans in the streets, we were speaking French. Some Germans spoke French who understand us. So we never said the word "boche," which means-- it's a derogatory word for German, but they could understand this.

So we came upon a new word, and the Germans didn't know what it meant. It was called [FRENCH] for. It's an insect just like they have here in Napa with the wine grapes, some insect is killing the grapes, there's a potato insect called [FRENCH] that kills the potato. So we got to the point, I didn't invent it. It was among the French people when you want to talk dirty about a German, you said the [FRENCH] are coming. Watch it. you said that in French, the Germans didn't know what it meant, but between ourselves, we use that word.

Now, as I mentioned before, at that time, when they came, I was between 17 and 20 in Dijon at that time. When you're that young, you don't pay that much attention to fear. You want to be macho. You want to be able to say, I'm not afraid of them. And so you act sometimes in a funny way.

I called my friend, Paul, we had gone to have a drink in the cafe, and we're coming out, and there were some Germans crossing the other way, and some of them were drunk. So we started to curse them in French and say all kinds of things. And in normal circumstances, you don't do this because you're looking for headaches, something like that. Somebody might grab you, and they have guns. We don't have guns.

But we're looking at that time. You see, you have to make a difference between a German soldier that's in the war. If you want it or not, he's in the army. And the Nazi, which is the elite that nothing counts, but in Nazi and the Germans, that's a difference. You can't act the same way in front of the Nazis as you would in front of a German soldier.

I'm understanding where your mind was working then when you were 17 years old. Still, in all, do you recall any newspaper accounts of the Germans going into the state land or--

Yes. You got to remember the German's propaganda was well tuned in with Goebbels', and the French newspapers were taken over by the Germans. Although it was in French, the publishers the editors were French, they had to publish what the Germans told them to publish. So most of the time, you read the papers, and the war was going on in Africa, they

never were losing. They were always winning, the Germans, wherever.

Tobruk was one of the places where they were fighting in the year '42, '43, and especially Stalingrad, which was already in the later '43, '44. I had an experience, which had nothing to do with this particular thing, but it gives you an idea how the Germans work on the sense of propaganda and in the sense of being able to maneuver the press. In the war, the Germans worked so much with their own people that once they controlled Europe, it was the same thing.

They controlled it so much so that some French people that believed the Germans, that's what we call the collaborators in France. There was a lot of them. Barbie was one of them, the one that was in Lyon and the people.

Now, in 1940, '41, after I came back from that little town near Cognac and Bordeaux, I had met two ladies that were from the suburb of Lille, in the North of France. Their husbands were in the mines. They were engineers in the mines, and these ladies walked from Lille to Paris, running away from the Germans and finally, by train, we met in this small town by Cognac.

And this lady had some valuables, I forgot exactly what it was, like titles, bonds, whatever, in a tin that in France, they have [FRENCH], tins of cookies. And that was full of documents that had value. So when we found out the Germans are coming on that main road that I want to see them, she asked me to bury this box for her in the backyard where we were staying.

And so I did it, and it turns out the Germans didn't come. She got that stuff she went back in May of '40. The war ended. She went back. She corresponded with me, and her husband asked me what I'm doing and so forth. To make a long story a little shorter, I decided to go up north because remember, I told you when I enlisted in the army, I want to go to Gibraltar. Prior to the army, in '40, my idea is to go north-- Holland, Belgium, close to England, cross the channel, go to England to fight.

So when I went up to Lille, first of all, I went to work in a bakery in Lille, and it was three days a week. They had material to bake. I remember there was peanut oil. There was no more butter. We made some bakery goods with peanut oil. And all of a sudden, there's nothing anymore. But I have to explain. I was about 19 at the time. I lived in a place, and there was other fellows. One was a policeman, which was anti-German, actually, was a part of the French group.

And he got me a job in an office of the railroad, which was nationalized, SNCF-- Societe Nationale des Chemins de fer . I go to work as a telephone operator. Now, there was German employees of the railroad. They had uniforms, but it was not military. And there were some military there too in that office group where I was, and I come to that saying about propaganda.

What my job was to, by telephone, connect train stations south of Paris, going up north towards Germany. So some of the things that I did then and I had contact with some Germans, I understood. They didn't know I spoke German. I was listening to the telephone, what we were supposed to do, and they told me there's a train coming from Normandy going to Germany. Content, butter.

A week or two weeks later, the French papers had a great headline, "Germany brings butter to France to help the population." They took the butter from Normandy, brought it to Germany, and put it in barrels, and it had the German eagle with a swastika. We knew that's the butter they took from Normandy and brought it back from Germany into France for propaganda purposes.

I was there in February to June of 1940, and among these things, we had to have convoys of military that left France. So when a train went towards Germany or came from Germany, we had to notify their stations. There was no telegram wiring or whatever. We used to get a Convoy Volga, Convoy Carpachian. Now remember, that's before Russia got into war with the Germans.

We had convoys of Germans going to Russia, towards Russia anyway, not to Russia, with a Convoy Volga, Carpachian. Where were they going, to Africa? No. So we knew from the railroad that this is what was going to happen, that these troops are going to open a new front. Even prior to this, found through the German guy, civilian, that they had put

Czechs and Austrian soldiers on barges to land in England in early '40. Maybe-- I'm trying to remember when it was. It was '41 because May '40, it was armistice.

In '41, I was in that country by Lille. They had these Austrian Czechs on barges trying to invade England, and that's when the English put petroleum on the Dover Cliffs and put the fire on, so they never landed. And some of these guys, they hooked them on those barges. They didn't want to go because they were targets. Go to England like this. You get stuck. Anyway, I digress right now something else.

What I'm trying to say, the Germans were the masters of propaganda, that if you tell a lie long enough, it becomes the truth. And that we learned by the way the Germans, with Goebbels, and then politics, that they were able to hide fairly well the question of the camps. Unfortunately, now that I'm 70s, I realize what happened this country before I got here. They knew. They knew here.

A lot of people didn't care for Roosevelt, and Roosevelt is the one guy, in my mind, that sticks like the guy that saved my skin. Because if he hadn't sent the troops to fight and open a new front, I wouldn't have survived. Eventually, there was a limitation how far you can go on that diet. So you have to look at it as far as the question you put me about the propaganda, they were the masters of that.

You could have easily swayed people to the German cause unless you were really a patriot, a guy that wanted to fight bad enough, like I did. When I got to Lille, I wanted to go to England. I even met in a place I was eating, a fellow that showed me the Daily Mail or some English paper that was two days old in the middle of the war, and the Germans are around us.

When he saw me, he was ready to recruit me to go to England. And he gave me two choices, one, to go to Ostend in Belgium, and there was a fishing trawler guy. He would leave the middle of the night with guys, and a hydroplane would pick up these guys from England. He could fly low altitude and could do this. That's one way.

The other way was to volunteer to work on an airfield where the Germans were, and among these workers were pilots. They would grab a German Stuka plane and fly you off. Well, that was too dangerous for me, but working for that railroad thing, I had a band here, and I could travel all over that area, even in Belgium, for free. And my shift of work had three shifts, and one of the shifts stopped at 7:00 in the morning. And after this, I had almost two days off, and the next shift was a third day at 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

I took all my belongings, sent them by train to my folks in 1941 to Dijon, and I took a bag a little bigger than this with some underwear, socks, toothbrush, and shaving, and off I went to Ostend. Now, you have to understand what happened. France was divided into, and among the northern part that was occupied, it was a red zone. It was close to Calais, Cherbourg, and Belgium. That was a red zone.

So Lille was a red zone, but because I worked in the railroad, I had a card signed by the general of the German troops in Paris and then one from Brussels that I could travel 24 hours a day, if I had to. So there was a curfew, but I had this, and I could go. So I got to Brussels. There's two railroad stations, one, north and then south. I come with the south, I had to go to the north, and here we go towards Ostend.

And maybe 50 miles before you hit the coast, the anti-aircraft is pointing toward England, and I passed this. There's control on the train. No problem. I go out in Ostend. There's very few civilians in the street, and I don't know. I'm supposed to go to a street called Antwerp, Antwerp Street, [FRENCH].

Now, I see a lady in the street, and I go towards her, but I'm afraid. How do I speak? They have a different accent over there? How do I ask her? And so I was going to ask her, I see the street sticking out. That was Antwerp, where I'm supposed to go, so I didn't speak to her.

So I started going. Remember, the towns in Belgium, I don't know of now, but then, cobblestoned, big cobblestones, and the sidewalk, same thing. It was very-- it's not wood. So I'm walking, and all of a sudden, I see a tea salon. I come in front, and I was looking. Did they have some baked goods or something?

And as I'm looking, I see in the side two-- like in the movies-- this guy with leather coats following me. And I was so close to that place, that Antwerp Street where I supposed to meet, was across the street of a church. A tailor on the first floor, like in a movie, that's where I'm supposed to go see this guy to bring me to England.

And I never went there because I saw these guys. I went into the tea salon, and as soon as I sat down, they come up, ask me for my papers. I had this thing, so they asked me, what are you doing here? So I said, well, I work, just as you see. I worked that was the day before, I'd say at 7 o'clock in the morning, and my name is Blankenberg. And next to us is a town called Blankenberge, I wanted to see the town. I told them this.

And they said to me, you know, this is not the place to go because this is the red zone. We've got anti-aircraft shooting and everything. So they told me to go back to Worcester Station. There's a hotel requisitioned for the Germans, and stay there. I said, OK, if that's what you say.

So what I did, I didn't go there. They told me to go there. I went back to the station in the railroad station. First train that was leaving, I took it. I wasn't paying anything. I could take any train. That train got back to Brussels, and I was so disgusted that I was that close, that I couldn't do it.

So I looked, and the schedule of trains is on a large board and it starts at midnight. Well, 5 after midnight is 0.05. And between 0.05 and a couple of trains leaving after, there's a train that says Brussels, Namur, Luxembourg, Metz, and I look at the end, there's Dijon. Just to see the name Dijon in Brussels, I took that train. I got home where my parents were. My suitcases weren't there yet. They see me arrive, I was two days and two nights on that train.

And they had painted black paint and the windows so that when you have the lights inside, they can't see it outside. But the soot from the train, the smoke, my face was so black, when I got home, they looked at me and said, where you're coming from? And I explained to them what I tried to do.

And I reached there, that was the first attempt that I missed, then I went to work in the bakery. They took my father. And then I tried to Africa, and I didn't make it. That shows you that somehow, you try to do something, it doesn't always work, and maybe it had to go through this Auschwitz. But prior to Auschwitz, I was willing to lay down my body for fighting against the Germans.

Because when you're young and you go to school, that's what you're taught, and that's what I thought was my future. I wasn't among the people that had businesses or had money that you could buy yourself out. I had nothing of the sort. So I had to go by my natural instinct, and my natural instinct was to go fight.

As a Frenchman, or as a Jew?

As a Frenchman.

Can you tell me why, when you were born in France, you were not a naturalized citizen?

No, I was born in France.

Why were you not a citizen?

I was not a citizen because I learned in the last few years when I had to prove, I told them at the consulate here, I was born in France. No. No. That's not good enough. You have to prove that you're a French citizen. So I figured it's nothing special. So I send to different offices, and finally, I get a naturalization paper that I'm a French citizen by naturalization, although I was born in France.

Remember, we're not talking about the United States. You're born here, you're an American regardless. You can be Black, white, Chinese, whatever. You're an American as long as you're born here. Correct? Not in France. I got the papers to prove it.

But I only started in '79 when I went for my pension and I had to prove that I was born in France that I was a Frenchman, citizen. And then I get this thing and I realize and I wouldn't remember because it was in the '30s. I must have been about 8 or 10. I have no recollection at all. I automatically figured I was born in France-- they didn't ask me when I enlist in the army, are you a citizen? They didn't ask me was I naturalized, nothing.

Were you aware of any collaborators in Dijon?

Only of one person, and I guess that person was involved with me in the sense that among the reasons that I tried to bring forward how come they came there to pick me up. That's not why they go looking for a Jew. It had to be the head cook was Alsatian. And that guy, when he was talking with us, he more or less was French minded. His wife wasn't.

And when you're young, sometimes you say things, which I suppose I must have done this or somebody around me did this or said this. She ran around with Germans, the wife. She was-- to give you an idea, she resembled blonde Greta Garbo, not Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, that type of woman.

And so she didn't mingle with us, but among the guys, we used to say there's a French word that says [FRENCH]. So we used to sing among us the [FRENCH], meaning the cook is cuckold, cocu. Cocu means the wife runs around. And I guess she did go around with a German, and she could have been the one that brought us after the Germans that I was a Jew or hiding there, something. I'm not sure. I never found out. I never looked to find out.

I didn't even, after the war, found what happened to the fellow that put me there, to work there for the underground. He was head of the underground. Only thing I found out is that when I was caught, there was a whole group of guys that were taken from the underground, and among the guys who were taken, this guy was taken.

When I came back, my mind wasn't looking for him. I had my friend Paul and his family. I knew my little brother was gone, and my sister was here and everything. And it took me very little time, although when you say I left there in '47, between '45 and '47, it's almost two years. But I come back in '45 in June to Dijon, and that summer is where this fellow, Mandy Blatt went to New York, and I started to think about it, start to write a letter in French. By the time I get to papers--

See, the French quotas, at that time there was quotas of where you were born. Being born in France, it was open. In other words, it took three months, and I was able to leave France. There were some French guys that were in the consulate, American embassy. They were born in China, French parents. It's Chinese. They wouldn't give them papers.

Did you stay in Dijon while you were waiting, or did you go elsewhere?

Well, I stayed in Dijon with some peers. I went to Paris to get to find out, if I could, from the federation of these people. There was a federation that was formed, and I joined it in '46. I have the paper here with me. It looks like a passport, not a passport, an identity card. It says which camp I was, it had my picture, 1946.

And in between, I went to that recuperation place where I met these people that were going either Israel or the United States, where I met the Eckles, but all the rest of the time I was in Dijon up to March of '47, no February. Because I left in February, France, and I got to New York March of 4th. I took the week on the SS Washington. Sure, I can tell you which boat, who was in the boat with me.

I met an English war bride married to a GI, and what we had, the main room-- when it was a luxury ship, where they had a dance hall and everything-- was turned around were you tables of 10 people. It was still like a troop ship. And so people slept in bunks. And I happened to be in a cabin, but where usually that's a cabin for a couple, there were four people, no more than that.

There was a bed for an American, and it was two beds on the side, one above the other.

And so on that voyage, we went from New Harvard to Southampton that picked up maybe 400 or 500 women that were

rejoining or going and getting married to American GIs. So there was even a Scotch red head that was Jewish, I'll never forget, with a Scottish brogue. Just like the mayor of Dublin there was a Jewish guy. Remember. Devalet? No not Devalet. There was another name. I forgot his name.

So anyway, this Scottish girl, we had groups of French people singing French songs, the Scottish and so forth. So I remember I'm walking on the deck, and this lady-- you're going to laugh, you don't believe me. Her name was Marsha Loxeley, L-0-X-E-L-E-Y. I got the ship's manifest for the people. And she spoke but English, and I didn't speak in English.

So we got to talk, and there was a boat that was passing, and I remember saying, chimney. I want to say, there's smoke coming out of the chimney. I couldn't say that. And that just shows you that you can communicate with all kinds of people. And my point was at that time, it's just like people that go to the moon now. To me, going from France to America on that boat was like going to the moon.

Because I had not the slightest-- sure, I knew some American actors from the American movies that they showed in France, but that's all I knew about America. I remember *The Last of the Mohicans* and the movie, all that stuff about the cowboys, like all young guys, you know. And so that's the thing, that you leave a continent and still, 3,000 miles on the water. It's 5,000 kilometers for me at that time to get to New York.

Have you spoken about the Holocaust in the 50 years that have gone by? Did anybody, except your--

Well, you have to understand, when I first came to this country and my aunt in New York, she lived in Brooklyn, so I stayed with her for a while. And sure, they asked me a lot of questions, but it doesn't stick out in my mind that I talk to them like I'm talking to you now. I didn't explain pieces to emphasize the atrocity, the bad things that I brought up.

And most of the time, I would say, well, that's all I'm going to talk because I think you got the idea what happened. And then when I met my wife in June 7, 1947, I also talked about some, but I don't recall that I could openly speak for hours and tell all this, because I figured it isn't something that will change her idea about me or my idea about her. We had a new life in front of us, and we were looking for the future.

And as we went on and that Mandy Blatt had been in the camp, he told his stories from Poland that he was in a group of people, and they started shooting. He fell down, and people fell on him, and he never even got a scratch. They shot through the whole bunch, and he survived.

Now, he mentioned many other things, and as I said before, the people from Poland were like this since 1939, the ghetto in Warsaw, all of this. And where he was, I don't know exactly where he was from, but he was a drummer in an orchestra, a band that was on a cruise ship that was going from Poland to South America.

In '39, just before the war broke out, he came back to Poland, and that's how he was caught in that group. And when I met him in '45, he was going to the United States, and that's because of him, I got involved to come to the United States. And as I said before, 10 years about, I tried to-- to tell you the truth, my son was born in 1950. He didn't even know I was Blankenberg till he was about 16.

I didn't feel that why should he live with the idea of what I went through. Let him enjoy life, and he's big enough to realize that what I went through, he's going to read about it, he's going to hear about it, he's going to be involved with other people. And then finally, we got to the point where I told my wife, maybe he should know that he's a Blankenberg. And so that's how we started.

You married Sarah on July 1948.

July 3, 1948. Yes.

What do you remember about your wedding day?

It's not too difficult to remember because she had-- I remember, my life up to then was very, anti-- not anti; the word is not anti-- away from the religion really, if you want to, the Jewish faith. I was not that much involved, but her name being Rabinowitz, she had in her family cantors and rabbis and all that.

And so her mother's uncle was Papa David. That's what she called them. And she was 23, and Papa David is the one that took us like he was a family. And he took me to the temple. Phonetically, I learned for the wedding in Hebrew and all this. And he was a guy that really got us involved with the wedding ceremony.

And the daughter of this for Papa David was in New York, very involved with catering, so we had catering. And at that time, my aunt was with us. I have pictures of the whole family-- my wife, my sister that I brought up from France in May of '48 to be at the wedding. She was at the wedding.

She had no family except she had Tanta Tuba. I remember Papa David and his wife, Uncle Izzy, my uncle, and my aunt is the only one I can't remember her name is. Isn't that something? No, I can't remember. And so of this picture of that wedding, I'm the only one alive.

Now, you see, regardless of the Holocaust, now we have a new life. I got things with people that were at my wedding, 1948, and my sister passed away in '82, my wife passed away in '83, and the rest of the family. Although my aunt-- it's a mental block. I can't remember her name.

My mother's name was Zeisel, and Zeisel was Suzanne in France, and her, I don't remember. Uncle Izzy was her husband. He was a Litvak. so he was always talking about-- see, I was a guy from France, and I reacted like I'm big enough. I know what to do. He'd give me ideas what I should do, but what was I going to do in Brooklyn?

I'm involved with the French hotels, and I have a future of my own. I get married. They went to the wedding. My aunt was a type of lady that she thought with my looks and what I know, I should have married some rich lady, a rich girl. She don't realize that life is not done that way. Because happiness comes not from money. Happiness comes how you feel.

She had felt that she had no family. She had a grandmother that passed away before we got married, and I needed someone to guide, to be taken along on a voyage. That's the way I looked at it.

And I was a good talker. I explained to her what I want to do, and she was-- if I had said to her, tomorrow, we're going to pack a case, and we're going to go to Alaska, OK, we go to Alaska tomorrow. That's what you think is going to be best for us, she would follow me anywhere. And it was such a blind faith in me that I had to repay with faith in her. See?

And that's how I had a life for 35 years. Sometimes, you think, how can you have this kind of life and then get with a second wife and a new life and be able to give that feeling of love to somebody else? You love somebody for so--

But what the camp taught me is that you cannot dwell in the past. You cannot change the past. You can only better the future, have people that are with you enjoy life to the fullest. I went with my new wife four times to France. I drove with her from Canada to Mexico. She's 20 years younger than me, and I guarantee you to this day and yesterday, she had to go to Walnut Creek in a big office. She's a big shot in the bank.

She's an officer, a loan officer, and she deals with France a lot, and we speak French. As soon as I see her, I can't speak English. Oh, I can, but I'm so more at home with her speaking French. And so I went to take her in the city, brought her to Walnut Creek, listen to the Giant games. Just as the game was over, she came out, we went home, I fixed supper. I fixed the food.

I enjoy it because she gained 20 pounds when she's with me, but she was 50 this year. I'm 71-- 70. I have a funny habit. I'm always more than I really am. I recall when I was about 56, I had a place in South San Francisco. We were making granola. I invented a way to make a new granola, and I sold Oroweat 20,000 pounds a month of granola.

They put one ounce on each granola loaf of bread of this granola, and they used 20,000 pounds a month. And I worked

it with somebody out of the bakery from Oroweat and worked a thing. Now, why did I bring this subject up? I lost--

Your youth.

My youth.

How young you are.

Oh, yes. Correct. Now, I had some employees, and I had some Mexican guys in the 20s. And the sacks of oats to make the granola came in 50 pounds. And I see this guy. We had 400 sacks coming on a truck from Utah from Conagra. Company was called Conagra.

We bought 20,000 sacks of 50 pounds each, and we had to put about 30 or 40 sacks in it now. And I see this guy, and I thought he wasn't doing the job right. So I went in the truck and I took one in each hand and say, you see? I'm 60 years old. I was only 54, 55, and I got to call myself 60.

And since that time, I always give myself-- some people tell me, well, how old are you? I say 72. I'm really 70. It's a funny habit I picked up. Sure enough, once you hit 70, things change. In your mind, you can want to feel like always, but it does change.

It's just like a car. There's too much mileage on it, so you got to change the oil once in a while. I go to the doctor. I lived for 20 years. I never seen a doctor. I went once in '57, before we went to France for a checkup. And the guy said, well, your just tired, and I didn't take any medicine.

Go ahead.

Looking back on your early years in France, what words would you use to describe those years?

In a sense, I'm trying to figure out how to explain this. It was not what you call a happy life. First of all, you have to realize my parents came from Poland. When I was at the age of going to school, I went to Catholic school. There was no Jewish life. And so I knew to my parents of the holidays, but in the school, your environment is with Catholics with a prayer, not here here. Here they don't have a prayer, but not a Catholic school, a public school, you have a prayer when you start, and when you go home, there's a prayer.

And sure enough, I had some friends. I remember one guy by the name of Stivaldi. His father was a mason from Italy, came to work there, and this guy was a buddy of mine. So one afternoon, they got to go to catechism with the priest. Everybody is going. I follow. I don't know where I'm going. I'm following.

And there's this big, tall priest. You, Jew. You're not coming with us, and he chased me away. I looked like I was a pariah, somebody that had leper or something. And I'm talking about what could have been eight or nine or something like this.

And again, I've got to explain. We didn't have lots of money. My father worked in a factory. And even when my mother had this restaurant and we went with pushcarts on the fares, we took it for granted. That's our life. We never had any ambitions of what the future is going. No, we don't think about that. You follow your path.

And with my parents, we had, what you call a fairly nice life. There's no question. I mentioned to you that we only spoiled the kids. We were spoiled in a sense, what is spoiled? In your eyes, what you think is spoiled. Really, I can't say they gave us a bicycle and they gave us toys. We didn't have these things. And what you don't have and you don't know about, you don't miss.

But it wasn't what you call a happy life. My youth was more, not desperation, but matter of fact, that's your life. You can't do nothing about it. So as things got worsened with the war, you had already started to feel that toughness, what life was all about. And so as I said, I wasn't a soft kid. I was already hardened.

I think it's time for the pictures.

I had a question I wanted to ask him, if you don't mind.

Yeah.

The fellow who was your friend briefly at the end, who worked at the--

Ovens.

--back at the ovens and who said that he had buried diamonds and things like that. Did he ever tell you what became of those things he buried?

No. Because you see, when you get freedom, where you see these trucks of GIs that took us from that depot in Germany into Holland, we all, more or less, spread out. This guy shared my life about three months. And when he mentioned this, it meant nothing to me. I thought of it quite often after when I got back, but as I said, I got to Holland, and within days, we went through Belgium and into France. And I remember the white bread, but the guy was out of my sight. I never got to see him ever again.

And once in a while, I was wondering, did he go back to get it, or did he survive. Many things could have happened to him too towards the end. When I didn't see him anymore was in Ravensbruck, when we split up more or less. And as I said we were kind of weak and we had no time to think. Although, I have some papers that I was able to write down names and addresses of people that were around so in case one of us doesn't come back, the other one would get in touch or something.

And the funniest part, once I got back, it's just like I didn't want to get involved with anybody with anything. I do recall in Paris meeting in the subway some of the guys that had been in the camp and that I was telling them, I'm going to the United States. And one guy said to me, I'm going to the United States too, and I met him in New York.

But it's just like you want to cut your past. I say what I did, isn't maybe natural. Maybe other people try to nurture a friendship. I was doing just the opposite. It was too much bad remembrance that I try to so much to get into a new life so that when I met my wife, which was I got there in March before 1947. In June the seventh, I met her, so that's what, three months?

So the first three months, I was involved in the hotels where people spoke French to me and no connection with the past. Most of the French people that were there from pre World War II. They didn't know what the German and Nazis were except what they read in the paper. That's where also, I had this chef in the Waldorf, which talked to me when I introduced myself, and they heard my name and said, you're not French, you're German.

So I said to him, look, if I'm here, it's because I'm French. I'm not German. I didn't want to antagonize them, so I wouldn't have the job, but it didn't please me at all. But I realized who he was. There's a guy that left France in 1916. He deserted in one, being the army, 1916.

And when I met him in '47,s we became friends, once I worked there. And he said to me, my children are born here, I can never go back to France. I said I hit the French territory, I'd be arrested as a deserter. They have a record of this guy. So he never went back and his name was Florio, Joseph Florio. Very good baker, a good chef. But again, this guy hadn't gone through a war. I worked there in 1949, so I met him in '49.

And these people in the hotels here, you have to understand also, the Waldorf Astoria was a huge hotel. In 1949, '50, General Motors had an exhibition of the new cars in the main ballroom. They paid \$75,000 a day in 1950 for the executive in the hotel plus the renting a room. And there was a lot of Jewish, not firms, a Jewish organization that had parties.

The main ballroom held 5,000 people and a banquet. And so I worked part of the time making ice cream for the hotel. The chef that asked me if I'm-- they told me that you're not French, you're German. Eventually, we became good friends. He saw I was working properly. So he says to me, did you ever work making ice cream. I said, yes, in France.

What I didn't tell them, we made two or three quarts with a hand, with a little machine. This hotel was bought by Hilton chain, and pioneers of the hotel where were Oscar of the Waldorf. It was a number one hotel in whole of New York. But then it changed to the Hilton, and I worked in ice cream.

I realized the first full year I worked there in 1950, '51, I manufactured enough ice cream to make \$100,000 profit for the hotel. I was getting \$80 a week with food. So that prompted me to go in business for myself in '52.

Show me the pictures.

I think it's time to see the pictures. We'll stop.

And please tell us about this photo.

Yes. This is my mother. This picture was taken approximately in 1919, 1920. I presume she was in her 30s. And these pictures being in my possession is really remarkable. They were sent to her sister in New York prior to World War II. And when I came to the United States in 1947, my aunt was gracious enough to hand me a lot of pictures of my family, which I had none whatsoever in 1947.

And please tell us about this photo.

This is also a picture that I received from my aunt showing my father standing, pouring a drink to his friend. And in the back of the picture, it says this is a picture from 1913. And I guess my father was pretty young there.

Let me see this for just a second.

OK, tell us about this, please.

This picture also is from my mother, but it was taken in France in 1930. And I guess between this one and the first one I showed, there is over 10 years difference. She must be in her early 40s here.

Tell us about this, please.

Yeah, this picture was taken while I was in the service, in the French army, in July 1942. And as you can see, it's been pretty much used by the fact that I kept it in my wallet for a long time.

How could this survive the war?

It was also given to my friend, Paul. He had it. And then after the war, he gave it to me. I had nothing. The place where they took me and where they took me to the Gestapo, I never got back-- whatever suitcase of clothing or whatever I had was never recuperated. And as I said, when I came to this country, I had whatever my friend, Paul, in Dijon gave me as pictures and what my aunt in New York gave me.

Tell us about this photo, please.

This picture really brings back some fond memories, pre World War II, where we had fairs in the small towns, and among different stores, they took pictures of children. And this doesn't happen to be a car. It's just a cardboard front of a car. And I sat at the wheel, driving the car. I can see I wear a funny kind of hat. The fellow next to me is my cousin. His sister is sitting behind me.

This is your cousin?

Right.

This is you.

Yeah.

This is the sister.

Right. That's my sister, and the other one is my cousin, Elsa. That's a sister and brother on both sides. They're brother and sister. My wife and the father of these two were brother and sister. And so as you can see even then, I was the one that drove. They always looked up to me. I don't know why. I guess at this particular time, I must be about 12.

My sister was born in '25. She had to be about nine. He was about my age. He was taken from France to Germany, never came back. She survived the war with her parents and must be alive in Metz, France, married and had two children the last time I heard of her. Must be in her 60s now.

Tell us about this photo, please.

This is also a picture of my mother that was taken during the war, World War II, in the early '40s. And I guess you can see the difference between the first picture in Warsaw, the second one as a young woman in France, and this, she must have been close to 50 in this picture. If I'm not mistaken, that picture was taken a few months before they took her away in a camp in Germany.

It slipped, kind of.

Tell us about this, please.

Yes. This is my oldest brother. He was born in 1911 in Warsaw, and that's the only picture I have of him. That was given to me by his wife, and it's an enlargement of a passport picture, and it was taken in July of 1943. He is the one fellow I saw just before the Germans took me. I went to see him that same morning, and he was telling me to watch. I work in a very dangerous place and something might happen to me.

Like an omen that day, I was taken by the Germans, and I never saw him alive anymore. He passed away in June '44, maybe a little earlier because I was in Germany at the time, and I found out he was killed by the Germans, shot in his bed in May or June '44. Because France was liberated just about that time. He went through the whole war just a last few days left.

Tell us about this, please.

Well, this happens to be my sister sitting in a chair, and I with my dumb look. I realized when I saw this picture for the first time how much one can change. And I can't recall when it was made, but I was born in 1922, my sister, in 1925. If she's three years old, so therefore, it has to be 1928, and I was '22, '28. Yeah, 1928, '29, that's my guess.

Tell us about this, please. This is my youngest brother, born in 1933. His name is Victor, and it's also the only picture I have of him. He was taken by the Germans in 1944 at the age of 11 to a concentration camp in Germany, and he never came back. Name is Victor.

Do you know where the picture was taken?

No, and there is no date in the back. And if he's born in 1933, he was taken '44, that's 11. I guess he's about 9 or 10 at this particular time. Yeah, it had to be '43 because my sister had this picture, and when my mother was taken in July of '42, he lived with her, and she had this picture taken in '43. Therefore, he had to be about 10. The following year, in '44, he went to Germany.

OK. Tell us about this photo, please.

I couldn't tell you when it was taken, but as you see, these two children with their father and mother are the two that were in the picture with that assimilated car. And my uncle is the husband of this woman, which lived in Hayange, where I was born. He was taken with my father prisoner by the Germans and brought to Hayange, in Lowell.

And again, going by the age of the children, if he was born in 1923, he's about 12. 1935 '36, I would say that picture was taken.

And he's the brother of whom?

My mother.

He's the brother of your mother?

Yes, and he also had a sister, like my mother, the sister from New York that brought me to New York. And she gave me that picture because I had none of the family, which is my uncle, aunt, and cousins.

His name?

Heidenberg is my mother's maiden name, and he's Heidenberg. Yitzchak, that's what I remember. Her, I don't remember her name. He was very proud. I went to visit him in 1958 for the first time, and he had in the basement of the house, because they had large basements in those days in France, he had his push cart, and he made a living with this.

And he showed it to me, and he said, you see, this house belongs to me, and this push cart had me earn a living, and that's how I bought this house. There's a man-- he never was bothered with the Germans, but he lived to the age of 78, and he smoked a pack of cigarettes a day. And then he had a lot of black coffee. He was telling me he enjoyed black coffee when I went to visit him.

OK, tell us about this, please.

This, I guess, had to be about a year after the picture that was taking with my sister where she's sitting on a chair, and I have no recollection where that was taken. But she has to be maybe 6 there, and I'm about 9 or 10. There's a three years difference between her and me. The one thing I enjoy is the hair, lots of hair.

OK, tell us about this, please.

This happens to be a picture taken in Nice, in the South of France, and I realized I had another picture of my oldest brother because he was living there away from his family because it was occupied by the Italians, and the Italians did not pursue the Jews as much as the Germans. So you went there.

And this is my girlfriend that I had met in Dijon, and I wanted so much to come back after the war to meet her again. And we took this. We took a trip by train from Dijon, and we went through the demarcation line between the occupied zone and non-occupied zone. And if you look on my lap, I have some flowers. Because in Nice, they had a large market that was selling flowers, and this happens to be carnations. I had bought a bouquet of carnations.

What was her name, the name of your girlfriend?

Let's see. I remember this lady is over 60 now. What happened, you see here, Paulette Goce. Paulette. See, these guys, I send my girlfriend, they send her postcards, asking for food. She had called a sister-in-law, some other places, "Dear Madam," and that's April '43 from Auschwitz.

Does she know how important she was to your survival?

No. My niece, in Dijon, when I met her, the last time I was in France, she says to me, you know, you remember Paulette? And she got me by surprise. She was born in 1940, my niece, and this is 1943. How come she knows about this Paulette? So she looked with a smile at me. She's my neighbor, and she found out Blankenberg, so we talked, and she talked to her. She was a grandmother, and she was widowed.

So what she does, she gives me her name, address, and telephone number. You know what? I couldn't call her. I couldn't call her because what was I going to tell her that she helped me so much to survive, but when I came back, she was gone. So it would maybe open wounds many, many years later.

So I get my courage to call her when I got from Dijon to Paris, and I called her from Paris, and I said hello to her, and we said a couple of words, not very much. But I hate to see a grandmother now when I see her like this in the picture I have.

It's again, a matter of opinion. Maybe I did the wrong thing. I don't know, but in those days, I remember that was a nice trip, by the way.

OK.

This picture is of my sister in 1946. She was in the French army, and I guess she gave me this when I came back from Germany. And she also, at that time, you can see the transformation of an adult from a child, where I sat with her when she was about 5. Here she had to be-- in 1946, she was born in '25-- she was 21 years old.

She had a girl born in '43 that was three years old, and she passed away in 1982 from breast cancer. She has a second family. She remarried in this country, and she has a boy and a girl from the second husband and very nice children. It's the next one. Let me see if the date, when you look at it.

Tell us about this, please.

This happens to be my sister with her daughter, Lillian, and also was taken while she was in the army. And she gave me this picture when I left for the United States in 1947. And I just happened to read in the back of it. It says, "To my dear brother, Maurice, the sole survivor of our family."

And my sister wrote for the daughter, "To my Uncle Maurice. She couldn't say the R, and she called me Molisse, M-O-L-I-S-S-E. That's what is written in the back of the card.

I have to also mention that this girl that is on the lap of my sister happens to be born in '43, so she is going to be 50 in October, and she has a daughter that's married, and there's one that's going to be married in May. And if everything goes well, I'll be at her marriage at the end of this month in New York.

If you could tell us about this photo, please.

Yes. This is a picture of my sister. She came to Dijon visit me before I left for the United States, and it's all a period of time where she was in Germany, in occupation, working for the military post office in censorship. Taken in, my guess has to be in the fall of 1946.

And tell us about this, please.

Yes. This is a picture of my niece, Lillian that was born in 1943. And I guess it has to be 1948, prior to coming to the United States. It's like a passport picture, and it was taken just before she came to the United States with her mother.

You want this one?

Tell us about this, please.

Yes. This is a photo of my oldest brother's wife and their two children. It had to be taken some time in 1945, where the father had been gone maybe a year. And this lady, Suzanne, was born in 1907. She was four years older than my brother, and she passed away two years ago and never remarried. She brought up those two girls, born 11, 12 months apart, one in January of '40, the other one in 1941.

The one on her right is Francois, and the one on the left is Colette. And as I mentioned, this was taken in '45, and they're both over 50 years of age now. I saw them last year in France.

This picture is a part of my new life when I got to the United States, and I had met my future wife. And we had outings in a place called Bear Mountain. That's North of New York. And we used to go for picnics. The fellow with me happens to be her cousin, and he happens to teach me how to drive a car in New York City. And had to be just before 1949 because I got my license to drive a car in New York in February of 1949, and we're trying to be funny there, I guess.

This picture is all people that worked with my sister in occupation in Germany. As you can see, there's German writing on the wall. That's the place where she was staying while she was in occupation in Germany, and it's all people that worked with her. She is the one with a white collar. And as you can see, she's the nicest looking.

So she's in the front row right there?

Right there.

Tell us about this, please.

This happens to be a picture of myself, taken in March of 1946. And I had sent this to my aunt that had never seen me. She just knew that I was the sole survivor. So I sent her this picture. In March 46, I didn't speak any English, but to dictionary, I wrote in the back, "Best regard, from your nephew. March 1946."

Tell us about this, please.

This picture was taken in 1947. I met my future wife then in June 7, 1947, and we had an engagement party. And just before the wedding, maybe six months before, we took this in a studio. And unfortunately, this picture is nicer than the wedding pictures, in my opinion. Although, they didn't come out too badly.

OK.

This is a wedding invitation. We had a catered affair in July 3, 1948. And Sarah Rabinowitz, my bride at that time, had a pretty fair group of people that were cantors. And so we went to the congregation, and she said it, I can see, in the Bronx, New York. And that was in 1948.

And we lived on 1254 Sherman Avenue in the Bronx. I just remembered that yet.

All right.

I noticed that our wedding picture, after all, isn't as bad as I thought it was. Engagement picture looked much nicer, I thought, but it's still nice. Very nice picture taken July 3, 1948. And I recall I received some telegrams, and in that time, one of the cousins of my wife showed me a telegram. And I guess it had to be a fake. There was a telegram from Harry Truman. Congratulations on the wedding, but I don't think Truman sent it. Somebody that wanted to make me feel, well, I guess. might--

OK.

This also, is an individual picture of myself taken at the wedding, July 3, 1948. I guess I don't have to explain that I look very happy. A lot of changes have occurred since World War II. First of all, I'm back to normal as far as my face, and

life was very good to me. I really started a very nice 35 years with my wife.

All right.

This picture had to be taken just a few weeks after us coming back from our honeymoon. We lived in the Bronx, New York. And above on the roof, it was flat top, and we had that picture taken in July of 1948.

You look very happy.

Yeah. This picture was taken on our honeymoon in Montreal, Canada. We stayed at the Hotel Mount Royal. And as you can imagine, when you're on your honeymoon, the rest of the world doesn't count. We were having a very good time. We visited all good part of that area in Canada.

And we had no car yet at that time. Went by train and used the bus to go to different places. That's July 1948.

OK.

This picture was taken with my wife's cousin in Central Park, New York. We rented bikes, and somebody-- I don't even remember who took that picture-- but it was taken also, in the summer of 1948. That's the fellow that taught me how to drive a car.

OK.

This happens to be on the same roof that we took a picture of my wife and I, when we just get married. This happens to be when my son was six weeks old, and he was born on April 27, 1950. And as you can see by his hair, the night he was born at 10:00 PM, at 10:30, I was at the hospital. And I asked the nurse through the glass which one was my son. She says the papoose, the one with a lot of hair. And that was April 27 on a Thursday.

And that Saturday, I went to the hospital with a portable radio, listening to the Giants on the Giant-Dodger game. And my wife said, you're making too much noise with this radio. Said, well, you better get used to the Giants because he's got to listen to the Giants the rest of his life. And it happens to be to this day, when we meet, we always talk about the Giants. He's a Giant fan like I am.

By the way, his first words were papa, mama, and the third word was Bobby Thomson. In 1951, Bobby Thomson hit a home run to win the pennant for the Giants, and that's what he heard my wife scream at home, Bobby Thomson, so that's what he said, Bobby Thomson. Yes.

OK.

Yeah, this happens to be my son when he was five months old, and the arm that I can see holding him is a cousin of my wife that was responsible for us meeting, my wife and I. And the person you see on the edge there is her daughter. And she was pretty hefty lady, and by that arm, I recognize her. I haven't seen her in close to 35 years. By the way, she's not alive anymore.

Tell us about this, please.

This happens to be my wife and my son. It was taken in New Jersey. He was born in New York in April, and as soon as possible, I was looking for a place to live outside of New York City, and we found an apartment. It was called Garden Apartment in New Jersey. And we lived-- in the background, you see house. That's where we lived. It was apartments, and I assume he's got to be about eight months old, 1950, '51. Yeah. This must be 1951.

OK.

December 1951. We lived in this apartment that we just showed you in a previous picture, and December '51, he was

just a little bit over a year and a half, I would say. And I was working in New York City, and my wife stayed home when the boy was born, and we lived there in 1951, in New Jersey.

All right.

This happens to be Miami Beach in 1952. I had worked at the Waldorf Astoria up to that time, and I wanted to go in business for myself. And we took a trip to Miami by car with my son and my wife, and that picture was taken there. And in September 1952, I opened my first bakery business in New Jersey, and that was in July of 1952. Therefore, he has to be about two years and three months old there.

By the way, the hotel for the week cost me \$30, in the hotel. One week at Miami Beach, \$30.

OK.

This happens to be at a picnic someplace in New Jersey. My wife in the background, my sister in the forefront with her daughter, Lillian-- that's the girl born in '43-- and my son born in 1950. And I think everybody looks very happy.

OK.

This happens to be my son with a sombrero that I'm holding, with the neighbor's boy, which enjoyed playing with my son. His name is Joseph, and my son called him Jofish. He couldn't pronounce the name properly. And as you can see, he's got a Mexican outfit somehow. I don't even remember why.

The place we lived was that door just above my left ear, that door there, was a two-bedroom apartment. And each door had an apartment separately. And the one is on the right, was another on the ground, and on the left, then on the ground, and the other door is upstairs. And so all the families there, as I said, we were young, married couples, and everybody was very friendly.

I remember being there when they launched Sputnik. I happened to go out in the night to look out to see the first Sputnik in the air. Just about those years, I forgot. We left there in 1959, so it had to be some time before '59.

This picture was taken in 1951, and that's before they had that '51 Dodger-Giant playoff game in the World Series between the Giants and the Yankees. And DiMaggio was still playing in 1951, in the World Series. That's my recollection of that picture.

OK.

This happens to be a picture taken some place in New York, I can't recall where, with my sister, my son that I'm holding, and my sister's daughter, Lillian. And it's in the summer, and I wear some kind of a T-shirt. And if I can't recall, it had to be some place in Long Island where my sister, while she was working, had her daughter stay in a home where they took care of her while she would work. That building doesn't tell me exactly where it is, but it's some place in Long Island. The year had to be 1951.

OK.

This happens to be a picture taken on the roof at 1254 Sherman Avenue in the Bronx before my son was born. This must be about '48, '49. That's my sister with my wife and her daughter, Lillian. And if you can see in the background, there's a clothesline with clothes being dried outside.

It's on the roof. It was a four-story building in the Bronx. And at that time, my son wasn't born yet.

What about this place?

Yes, this happens to be my wife and my son. And if I try to remember when it was taken, it had to be when he was

about three or maybe four, therefore, in 1954. And I guess we went to a resort some place on vacation, and I took this picture there, up in the Catskills some place.

Tell us about this place.

This happens to be in the summer of 1949. I went to work at the Catskills in a resort hotel as a baker, and my wife left her job and went to work in the same place in the office. Not far away from that place where we worked, there was this French boxer that was training to fight Jake LaMotta.

Knowing that he was there, I went to visit him and he had us take a picture with him. Very nice. And Jake LaMotta got hurt. They couldn't stage the fight, so he went back to France. Upon his return to have the match with Jake LaMotta, the plane crashed in the ocean near the Azores, and he passed away at that crash.

Marcel Cerdan was a fighter, well-known by the American troops in Africa because he fought many an American military guy, and he beat them all. He was a champion of the world middleweight. And this is a picture that's pretty rare about this man. And my wife and I, 1949, I was two years in a country. I don't look like an immigrant there.

I have a tie and a suit, working in a bakery, but I guess I went right to become an American. And I don't regret it.

Do you want to--

OK.

As I mentioned in the previous pictures about my son, he was used to listening to ball games when he was just a few days old. And whenever we went to the ballpark, he enjoyed it. He realized if I like it, he's going to like it too. He was lefty, but he never played much baseball.

He became pretty big at the age of 17, 18. He was 6 foot 2". He played football in San Jose Lynbrook High, played football in high school. That's it. But there, you can see he's got a nice smile, and my guess he's about six years old there.

OK.

This happens to be in 1950 at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, where I worked making ice cream for the hotel. And this vat contained roughly 100 gallons of ice cream preparation. And what we did, I explained this to the gentleman, which was one of the office big shots. And they wanted to have a picture taken while we're working on the ice cream.

We manufactured about 400 gallons of ice cream per day in containers of 2 and 1/2 gallons. I had two helpers, shift of eight hours, of which we manufactured six hours. One hour of cleaning beforehand. We had to team up all the equipment at a very high temperature to kill the bacteria, and one hour after we finished to steam all the equipment at the hotel.

They were very much afraid of things that are happening now with contamination with coli bacteria. So we had inspectors from a private company, chemists, take samples of our ice cream to see if it had a certain amount of coli. You can kill all the bacteria 100%, but enough that nobody would get sick.

Now, in this particular period of time I worked there, as I said, that was six hours of work. The rest of the time, my help would clean. We all walked around with boots up to our knees because the refrigerator freezer that we put the ice cream in was at 20 below zero.

So when we went in, we put army surplus coats from people that were in Alaska, with a hood and the boots. And as I said, we manufactured 400 gallons a day of ice cream.

That was slide 60 on this.

Yes.

OK.

By 1959, we left the East Coast, and we came to California, cross country, and via Los Angeles, where my wife had some cousins. But as you can recall, I mentioned to you that baseball wise, I followed the Giants. And so we approached north towards San Francisco, and somehow, we came with highway 99 to the center of California, and we landed in San Jose.

In the first few days we were there, I met this fellow working in a bakery, a French guy, and we became friends-- that's the fellow on the left with his wife, my wife, and I-- in the back of the house we bought when we got to San Jose. My first property that I bought for \$19,100, three-bedroom house, and that's the yard behind.

And the trees you see in the background, apricot trees in bloom, so it had to be in 1960, prior to have maybe May or June of 1960. And just about that time, I opened a bakery business, and this fellow worked for me in 1960, in San Jose.

When I mentioned in the last picture that we opened a bakery business in San Jose. This was the opening day. We all wore these chef's hats. My wife was in the front with the customers, and I worked in the back. At that time, I started with two bakers, and we stayed there till 1967.

As you can see, by my arm on the left side, I had already gained weight at that time, and that happens to be 33 years ago. I would say I haven't changed too, too much weight wise in 30 years. I weight about the same, give or take five pounds.

OK.

This is a picture of my friend, Paul, in the center with his wife. My friend, Paul, I met in 1959. And over the years, we've been in contact, and he happens to send me this picture in 1955, where the lady sitting is his wife's sister and her husband, which he wrote their names because I had never met that couple.

And he was a very rugged, outgoing guy, my friend, Paul. And that is another situation with him. His family name is Prost, P-R-O-S-T, and he doesn't know anything about Germany. Prost is a German name. Prost, in German, means skol, good luck or whatever. He has a relative that's a race car driver by the name of Alejan Prost. In France, you don't see a Prost, you say Pro, like P-R-O. S-T is silent.

And like I said, we're friends since 1959.

What year did you meet him?

1939. I said '59. See, I made a mistake. 1939. I worked in this place, which was like a Woolworth store after I worked in the first bakery, making eclairs and pastries. And one day, he delivered some milk and he saw me put whipped cream in the eclairs, and he said, oh, that looks good. I said, do you want some? So I said open your mouth, and I squirted that whipped cream in his mouth, and it flew all over.

And somehow, we went out, and we had a good time after that. And whenever, we were free, we used to go out together, and we had a few friends. And like I said, he's been three times to this country. The trouble is after the age of 70, he slowed down a lot, so we don't see him. Whenever I went to France, I stopped there, in Dijon, like he was a brother to me.

OK.

This picture happens to be my second wife and I, taken in New York. We went to a wedding together in 1987. And that's the first picture of my second wife that I have been showing. Very happily married. The only thing, if you look at

my face, it doesn't change too much in the last five years, except I got older. From all the pictures I've been shown till now, her name is Suzanne. Cohen is her family name.

And in the bank where she works, she uses Suzanne Cohen-Blaine. That's her title. When she has her name on her desk, it's Suzanne Cohen-Blaine. I've gone out with her to different parties with the bank, and they said to me, how are you doing, Mr. Cohen? They call me Cohen, which I don't care. It's a lot of fun.

She has a lot of friends in the French community here because she does transact different transfer of money between France and this country, and she's well-liked in the bank where she works. This is the same.

OK.

This happens to be a picture taken in 1988 in Nevada, going to Virginia City. I took a picture in the rocks on the road that goes from Carson City to Virginia City, and I took her there in 1988, I guess. Yes.

OK. Go ahead.

This picture was taken in Virginia City, just about the same time that I took her while we drove on the road leading from Carson City to Virginia City. The only comment I can remember about this particular picture is, on the tree that you see on the left, they had a fruit on there, which is my favorite fruit in France called Mirabelle.

In the whole country, I never saw a tree bearing a Mirabelle. And that particular tree had Mirabelles on that tree, which, if you don't know what a Mirabelle is, it's a yellow plum. Very, very sweet. The specialty, they grow this in Lorraine, where I was born. I remember as a kid going into the fields where they had those trees.

The fruit is just a little bigger than a bing cherry, but it has a pit like a plum, and it has a polka dot, red dots, very sweet. The best jam is made with Mirabelle, in my book. And again, I just make that comment because seeing the picture, I recall this tree that fascinated me right there. But you got to remember, Virginia City had French miners that came dig out some silver in the mines there.

And somehow, somebody must have planted it, this tree from France. Shows you how things can be so far apart and so near because they brought with them also, at that time, the denims that made Levi's really famous, that originally was in France, the denim.

Because denim is a concentration of the word de Nimes, from N-I-M-E-S, Nimes, the city in France. That's where they made that material. And most of the garage people used to wear these blue jeans just like what we call now, the Levi's. And it sure went a long way from de Nimes. I guess we got everything.

Tell us about this, please.

Now, this happens to be a very, very unique postcard. While I was in Buna Monowitz. I happen to see some civilian people working the same factory I worked, and they spoke French. What I said to these people, as long as-- you're from France, he says, yes, I'd be so grateful if you send a few words to my girlfriend, Paulette, from Dijon. And I gave them the address 45 Berbisay, in Dijon, and tell her that I'm alive, not to worry too much about me.

And as you can see, the guy, the sender, his name was Lemaitre, and he was in a place called Lager Buchenwald number 2. And the firm he worked with was named [INAUDIBLE] something, in Auschwitz, in Germany. Now, the reason I have this picture is because after the war, I got this postcard, given to me by the people that the sender sent to Paulette Gotier. And after the war, they gave it to me.

And to give you an idea what it said on there was, as you could turn this card around. Yes. In this particular card, it says-- now remember, I never heard anything else from these fellows except that I gave them the name and the address in Dijon of France, and after the war, this is what I got, dated Auschwitz the 19th of April, 1943.

"Dear Madam, I received your package that pleased Maurice greatly, and he wants to thank you very much. His health is good, but he's ennui, which in French means he's bored a lot. And he also tells me he thinks a lot about you. His work is always the same. The clothes that you sent pleased him very much. If you can send him another package with more food and cigarettes and also some shoes because he works barefoot."

Now, you can see the rest is not very important except he is saluting this person. Big kisses from Maurice, and he signs it M. Aquanie Lumet. I never got anything of this package.

Translate the sentence before that, GQ.

He also says that I said to him, if you send other things to send it in a little box because when it was bulky, I suppose, the Germans, right away, would look into it and grab half of it. In a little box, they would let it go by. So in other words, the robber was robbed by the Germans. Now, I can laugh about it, but I would have never known if I hadn't--

Now, as you see in the bottom, the consulate made me copies because these postcards were getting pretty old, and this is the consulate that made me copies of this. Now, I can't read this to--

It's a continuation of the card, but it's on the other side.

No, it's a second card.

Which begins on the other side.

Yes. Now, as you can see, whoever sent this card had to write a different title. Sometimes you remembered to write, Dear Madam. There he writes, Dear Sister-in-law, because I guess the censor will read this, and if you wrote, Dear Madam several times, he would wonder what was this post all about.

You normally would write to a relative, like a sister-in-law. Dear Sister-in-law, I hurry up to answer your letter that has pleased Maurice a lot. Now, you see, this is something I didn't remember. By reading this right now, no, let me explain, now, why I'm confused.

He then answers a letter received, and he says in this letter, Maurice wants me to answer you quickly on the letter you sent me that pleased Maurice a lot knowing, that you are the godmother of Lillian. Now, as you can remember what I said, I never saw these letters, and I never knew that Lillian existed till I got back. This girl became my niece's godmother.

Now, when I read this, I just realized that somewhere along the line, this guy knew about it and never told me anything. And it continues. "I wonder very much why you didn't get my letters that I sent you, and then goes on the other side, on the right. The letters that I send you already, but I hope that you received them by now.

Life is always the same here, now, that we work 11 hours a day and we have bad weather till the end of April we had bad weather. I received your package like AI wrote it in one of my letters and Morris asked if you could send them another one with shoes and work clothes because she works in cement every day.

In this work, we don't have much clothing, and he asked us if you could send him some food. And when you send it, please make a list in the package of what you send because he's wondering why you didn't send him a watch. And dear, sister-in-law, wishing you a good day and my best kisses is Maurice. Now, you can see, when you get a car like this that I asked for a watch, and I'm wondering why I didn't get a watch, these people smelled a rat, and they stopped sending him packages.

Now, when I got back I was shocked when I saw this. I could have gone to Paris to the organization, and have this guy stopped, But I realize what good is it to me it was a father and son that the father was in the late 40s, and that was 1945 when I got back. I realized and like I said before all I wanted in life is forget the past and go on but is it a very easy way to see how you can find bad people, people that use you, an write things that I'm very happy about getting a package

which I never heard of. Now, this package did him good for a little while, but in the long run I'm here. And I wonder where they are.

Are these people French?

Yes. They were from the northern part of France, father and son went to work either as a volunteer they didn't tell me but I saw maybe three times at most and every time I ask him did you get some news he said no we didn't get anything. But one thing they did, they did send a letter. They knew I was alive, and that's about it.

The return address is Auschwitz, Germany. Yes because Germany Auschwitz was called Germany at the time because it was occupied?

No. No. They had annexed it, in 1938 with a pact of Auschwitz Deutschland. That's the post office's stamp. And that little round thing must be the censor that put this mark on there, but basically the guy that wrote this was French. You see the B, the D, the F, which is French.

Now Auschwitz, the camp-- the funniest part is called Lager Buchenwald, which means camp. He lived in back like we did, except they didn't have barbed wires around, electrified barbed wires like we had. There, in barracks, it was put there for them to work in that IG Farben industry's compound. As I said, there must have been a minimum of 10,000 people working in that factory. There was prisoner of war-- English, French, Polish, Russian-- and guys like us from the working force of Buna Monowitz.

Everybody doing more or less the same kind of work?

Except the people that went there as volunteer were specialized in any particular work. When you mentioned cement, I was never near cement. That was the work he must have been doing, building with cement and building buildings or some kind of building construction, because I never worked in cement. And I had wooden shoes. If I had gotten shoes from this guy, they wouldn't last on me an hour. The Germans would take it away from me.

We all had these wooden shoes with material tops, and I guess they would have sent me some working shoes. But they did send several packages. I would say the mother of Paulette did that.

The intended production of this plant was fuels.

Yes, chemical. Basically, fuel for that rocket, V1. But it was a coal area. Coal mines were plentiful around. So they decided-- and they came up with the idea that coal, they could distill this into-- for the tanks also in Russia, that they had-- they were lacking fuel. I guess that's meaning we're at the end, huh?