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Interview with BEATRICE HIRSCHFELD McCullough

Holocaust Oral History Project

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(Begin Tape 1)

Q WHAT WAS YOUR FATHER'S NAME?

A Meyer Hirschfeld.

Q AND WHERE DID YOU LIVE?

A I lived in Brussels, Belgium during the war, and I went to high school there and study there.

Q AND WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

A I was born in the free state of (Danzig), and when I was two years old my parents moved to Brussels, Belgium.

Q I READ THAT A LOT OF EASTERN EUROPEANS MOVED TO BELGIUM. CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THAT?

A I think it was because of business reasons and financial reasons that my father moved his business. He was in the lumber business, and he moved it from (Danzig) to Belgium and it had nothing to do with a mass immigration. This had nothing to do with that.

Q DID IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH BEING JEWISH?

A No, it didn't. It was monetary reasons.

Q CAN YOU TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR LIFE IN BELGIUM?

A I was brought up in Brussels, Belgium.

My parents were very strict. We went to -- we had governesses and private tutors. My sister and I, we had a very sheltered life, and then we were sent to a private school. Actually that was the first time that I was exposed to anti-Semitism.

The principal of the school made a conference on social studies, and most of us students there were from kind of middle-class parents and some of them were there because their parents were doctors in the Belgian Congo. This was also a school where you would stay all day or where you would also stay all year-round.

She wanted to make the point that the skin of a Jewish person was different from the skin of an Aryan.

She called two students, and under a lamp they examined the skin, and she said, "You see hers is different from hers." What she didn't know is that she picked two Jewish kids, and they were both Jewish.

This was the first time that I was exposed to this, and I told my parents, "I don't want to go to this school anymore. I want to go to a public school." We finally went to a public school.

Q WERE YOU ONE OF THOSE CHILDREN?

A No, it was two friends of mine, and they were both Jewish. She didn't know that. So she missed the point.

So I must say from then on I was really not exposed to anti-Semitic remarks, only much later.

Q WHEN DID THAT HAPPEN?

A Actually it was when war broke out. This was in 1940

when the Germans invaded Brussels. They started to bombard the city, and so we decided to leave. We went by car and to the northern border to France. We all had to stop, and there was one person there. He said, "Jews are not allowed to get out of here. Go back to Belgium." We had to show our identification cards, and we had this Jewish stamp. That was the first time I was really exposed to anti-Semitism.

There was this French guard at the border who said, "You just can go back to Belgium." Then all roads were closed and it was too late, and we all had to return.

That actually was the only time.

Q WHEN YOU WENT TO THAT SCHOOL, HOW OLD WERE YOU?

A I went there up to the age -- from eight to twelve, I would say.

Q SO YOU WERE 12?

A It was when this incident happened, yes.

Q AND WAS THAT THE FIRST ANTI-SEMITIC --

A Yes, it was. Actually I must say from my personal experience and my friends, for instance, when we were supposed to wear "The Star", my sister went to this school for social workers, the whole class -- the whole school walked with the star just as a gesture of defiance.

Q THAT WAS LATER?

A That was during German occupation, yes.

When we were not allowed to go to school anymore, then my teachers would come home and the principal would come also. That was the public school. She gave me English classes,

and she really went out of her way to accommodate me. She's a very fine, noble person.

Q AND THAT ALSO WAS DURING THE WAR?

A That was during the war, yes. For instance, when the war started out, well this was later if you want to know the reasons why -- how we happened to be in the concentration camp, which was not really a concentration camp. It was a camp where they would gather people to be sent out, and somebody suggested "transit camp."
But this is probably a good translation of it. In German it was called zammelanger, which means a place where you gather people.

This was in 1942 when we got these papers that were called Arbeits Einsatz Befehl which meant forced labor.
It just said that we had to go and work in the country somewhere, and we were supposed to be at this particular place at a certain time and bring food for two weeks. If we would not show up, they would take our parents instead.

This is why I want to explain that my situation is really quite different from the other people.

We were not taken from our homes. My sister and I went voluntarily, and maybe this is what saved us.

My father had just undergone a double bypass surgery from the heart, and it was the first time that such a surgery was performed. So I just could not visualize myself seeing my father being taken away.

So at night he was in the hospital, and we were not allowed to go out at night. But at night I would go there, and I would sit with him in his room at night in the hospital.

So then when he was brought back home, and we got these papers, we decided to pack our things and go.

My mother was hysterical, but we went.

I also want to add that during that time when we were not allowed to go to school any more, the Jewish community formed some special schools for us. We were going to be trained there to be teachers for Jewish schools. The principal of that school kind of suggested also, why don't you go to the 'SP" camp because it was in Malines. Why don't you go there with the diploma, and we'll see if they will send you back or not. This was kind of a test -- testing the system.

I went with the diploma, and I didn't even know what it meant. We were kind of naive, and when we took that train SP" and arrived in Malines. there was a gathering of quite a lot of people. There was this German officer who was standing there. He was huge, and I would look at the belt that he had, SP" and on the belt it said, "Got Mit Unz." And he looked very terrifying. I couldn't understand how God could be on the side of these people.

Q AND WHAT DID THAT MEAN?

"SP" A Got Mit Unz -- God is with us. It was the motto of the SS.

So immediately I realized that this was not a work camp where they were going to send us. There were women, children, older people, and they started shouting at us. They said "Get into those trucks." This was also a very clever device designed by the Germans to put those people into these food trucks, like here you would have advertisement for milk or advertisement for margarine. Well it was the same in Belgium.

So we were all directed in those food trucks so that the local people would think, oh, they are feeding them. Well, look at all the food that's coming in.

So we embarked in the truck, and we were let out in Malines which was a military camp that the Belgians had abandoned.

Can I just stop a second? I was just wondering --

Q OKAY.

LET ME CLARIFY SOMETHING BEFORE YOU START.

WHEN THEY PICKED YOU UP IN THESE MILK TRUCKS AND FOOD TRUCKS, YOU WERE AT THE TRAIN STATION AND THEY TRANSPORTATED YOU TO THE --

A To the military camp. Do I have to clarify that?

Q NO. I JUST WANTED TO CLARIFY THAT.

A This was very clever of them so that the townspeople thought this is just food -- to feed the people.

Everything was very cleverly designed.

Can I start now?

Q YES, PLEASE.

So when the truck arrived in front of the gate and we were let in, we got off the trucks and they started to shout "Loss, loss, mach snell! Hurry up! Hurry up! And we were directed toward the Aufnahme, which meant reception room. There were tables with girls on the typewriter making meticulously the list of the people that were coming in. Then you had to give your identity card, and they registered your name, your address, different information. Then there was another table where they would take the jewelry you had on and your money. They would put your name on it and the amount of the money they took from you. Then you would proceed to another table, and they would examine your luggage to see if you didn't have any concealed weapons or knives. And from that day on until two and a half years later, I didn't have a knife in my hand to eat.

After that we were also given a number, but we were not given a number on our arms. I was just given a number. And many times I tried to remember that number. I can't. Maybe it was 523 and my sister 524. We were there from the very beginning. It was a small number, but I don't remember the number.

Then we were directed to a room upstairs, well, if you can call it rooms. It was like bunk beds, and you had to choose between bunk beds or there were mattresses on the ground. I think it was the longest night I spent in my whole life.

I just sat up there all night. I was so scared. And here my rigid upbringing in Europe, thrown into that situation, I was quite scared.

The next day we had to appear in the courtyard, and we were called by numbers. And the commandant kind of started putting people to the right and to the left. For some reason I was put to the right with my sister, and he would ask us, do you know German? I said, yes. And, do you know how to type? And I said, yes. And then he said, all right, we'll take your number off. And for awhile you'll just be staying here, and we can use you in the office to register the people that come in.

I was very young at that time, and I snapped back at him. I said, "I am not working for the Germans." And he looked at me and --

(Ms. Hirschfeld overcome with emotion. Requests a few seconds to gather composure.)

Q HOW OLD WERE YOU AT THE TIME?

A I was 18.

And he looked at me,"You are too young to die. Where are we sending people? They are not coming back."

This was the first time I heard such a statement. Coming from an SS, it was hard to believe, but I really began to believe it.

So we were moved from this room upstairs to a room downstairs where there were beds aligned.

I think there were about 24 beds aligned on each row, and this was where I was going to spend the next two and a half years.

There were nurses there, cooks, They were all Jewish girls, and they were recruited from those who were in the camp. Most of them were from Antwerp or Brussels, like we were.

Then I'm trying to recall what our daily routine was. We would get up at five in the morning, and we had to walk in a courtyard. And then we'd go inside and we'd have this Ersatz coffee and a piece of bread, then off to the office.

They also found some paperwork for us to do. Then when the gates would open and the truck of people would come a load of people would come in, we had to be ready at our stations in the office and do whatever we were told to do that day.

Most of the time, what I did was put all the jewelry and the money in an envelope with their name. And I thought that they would put it in the bank. At least that's what they said they did at the end of each day, they would put it in a trunk. And I don't know where it went, but I thought for a long time that it was put in a bank but I'm sure it wasn't.

I also want to add something here.

When I came, I think it was about ten days after my birthday, I think it must have been on the 17th of July when I came.

My father had given me a pen, a fountain pen, which I took with me, and that was the first thing the German took -- and took away from me and put it in his pocket and said, "I always wanted a pen." And I was kind of bewildered, but this kind of stuck in my mind.

So, you know, here I was putting -- writing the name of the people that their belongings were taken from and registering it and doing my daily routine.

Also we were allowed to receive packages until the transport would leave, and I think that the Jewish committee was also sending packages.

I don't remember being hungry, but this is probably because I really lost taste for food because they gave us this cabbage soup every day. I then lost interest in food, and I don't remember being hungry.

So when the packages arrived through the mail, we were supposed to open them up and see if there were some knives in it or whatever and confiscate it.

I must say that people used to know me, and there was always quite a line in front of my table because they knew that I would be very lenient.

Actually I want to mention that there was a transport that left and people tried to escape and were given knives and instruments by some other men who worked there in the camp.

And we were told, for instance, by such and such, there is a package going to arrive. And so I would be very lenient

about it. But then the trouble was that this was the 21st transport. This was already much later. Some people, I think they cut a hole on the ground of the train, of the wagons where they were, and they escaped. Some of them were caught back and some of them who escaped and were caught back even a year later. Much later. But then when they were caught back, there was a list of those who escaped. There was recommendations being made that they get pretty harsh treatment. Among them was a friend of mine , Lorette -- can you stop it, please.

(Pause so Ms. Hirschfeld may regain composure.)

So there was this friend of mine, Lorette and she escaped, but then she was brought back. I would imagine, like a year later, I don't know what kind of treatment she underwent, but they must have asked her from where they got those instruments and maybe she was forced to tell. So the situation -- they started to get suspicious about the people working the "gepack controlle" which is the department where you inspect the luggage and the packages.

So anyway, the camp doctor, Doctor Parness , sent me to the hospital and I had my appendix removed. And Dr. Parness is now in New York. I guess, he saved my life. Because when I came back, it was the last transport that went, and so I was kind of out of suspicion.

I must say, at the hospital everybody was very kind. I remember it was a Catholic hospital in Malines.

All I remember was those two little nuns praying for me before the operation, and then the doctor telling me, "What was wrong with your appendix? There was nothing wrong with your appendix." And I said, "Well, you know, let's keep it among us here. Don't mention this to the authorities." That was all.

But, you know, when I think of when I went to Israel, and when these young people told me what have you done, you all walked like sheep. You didn't defend yourself. I kind of did the best I could under the circumstances there.

I still feel that life has been given me a second time.

There were many scenes of mental cruelty that I remember.

I, myself, have actually no complaints except that I was deprived of my freedom.

I never walked in a straight line. We were always walking around that courtyard in circles. I never saw a tree in two and a half years.

They had their little mental cruelty game. I can give you an example.

My sister and I were together in the camp and suddenly in the middle of the night one of those Germans would walk in our rooms with their two dogs and they would say, "The two sisters, we are going to transport them separately." And so there was a big silence. We knew that if we didn't react, they would stop that little game.

One day when there was a convoy leaving and I just happen to be there, so one of the SS said, "Go in that train." And so I went and he pulled me out of there and said, "It was just a joke."

And I think there was -- oh, yes -- there was one day the gates opened. And there were only men walking in. They had striped suits, white and black striped suits, like pajamas. They had shaved heads, and they were singing this song in German which I kind of now translate in my head into English for you. It said, "Brendonk, we won't forget you, because you are our destiny. Brendonk, we can't complain for every piece of bread you gave us because one day will come that we will be set free."

The story behind it is that these men came from Brendonk which was another camp in Belgium, a labor camp where there was very harsh treatment. I don't know why they were there. These men were told they were going to be set free. Instead, of that, they were brought to Malines to be transported. They said you are going to be set free, and you will be reunited with your families.

Well the second part of the statement was correct because their families were already gathered in Malines and they were to leave with them.

They were very emaciated.

The irony of that song, it was just a mockery. It was terrible.

Sometimes people, those transports would come in at night, and we would rush to the window. You could identify the cars whether they were people from Antwerp or Brussels. I don't remember now how we were able to identify that, and it was also a sigh of relief. "Oh, it's Antwerp, It's not Brussels." I realize now how cruel it was toward the other people in the room who had family in Antwerp, but you become very immune. You only think about your close family. So this is how it went. "Oh, it's Antwerp, not Brussels." So we knew then, we don't have to look for our parents because we never knew whether our parents would be on that convoy or not. Luckily enough, they were spared. they went into hiding, and they put our house under the name of a Belgian mayor near (Ghent).

The name was Mr. August Cras, because, I guess, the house was registered under his name. They were kind of spared.

It's kind of unbelievable. They never went out and never left the house, but they were spared.

Q DID THEY ACTUALLY LIVE IN THE HOUSE?

A They did. They lived in that house. I don't quite remember how because there was another house. And then they moved from that other house, and they bought that house on the same street. It was put under this mayor's name, and nobody was suspicious. But they never left the house.

Q (Inaudible question from interviewer)

A No, we had a maid, but I don't know.

I can't explain it. This is how they were spared, and on the same street they lived, on the same street but on the other side of the street.

So I understand that 26,000 people went through

Those who stayed mostly all the time like I did, I think they all left Belgium some went -- some went to the United States. Some went to Israel, and some -- when I go back to Brussels and I talk about it -- some -- we are rather a small group of people now. There is a group. They just don't want to have anything to do with it anymore.

I'm trying to remember to say anything relevant -- what happened in the camp.

Q FIRST, I'D KIND OF LIKE TO GO BACK AND CLARIFY ABOUT YOUR YOUTH.

SO THERE WERE FOUR PEOPLE IN YOUR FAMILY?

A Yes.

Q AND YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR FATHER?

A And my sister and me.

Q AND YOU LIVED IN BRUSSELS?

A And we lived in Brussels.

Q WHAT SCHOOL DID YOU GO TO?

A The private one or both? The private school was the Institut Mes Enfants. The other school, the state school, was Royal Atheneum, Athenee Royal.

The teachers from the Royal Antenee would come to our house and give me private lessons.

Q (Inaudible question from interviewer -- low sound)

A Oh, yes. Then we were not allowed to go to school anymore, and then this school for Jewish people was founded. It was given at the temple in Brussels, Belgium. that's when the principal of that school, Mr. Simring, said he will give me the diploma even before we graduate since we left for camp.

I must say that when -- I forgot to give you this detail.

That when we landed in Malines and at the train station that was -- at the railroad station and got off the train and we saw the German, this was the first thing I gave him was my diploma. He didn't know what to do with it. Maybe that's why he put us on the right side -- you never know. But he was very surprised, and I think he was surprised we came, that we took those papers seriously.

Those summons to appear, that kind of struck him. And maybe that's what's saved us.

Q WHEN DID YOU FIRST HEAR OF HITLER?

A That's a good question.

We did, but, you know, we didn't believe all the things because there were refugees coming to Belgium. And even if we believed them, we felt, well, this is not going to happen in Belgium. Belgians are much too civilized.

But, you see, I must say that maybe unwillingly the Jewish association, it was called Judenrat, cooperated with the Germans because they said that, you know, we had to register--they had the lists of our names because we were connected with the temple and the synagogue. And they were the ones who told us that we had to go and get a stamp, put it on our identity cards, so maybe not knowing they kind of contributed to helping out the master plan.

Q WHEN DID THIS REGISTRATION GET ESTABLISHED?

A I think it was in 1942. I think so, 1942.

Q AND BEFORE THEN, YOU DIDN'T HAVE A JEWISH IDENTITY?

A We had our identity cards, but then we had to put the stamp "Jewish" on it. I think the Judenrat did that.

Q I AM SORRY. I AM A LITTLE CONFUSED. YOU SAID WHEN THE GERMANS WERE INVADING YOU WENT TO THE BORDER AND THEY TURNED YOU BACK BECAUSE YOUR IDENTITY CARD SAID YOU WERE JEWISH?

A Yes, you are right. So it must have been earlier. The name "Hirschfeld," maybe that's how they knew.

Q OKAY.

A It's a good question. I don't think so that we had the Jewish stamp at that time, but it was a Jewish name and they knew.

I think the stamp and the star came in 1942 -- later. It's a good question, yes.

Q SO DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD OF HITLER?

A Yes. We remembered because they would come and visit our house and tell us all these horror stories, but first we really didn't believe it. Then, as I said, we felt it's never going to happen here in Belgium.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YEAR THAT WAS?

A It must have been 1939 -- '38.

Q HAD YOU BEEN HEARING HITLER ON THE RADIO?

A Oh, yes.

Q BEFORE THAT?

A Oh, yes, terrible. He was shouting like a dog. But you see, to us Germany was one thing and Belgium was something else. We never thought it would happen. Yes, we did hear him.

Q DID YOU THINK HE WOULD RESPECT THE NEUTRALITY?

A I thought that the Belgians would never behave like that towards the Jews.

Q BEHAVE LIKE WHAT?

A Like Hitler did.

Q WHY?

A Because I mean -- the master plan established by Hitler -- we didn't know that it would follow through in Belgium after the occupation. Well, actually maybe we didn't think it would happen. Maybe we didn't think the German occupation would happen. It all happened so fast. I think Belgium fought only a week and gave in.

King Leopold gave in to save the people because remember what happend in Rotterdam. In Holland everything was just bombarded. Then after that, things happened really fast. Still, when it happens in Germany, it is one thing. But then we thought that the Belgians would not cooperate. I don't think that they did, and this is why, I think, that maybe the Judenrat gave out these names not knowing really what they were after.

Q WHAT THE GERMANS WERE AFTER.

A What the Germans were after, yes. Because like, you know, we were not allowed to go to school any more. Why didn't we stay in school? For instance, why did we obey? You see, step by step we gave in. I must say that maybe the Israelis were right in that respect because I don't know what would have happened if I would have stayed in that school.

But then, you see, we were supposed to wear the Star, and so it was just organized in such a way. We were not allowed to go out after eight o'clock in the evening, which I did when I stayed in the hospital at night to see my father.

But little by little all these rights were taken away from you and you gave in. I think this is very dangerous. It was a slow, calculated process. Looking back, if I had to do it again, I would have stayed in school. But then maybe there would have been a repercussion. I would have finished that school. That really haunted me that I never finished high school. And I tried for the Ph.D so many times to make up for the high school.

Q I AM NOT SURE WHAT YOU MEAN.

A Well, this is when I came here to the United States years later. I got my B.A., my M.A., but I had to get the Ph.D, and that was still not good enough for me to justify the couple of months I missed in high school. This is why I tried to push myself, to make up for it.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER ANY BELGIANS COLLABORATING WITH THE GERMANS?

A No, I don't.

Q ON THE WHOLE, THEY TREATED YOU PRETTY WELL?

A Actually I must take that back. In the camp in (Malines) there were those -- there was a movement directed by a leader and his name was Rex. They were all dressed up in black.

In the camp, in the office where we were at the reception desk were those people. They were the ones we had to hand over those envelopes with the money and the jewelry, and they collaborated. They were Flemish people.

At the end of the war, they approached my sister and me because they were judged -- there was a tribunal, and they begged us to give them a character reference. And I said, "I am sorry, I am not giving a character reference." But she said, "We were the ones who smuggled out all your mail." They did, but I felt that was not good enough.

Q (inaudible)

A It was him and his sister. I don't know what happened to them.

Q HOW DID THEY COLLABORATE? WHAT DID THEY DO?

A They live in Malines, but they worked for the Germans. They could go and work somewhere else. There was no need for them to come and work there. So there must have been a link between the Germans and the banks because they were the ones that deposited that money somewhere in the bank.

They were dressed all in black. So they associated with the SS because they were just thinking the same way they were thinking. They were going to join the master plan of the Germans, yes.

Q SO THEY WERE THE ONLY COLLABORATORS?

A They were the only -- I was in the camps. I wasn't really in the outside world. I wouldn't really know. I was there for two and a half years. I saw them every day would come to work. When I would try to smuggle out some mail -- it is true, they did that.

Q DID YOU DO ANYTHING IN THE UNDERGROUND IN THE TWO YEARS AFTER YOU WENT IN THE CAMP?

A No, no. The only incident that I helped out was with some smugglings of tools. I just told you about that. My friend that got caught, that was the only time.

Q THAT WAS IN THE CAMP?

A That was in the camp.

Q OKAY. I WANT TO CLARIFY ABOUT YOUR PARENTS.

BEFORE THE WAR YOU OWNED A HOUSE ON ONE SIDE OF THE STREET?

A Yes.

Q YOU SOLD THAT HOUSE AND BOUGHT ANOTHER HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET?

A Yes.

Q AND YOU LIVED IN THE HOUSE AND THEN --

A Under the mayor's name.

Q BUT SOMEHOW YOU MANAGED TO LIVE THERE WITHOUT BEING DETECTED?

A Right.

Q DID THEY EVER TALK TO YOU ABOUT THIS?

A Except that they never went out, which was hard too.

Q THEY NEVER SAID ANYTHING?

A My father died very shortly after the war.

Q YOUR MOTHER?

A My mother actually came here. She died in San Francisco, and she was a recluse.

We had many friends who would come and bring food, and it's really unbelievable, isn't it?

Now, you know, more and more as time goes by, I find it more incredible. It just shows you that people -- it was not a Jewish neighborhood, that people just would leave you alone and not denounce you.

My father was a very respected person, and maybe they didn't know we were Jewish. Maybe it's just as simple as that.

Actually, one of the commandants when he set us aside, he said we didn't look Jewish. That was one of his remarks. So we were very lucky.

I remember every two weeks when a convoy would run, we'd run to the window and see if they were in there. I was going through this routine again and again. It was quite a difficult situation.

Q WHEN YOU GOT TO THE CAMP, DID THEY DO A BODY SEARCH WELL, FOR JEWELRY?

A Not for us. Maybe they did later, but not at the beginning.

Q WHAT ABOUT CLOTHING. DID THEY TAKE YOUR CLOTHES AWAY?

A No, we kept our clothes. We didn't have that much with us. This is only later in the extermination camps that they took the clothes away from people. This was all part of the game, too. Because when the people who came with their luggage, very religiously everything was put back in their suitcases so they could go to those camps with their suitcases full of clothes. And assuming what would happen there, so this was all part of the game.

Q SO YOU WERE ABLE TO KEEP YOUR SUITCASES AND ANYTHING YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU.

A Yes.

Q AND TWO WEEKS' WORTH OF FOOD?

A No. The canned food was confiscated immediately. And this was another device sending all these canned foods to Germany. That was confiscated right away.

Q AND THE REST, WERE THEY ALL CANS?

A There was no "rest." We didn't bring any. You see, this is strange. I don't remember being hungry, but I know that we really didn't have that much food. That was really irrelevant. We ate that cabbage soup every day. Maybe we got some potatoes, and maybe the Red Cross sent us packages too. The Jewish Committee I think, did. But it was mostly the mental cruelty.

The games they were playing, like on Yom Kippur. They would line up all these religious Jews from Antwerp. There was a whole section of very religious people. They made them eat pork chops in front of everybody on Yom Kippur. They were laughing. They knew what to do to make them -- to ridicule them.

Q WERE YOU COLD THERE?

A No.

Q WERE YOU ABLE TO KEEP YOUR COAT AND SWEATER?

A Yes. I would have remembered that, I guess. It's a good question. I don't think so that I was cold. No, we had blankets. We had our blankets.

You know, these barracks, this big room, you know, 24 people in this one room. No, we were not cold. And we were able to take a shower across the hall. I don't remember exactly. That's a good question.

Q IN THE WINTERTIME DID THEY HEAT THE ONE YOU WORKED IN?

A No, they didn't. Maybe the office, since we spent most of our time out there. Maybe they did heat the office since there was some Germans there and people in the back.

Maybe the office was heated. It probably was. You see, if I could see the tape, there must have been -- you know what, there was a stove in our room. There was a stove in winter in the room where the 24 of us were. There was a stove, a wooden stove.

Q THIS WAS THE BARRACKS THEN?

A There was a stove, yes.

Q AND THEY ALLOWED YOU TO USE IT. THEY DIDN'T JUST KEEP IT COLD?

A Yes, they did.

Q WHAT DID YOU DO? DID YOU DO ANYTHING TO MAKE IT MORE BEARABLE?

A Well, it's the people. It was an elite of people. Like they had painters there. Those who painted our numbers. It was called Mahlerstube. They have the little room for themselves.

One painter painted my portrait, and I still have it.

Actually, now there is going to be a center in Brussels, Belgium for people who were in the camp. They asked me if I would bring this portrait there for that museum.

So we had time for that.

It's sometimes unbelievable that I had my portrait made.

It was a group of very intelligent people, professors, engineers. We had discussions. I think it's the people that kept us -- that kept our morale going.

My sister, she wrote a book -- her memoirs.

There were relationships that formed, and some people got married after the camp.

I'm trying to remember whether there were ever any music performances. No, there weren't. There was no music like they had in some other camps to show off. There was none.

Somebody also had a radio. It was the painter who had a radio, and we could hear the Radio London.

I remember, actually -- this is kind of ironical. I sent a postcard, and I put on it, "Don't send raw vegetables anymore. We won't have time to cook them." And it meant that we knew we would be released pretty soon that we would get out of camp. They mailed it -- they were -- they mailed all that stuff for us. We knew. What we really didn't know was all the horrors, except for the only one time the German said to me, "You want to die?"

I know, we didn't know about it all, and we heard about the gas chambers and all that. We didn't know.

Q YOU NEVER HEARD RUMORS ABOUT IT BEFORE?

A No. No. Never.

Q HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO LISTEN TO THE BBC STATION WITHOUT SOMEONE OVERHEARING OR TELLING THE GERMANS?

A You know, sometimes you feel you've got to do it, and you don't really care.

They had this little radio there, and I didn't ask any questions. We listened to it. That was in the room where the painters were working.

Is there anything else you want to add?

Q BACK IN THE CAMPS, WAS THERE ANY HOMOSEXUALS OR LESBIANS?

A No. Just to tell you the truth, the first time I heard about it was in the United States. You don't hear about those things in Brussels. And if there was, I wouldn't know. I didn't know that it existed.

I don't think so.

You know, now I find it a quite normal question. But I only found out about homosexuality when I was at U.C.L.A. with a professor in French literature when we read Gide and that was in the books. That wasn't even in reality.

And then, of course, when you come to the Bay Area, it's a fait accompli.

But, no, I never heard of it. I don't think so. I was not aware of it.

It's actually a good question.

Q WERE ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WORKED FOR THE GERMANS, WHO STAYED IN THE SAME CAMP, WERE THEY ALL IN THE SAME BARRACKS?

A No. We were just the women, and the men were somewhere else. I don't know where. This is also in the tape.

Not everybody agreed about that -- where the men were and the women were. We were kept separate from the men.

Q WHAT HAPPENED? DID WOMEN STOP MENSTRUATING?

A No.

Q DID THEY GIVE YOU WHATEVER YOU NEEDED THEN?

A Yes. There was a doctor and kind of an infirmary. So they supplied us with what we needed -- the nurses.

Q WHAT WAS -- BEGINNING, SAY, AT FIVE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING, WHAT WAS A WHOLE DAY LIKE?

A Well, after five o'clock, and after we had our coffee, we would go to the office and work. They always found some busy paperwork for us to do, statistics and -- who knows what.

And then when a convoy came in and the doors opened and the people got off those trucks, it could be either during the day or in the middle of the night, when it happened you had to stop whatever you were doing and be there and register them.

Q THEY WOULD GET YOU UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?

A Oh, yes.

Q BUT IN THE MORNING IN THE ROLL CALL, IS THAT WHAT YOU TALKED ABOUT WHEN YOU WALKED AROUND, THAT WAS ROLL CALL?

A They would call us -- and you see, since they took our numbers away, they must have called us by our names. They called us by our names every day just to see if nobody was missing.

Q WAS THAT A LONG PROCESS, AND WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

A You know, now that you mentioned being cold, it was kind of cold standing there, now that you mentioned it.

And it was a Jewish person who did that, and he was actually very nice. He was (Vienese); and he was a singer, and they selected him because he had this high-tone voice to call us and give us orders. He was very nice -- a gentleman -- a very nice person.

Q SO IT WASN'T ONE OF THOSE ROLL CALLS THAT LASTED FOR HOURS?

A No, because there were not really that many of us.

But it was sometimes cold to stand there, but there was not really that many of us. Let's see, we were 24, and maybe another 24.

Q THEY DIDN'T DO THIS FOR TORTURE?

A No.

The other people sometimes had to stay there -- see, because we had to go back to work. But then the people who didn't work and who were there until they had -- let's say 500 -- gathered to be transported again -- or 1,000 -- sometimes they were standing there for a long time outside.

You see, all these details I've forgotten now.

But with us it was never a matter of standing out there for hours and hours.

Q THEN YOU'D -- WHEN WOULD YOU HAVE BREAKFAST?

A That was always the coffee. That was it.

Q WHAT TIME WAS THAT?

A After we -- maybe twenty after five.

Q AND THEN WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?

A And then we'd go to work.

Q HOW LONG WERE YOU AT WORK? AND HOW LONG DID YOU WORK BEFORE YOU HAD A BREAK?

A Twelve o'clock was soup. Then, I guess, there was another round-the-block running. Then again, back to work.

Q UNTIL WHEN?

A I would say five. But you see it was not really -- the routine was flexible because whatever you were doing, you had to interrupt whenever people were coming in to register them.

It could be at four in the morning or two in the morning. Preferably at two in the morning they would rather have them come in at night because when the raids would come. They did it at night because they didn't want the people who are living around the camp -- they didn't want them to get suspicious. So it was at night. So regardless of how late we worked at night, the daily routine would just continue.

Q HOW OFTEN DID PEOPLE COME?

A At the beginning, quite often. And then it became harder. They even brought in gypsies because they couldn't find enough Jews.

How often? It kind of simmered down from maybe twice a week and then once a week and then at the end every two weeks. It became harder for them.

Q AND THE PEOPLE WOULD BE GATHERED FOR A TRAIN UNTIL THEY HAD A THOUSAND?

A Five hundred sometimes. At the beginning it was a thousand.

Well I just read a report from somebody else and she wrote down -- that's the girl, the painter -- she said 26,000. So I was there 26 months. So it would be a thousand per month. But then she said, sometimes you know, it would slow down. So maybe her estimate was correct. I didn't know about that figure.

Q ONE OF THE THINGS I READ WAS THAT THE DEATH CAMPS IN EAST, TREBLINKA AND SO FORTH, THE TRAINS FROM THE EAST

WERE MOST ALWAYS CATTLE CARS?

A Oh, yeah. They were cattle cars.

Q THEY WERE. WERE THERE EVER ANY PASSENGER CARS?

A No, they were cattle cars. It was always cattle cars.

I don't know why. I think I know why. So they wouldn't have any window. They wouldn't be able to see where they are and where they are going and also to the outside world. It would look so suspicious. They wouldn't know what they are carrying. Those trains were aligned outside of the camp. There were railroad tracks right there.

Q WHAT DID THE CAMPS SMELL LIKE?

A No. Nothing. It was not an extermination camp. You see, this is why I really have been spared from the horror. It was just a place where they were gathering people, and sometimes they let people go. Like when the Queen -- well, you see, I lived in Belgium but I was not a Belgian citizen. Except I was just -- when I was 21 I could have chosen to become Belgian.

You vote for it. But I was -- I had my parents' nationality. It said "alien" on my identity card. But the Belgian Jews who came and who were also in the camp, the Queen intervened -- Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother intervened and they were let free.

So sometimes you had this -- they would go in the other direction. They would come and they were released. And I made many good friends, but they stayed there for quite a long time.

Over a year, some of them.

Q WHY DON"T YOU REPEAT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING ABOUT THAT.

A I would like to clarify something about anti-Semitism in Belgium.

I was not subjected to anti-Semitism in Belgium.

There was another thing about them. They really didn't like foreigners. Since I was not a Belgian citizen, because you had to wait until the age of 21 to become a Belgian citizen. When you are not born in that country, I had an identity card that said "alien." Etranger. That's what gave us away at the border. And I did not have a foreign accent, but my mother did. She had a Russian accent.

And I was subjected to derogatory remarks directed towards foreigners -- etranger. And I remember being in the store with my mother. And I remember the sales lady say, "What kind of an accent is that?" That part I was subjected to, but it was not in the category of anti-Semitism. It was in the category of being an alien.

So coming back to the situation in the camp that the Queen intervened and got all the Belgians out of the camp. But that happened very late, and maybe too late. Because there were some older people who were, you know, they considered themselves as aristocrats. And they had poison with them. And when they were deported, they were going to poison themselves in those trains.

And maybe I had this -- I was hardened. I had already this element in myself of being a little harder than the other people

because I was subjected to this treatment of etranger when I was with my mother. Maybe this is why I was a little bit tougher than the rest of them.

So where were we? Where were we? What did you ask me about the camp and the cold weather? You see, I had forgotten that. What else?

There were some disheartening scenes. There was a lady from -- I think she came from France, and she was supposed to go to Switzerland. And there were these two little girls -- twins -- and she and her husband and the twins tried to cross the border. And they were betrayed, because you asked me if there was some people who betrayed. The person who was in that kind of business trying to get people on the other side of the border, he took money from them and he took money from the Germans.

The husband got across the border, but she and her two kids didn't. And the commandant of the camp used to walk with those two little twins in their little blue coats -- used to walk with those little twins. She became completely hysterical. She was put in our room, but she was crying all the time. She just couldn't -- she was beside herself all the time. And they considered her as a nuisance, and they transported her. She really lost her cool.

At that time I was so naive, and I felt that those twins were saved because they were sent to Theresienstadt. That's where they were taking care of the children. Now I know better. They did not survive because they were making

special experiments on those twins. They were experimenting on twins. So it is hard to know.

Very often I ask myself what happened to those two little girls.

Yes, do you have any other questions?

Q DO YOU REMEMBER LIBERATION?

A Yes. You see, there is also controversy about that. I think we were liberated by the British. I'm pretty sure we were.

But what they did--the Germans threw the keys on the floor, and they left. And they said, "And we are going to come back and get every one of you. This is just temporary."

You see until the last minute they had this superior attitude. "We will come back and get each of you back."

Q THE GERMANS DID THIS?

A Yeah. And then, of course, we were just -- we just left everything there.

I think I was able to catch a train. Some people were not able to get the train, but we went back.

And then in Brussels, I definitely saw more British troops than the Americans.

It was a great day of joy. Yes.

Q IN THE CAMP, DID THE GERMANS --

A They didn't know we were in there.

Q THE BRITISH DIDN'T?

A No. They passed it. They didn't know. It just -- and, you know, the Germans were hiding in there, and this is

how they left -- at night. The British didn't know we were in there. It was just the townspeople that helped us and gave us food, and those who didn't have shelter were able to spend the night there.

But we went home to Brussels right away.

We will never forget that day. The trains -- being in the train. It was just unbelievable.

Then when we went home, we started eating chicken, and we got real sick because we ate a lot and the whole neighborhood was there and our friends were there -- and full of flowers. Yeah. I remember that. Such a long time ago. Then all those who didn't come back.

Well, do you have any other questions?

Q WHAT ABOUT YOUR FAMILY, YOUR EXTENDED FAMILY?

A They were all in the United States. My uncles left Russia. They were musicians, and they left Russia. They came out to the United States with a whole group of Russian artists -- Horowitz and Rubenstein, the whole clique.

Actually, you see, my mother and her brother -- two brothers used to be a trio. My mother was the pianist and one brother was a cellist and the other a violinist.

So, anyway, my uncles lived in Laguna Beach and played for the studios. My grandmother used to come and visit us. When she came back she lived in Santa Monica, and when she found out we were in the camp she kind of felt guilty that she didn't bring us into this country. She just refused to eat.

Q SHE STARVED HERSELF?

A Yeah, she starved herself.

My uncles, they knew we were in the camp -- my parents must have written to them. I was told that when I came here.

Q WHEN DID YOUR UNCLE LEAVE RUSSIA?

A Well, when the revolution started. When was that?

Q 1917.

A It must have been a little later than that. My uncle left because he was a famous musician there. His name is Nicholas Levienne. He was a cellist there. He said when the Red Army came and asked him to play under a gunpoint, they would say, "now play." He decided this was time for him to leave. They all left, you know, with all these Russian musicians. They all left together. So they've been here for a long time.

As I said, my grandmother didn't forgive herself.

Q WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE WAR FOR YOU?

A For me, after the war? Well, as I said, first, I just -- Belgium for me was never the same after that. My sister took it quite differently, but I just didn't. I knew that I didn't want to live there anymore. So I went to Israel, and there I had an attitude problem and also a language problem. I realized that if I wanted to be part of the culture that I'd have to learn Hebrew. This was just too difficult for me. So I emigrated to the United States.

My uncles sponsored me. My sisters stayed in Belgium, and I came here alone with a typewriter and a frying pan in New York and all that jewelry -- the silverware and the candelabra. I remember the customs officers said, "What do you want with all that junk here? We don't need that here." To me, it meant something to me. I still have that candelabra.

I went to Columbia University first. I stayed in New York. I went to Columbia University, and then I went to Los Angeles where my uncles lived. Then I went to U.C.L.A., and I got my B.A. and M.A. at U.C.L.A.

I got married in Los Angeles. I have two sons now.

Then I tried my Ph.D., and I was not too successful on that. And a psychologist tells me that it's because this committee -- I associate it with the German occupation. I don't know. Maybe he was right. I don't know.

Well, anyway, so I taught French all over the United States, in Connecticut, in Indiana and in California.

I have two sons now who are very successful, and I am very proud of them. I have a grandchild.

What would I say? This tape is for kids in school. I would say that they should save every day; every day is a celebration to be alive. It's a good thing to be alive.

Q WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAID YOU HAD AN ATTITUDE PROBLEM IN ISRAEL?

A Well, it was not my attitude. It was Israel's. The way they felt that we didn't fight back enough.

Q COULD YOU TELL ON THE TAPE WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER ABOUT THE --

A The attitude of the -- well, you see, this was just when the state of Israel was founded. You know, when was it founded? In the early 40's -- 1948. You see, I think I was there in '45. Their attitude, especially the young generation, felt very positive, very aggressive, very defensive, and they said, well this is why we have this state. We have the army. We can fight back. But you just sat there like sheep, and you let -- you know, when they would come at night, you would all just -- you would all just follow the crowd.

And why didn't anyone take a gun and start shooting. What did you have to lose? Many times I thought of it, and maybe they were right. But first of all I was not in that situation. I did even worse. I came voluntarily with my sister. And I guess they kind of laughed at me, and I told them my story. There probably is some truth to it.

But then I figured that my way of thinking and their way of thinking was not the same way of thinking, and that I wouldn't function in Israel. I really tried.

I came back to Belgium and applied for an immigration visa, and I have never left the U.S. since.

Q SO YOU WENT TO ISRAEL IN '45?

A Uh-huh.

Q DID YOU HAVE TO SNEAK BY THE BRITISH TO GET IN?

A No. It was already a state -- already the State of Israel.

Q IN '45. I THOUGHT THAT --

A '48 wasn't it? It must have been in '49. Then it must have been in '49. Correction, yes. It was just a young state, yes.

Q AND SO WHEN YOU WENT OVER, A LOT OF THE SURVIVORS FROM CAMPS WERE GOING OVER AT THE SAME TIME?

A Maybe. This I wouldn't know. Probably. Because this is what they anticipated to do. Many anticipated to go to Israel, but many also -- the doctors, the lawyers decided to go to the United States to immigrate to this country.

Q HOW COME HERE?

A I think because they already had relatives. I had my uncles. I mean they probably already had some connections there.

But I thought I really could make it a go with Israel. But I realized that for me it was too late.

It was an attitude, but then it was really the language also. Well, I couldn't read the newspapers in Hebrew. Everything was in Hebrew, and I didn't know Hebrew. The only sentence I knew was "Ani lo medaberet Ivrit," which means "I don't speak Hebrew." That's about all.

I realized that I would never be part of the intellectual life in Israel.

I sat down and learned Hebrew. I just had a block for that language. I don't know why because I speak Russian and

I learned the Russian alphabet, but I guess it's different.

Q DID OTHER SURVIVORS FROM THE CAMP HAVE THE SAME PROBLEM THAT YOU HAD WHEN THEY WENT TO ISRAEL?

A Maybe some did. Maybe some stayed and some left because they felt life was too hard there, but with me it was not the hardship. It was really bad, the food and everything. It was not that side. It was the attitude. I think some did stay, yes, I think so.

Q I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU, IF YOU DON'T MIND TALKING ABOUT IT. I KNOW THAT YOU DON'T WANT YOUR NAME ON TAPE, SO YOU COULD SAY THEY ASKED ME BECAUSE MY NAME WAS IRISH OR SOMETHING.

A I had a hard time to convince them I was Jewish, and this I was not totally prepared for that experience.

Q CAN I ASK YOU ABOUT THAT OTHER TAPE?

A Okay, but I am trying to remember. I applied to so many things. It was something in Israel to teach. Maybe to teach French in Israel. They had asked me all these things about what do you know about the Jewish history.

We teach -- I think I better not because --

Q IT WOULD BE REALLY INTERESTING.

A All right. Shoot your question.

Q JUST TELL US ABOUT THE SECOND INSTEAD OF WHAT YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT.

A I just wanted to mention an incident that I had to prove that I was Jewish when I applied for a teaching job to teach French in Israel.

And they came at the Berkeley campus and interviewed me. First of all, they didn't believe that I was Jewish because of my name, my last name. Then they wanted to know what I knew about the Jewish history, and they said that they -- the philosophy in that country was to teach everything according to the history of the Jews and what would be my contribution.

They kind of doubted that I knew enough about the Jewish religion, and maybe they are right because I actually don't know really that much.

I knew that I was Jewish, and I had a hard time convincing them of that. I told them that I was in a concentration camp.

Well, finally they accepted my explanation, but then they kind of -- we kind of mutually decided that I would not function in that country.

It is kind of in a way reverse discrimination that I had to prove that I was Jewish. It was painful. It was painful. It was a painful experience.

Q WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN?

A I think it happened about ten years ago at the U.C. Berkeley campus, I was interviewed.

Q YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT HATE MAIL ON THE PHONE THE OTHER DAY. DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT A LITTLE BIT?

A Well, I got some more information about the person concerned. I gave you a name there, and I am not going to mention any names. I clarified that with the person concerned. It is because she went to London to a conference and for some

reason she said her name here in the United States -- name and address -- were published here in a newspaper, that she got hate mail and hate calls. Then the Anti-Defamation League took care of that and even the F.B.I. looked into it, and everything has been straightened out.

Q AND THIS WAS RECENTLY?

A Yeah. That was about three months ago. It was the German-Nazi group.

Q HAVE YOU EVER TALKED WITH YOUR FAMILY, YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUR HUSBAND ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES?

A Well, my children claim that whenever they asked me a question I wouldn't answer it. So the other day I sat down and wrote everything out, and I handed each of them a copy. Then when they read it -- you told us -- you told us all about it. So it is kind of conflicting signals.

But I will tell you that in the story that I finally sat down and wrote out for them, I did miss some details that I didn't want them to know. So it doesn't really help to put too many bad things there if you want to hand it out to the future generation.

I would say that my daughter-in-law knows that I am here today, and she is not Jewish and she is very supportive. So everybody has shown quite an interest in it.

I will tell you that I did not, even up until two years ago, believe of all the things that happened until I saw Shohah and that really destroyed me. I had no idea that

these things did really happen.

Thinking back of it now, it is, you know, like when you talk about child molestation. You don't think it exists. The Holocaust is a little bit similar to that. You don't want to believe it, and you know it existed and you know it happened. It's a terrible thing that happened. It is unbelievable that we let this happen.

Q WHEN DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE CAMPS? DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THEM AFTER THE WAR?

A I guess so.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD ABOUT THEM?

A No. Actually up until quite recently when I was invited at one of these commemorative ceremonies, I think it was three years ago.

I was with a group of people, and then when I started to tell my story again they would say, "But that's nothing compared to what we went through." It was actually a little bit deliberate whenever there were all these programs like Shohah I would turn the TV off because there is not a day or night that I don't dream about what happened during the war. So I felt I have to go on with my life and live beyond that. Now there has been so much again. You know, showing and telling about it that it's really kind of hard to forget.

There was this one movie, I think also "Playing for Time," that was also about Theresienstadt. You hear these things, but then you don't see them. Then when you see them on the screen

it's quite different. Like the gas chanbers, I didn't realize that this is how it was done. This is beyond imagination.

Actually I must take this back because when I was in Indiana, I was teaching in Indiana, and my children were about ten and eleven. They were showing a film about the Holocaust to the children. The teacher approached me and said that one of my sons, Mark, was kind of impressionable. She was thinking it would not be a good idea that he see the film. So actually it was the first time it was mentioned to me. That was in 19 -- when was that? I was in Indiana in 19 -- it was 1972. Yes.

Q BUT YOU DID NOT SEE THE FILM. HE JUST DIDN'T WANT TO. (TAPE SOUND MALFUNCTION AT THIS POINT)

YOU WERE TELLING US EARLIER ABOUT THAT MOVIE THAT WAS ON LAST WEEK, "ESCAPE FROM WESTERBORG."

BASICALLY THE QUESTION IS WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF IT?

A I think it was very real. The cruelty of the German officers was very real. One scene was a little bit idealistic, I would think.

This young couple making love. We were told in the camp that if they would catch us making love that we would have to do it in front of everybody. So that scene, the love scene, I don't think that this is how it happened. But people go on living and love does happen. But they were threatening us if they would catch us, we'd have to do it in public. I mean

the cruelty of it. So that kind of takes the taste of romance away.

Q YOU ALSO MENTIONED THE CLOTHING IN THE MOVIE.

A Well, that reminded me about what I was doing at the gepack controlle looking into the luggage. Although there I noticed they were taking the stars out of all the clothes, and they were kind of trying to mend everything so that it could be used again in Germany. Just seeing them with the suitcases reminded me of one of the chores I was supposed to do, just looking through the clothes to see if there were some guns or knives. It was the first time I saw something that real. It was real.

Like the young boy who was working with gold and had to do all these things. That's real. That was very real.

I wouldn't know about the gas chamber because there was none of that. It was just a camp where people were gathered.

The baby scene, I don't know about that. They could be that cruel to shoot a mother and a child. Yes. They were that cruel as saying we can only save one. Which one do you choose? I mean they were putting them on the trains. It's just beyond imagination -- the cruelty. I think they must have been going to a special school for that. They knew exactly what would hurt you.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER ANY PARTICULAR BRUTAL GUARDS MORE SO THAN OTHERS?

A Yes. Actually there were not the Germans because

you asked me this before about the office, and I said yes there was one and it was again a Flemish soldier.

He would sometimes beat people up, one or two in this department. I didn't see the Germans do it.

You know, some of them were pretty sick -- sick of it -- of what they had to do, and they asked to be transferred. They didn't want anything to do with the population -- the civilian population -- some of the Germans.

Q CAN YOU REMEMBER SOME IN PARTICULAR?

A Yes. There was the German SS. His name was (Meinshausen), and he told me that he asked to be transferred to the eastern front because it was too much for him. He was just a peasant.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OTHERS NAMES?

A No, because I would have some political discussions with him sometimes. He said that Hitler's image of the Jews was a misconception and that if he didn't know that some of the people were Jewish, he could never tell the difference. He told me that.

Q THIS WAS --

A (Meinshausen), he's the one who put me on "the right." I don't know what happened to him.

Q DID YOU HAVE ANY MORE DISCUSSION WITH ANY OTHER DIFFERENT ONES?

A No, no.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER THE NAME OF THE MAN WHO WAS THE BRUTAL ONE WITH PUNISHMENT?

A No. I remember the name of the commandant of the camp was Steckman and then Eichman. You hear his name all the time in all those movies. He was there when there was a transfer of a thousand people. He was there -- but, no, I don't. But I am sure the population has taken care of him. I am pretty sure that he has been taken care of.

This is very strange. Once I was liberated, I had absolutely no desire of vengence. I just wanted it behind me. I wanted to go on with my life. Maybe because, as I said before, my sister and I took the train and went. So it is a different experience from being caught in the middle of the night and brought in.

Frank was the name of the commandant after Steckman and I understand that they caught him and that he wrote to some of us, but not to me, and asked for food packages while he was imprisoned.

Q DID ANYBODY SEND ANY?

A I guess not. That he would do that. I just read this yesterday from another girl who wrote her memoirs that Frank said that he was like a mother to all of us and that could you please send me some food packages. I don't think so that anybody replied to that.

Q WAS HE CONVICTED?

A Oh, I am sure he was.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER HIS FIRST NAME?

A No. What did I say just now? What was that name, Frank?

Q OH, I AM SORRY. I THOUGHT THAT THAT WAS HIS LAST NAME.

A That was his last name. We didn't know them by their first name. You know, maybe they also had assumed names. Who knows. Those in -- those Gestapo, maybe they had assumed names. We don't know that.

His name was Frank, but I don't know what his first name was. It seems such a long -- actually it seems that, you know, it's not really me who was there except now when I talk about this Frank. Then it came very close, otherwise, it is just not even me anymore.

Do you have any other questions?

Q DO YOU STAY IN TOUCH WITH MANY PEOPLE FROM THE CAMP?

A Yes. Two years ago when I went to Brussels -- actually, they invited me for dinner, and he was one of the Belgians. His name is Alex Gurary, and he has something to do now with the Jewish Committe in Brussels. Actually, his family -- his brother -- they went to Israel. He was a geologist and they went to Israel, but Alex chose to stay in Brussels. He has a daughter, and when Mark, my son Mark, went to Brussels, I introduced those two and they went out. But Mark had to look in the dictionary and look up French words all the time trying to communicate with her in French.

It was forbidden to have religious ceremonies, Alex carved -- how do you call this? -- with the candles -- for Hanukkah --

a Menorah. Alex carved a Menorah in the camp, and he has it now. He showed it to me to conduct some religious ceremonies.

Oh, there were many rabbis there in the camp.

You know, about music, I think that we had a cantor there who would sing sometimes in the evening. Yeah, there was not much recreation in the camp.

I think, you know, two and a half years without seeing a tree, it's a long time.

Anything else?

Q DID YOUR FRIEND LORETTE SURVIVE THE WAR?

A Not when she got caught the second time. I knew her because her two brothers were also in the school, that special school.

Actually when I went back to Belgium, the first time, you know, it took me a long time to go back to Belgium.

I met with one of her brothers, and then he asked me to talk about her.

No, she didn't make it the second time.

Q WAS SHE PUT IN THE TRANSPORT?

A Yes. I actually want to add something to that because you asked me whether I was part of the underground, but there was an underground movement in the camp.

Doctor Bach and Edith and Clara. And Edith was working in the office for Steckman.

I don't know how he ever trusted a Jewish person in his office--the commandant of the office -- and she stole the seal,

the German seal, and would deliver papers telling people that they were postponed, that they could stay home.

I don't know, there was this thing going on there. She was caught and deported. I am not sure that they did this without asking money for it. This part I don't know. But all I know is that she got caught and was deported, and Dr. Wolf and Clara who was also working in our office they were also issuing these passes with the stamps from the office. They all got deported and caught.

Now that you mention Lorette -- so there was an underground movement going on.

I would hope that they didn't do it for monetary reasons, but this I don't know.

I guess that's about all I have to say. Is there anything you want me to add?

Q I HAVE A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS.

COULD YOU TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE (DANZIG) FREE STATE. I AM NOT EXACTLY SURE POLITICALLY WHAT THAT WAS.

A Well, it was a free state at that time, but then war broke out because I don't know, some ships went through

Q WHAT WAS THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION?

A Of the -- Gadansk -- Lech Walesa who comes from there. But at that time when I was born, it was (Danzig), the free state of (Danzig). And then they changed the name. It became Poland.

Q WHAT WAS YOUR ORIGINAL NATIONALITY WHEN YOU LIVED IN BELGIUM BEFORE THE WAR?

A Well, I must have been either stateless or Latvian like my father. I don't know.

Q YOU THOUGHT IT WAS LATVIAN?

A Yes.

Q YOUR PASSPORT WOULDN'T HAVE SAID "DANZIG FREE STATE"? IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN A DANZIG FREE STATE?

A Yes, it did say that. But you see I had to wait until I was 21 to become Belgian. But then I left. I lost interest. I immigrated to the United States.

Q WHEN PEOPLE PASS THROUGH THE CAMP AND INMATES PASS THROUGH THE CAMPS IN TRANSIT, HOW LONG DID PEOPLE TEND TO STAY IN THE CAMP IN THEIR TRANSIT STATUS BEFORE THEY MOVED ALONG?

A It depended on the orders they would receive from (Eichman) who was the big organizer of this event. It would vary from two weeks to two months, to three months. The Belgians stayed there a year and a half before they got released, before the Queen intervened for them. So it would vary.

Those of us who worked there were told that we would go when our parents would show up in one of those trucks because quote, unquote, "We don't separate families. We send them together."

Q WAS THAT A TRUE STATEMENT OR WAS THAT JUST A CRUEL THING THAT THEY WERE SAYING?

A Well, the -- it was a true statement because if you know my parents would have been there, they would have sent us away together. Yes.

Q SO BASICALLY, YOU WERE AMONG A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO WORKED IN THE CAMP AS A PERMANENT RESIDENT?

A Permanent until some relative would show up, and then your turn would come. So you never knew one day to the next.

Q HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE THERE AGAIN IN THIS GROUP -- PERMANENT RESIDENTS?

A Twenty-four of us.

Q TWENTY-FOUR?

A The girls.

Q AND THEN YOU SAID THERE WERE ANOTHER -- THERE WERE ANOTHER THOUSAND PEOPLE WHO PASSED THROUGH AS TEMPORARY PEOPLE?

A At the beginning, yes. But then they were staying there.

Among the 24 there, there were two sisters. They were Belgian. Then there were five or six half Jewish that they didn't know what to do with them. So they stayed there too.

And then there were like the nurses. So it was kind of a group that they didn't know kind of what to do.

My sister maintains we were spared because my father was Latvian, and in those days there was that non-aggression pact with the Russians; and they thought that maybe we would have a Russian passport. That is what my sister maintains because of that connection.

I maintain it's because of that teacher's diploma, because they didn't know what to do with it. We never clarified that.

Q THE TEACHER'S --

A They gave me the teacher's diploma. I was kind of a test case to see when they had these special schools in Brussels for teachers to teach the Jewish children since they were not allowed to go to public schools anymore.

They issued me that diploma and I presented it to the commandant, and he didn't know what to do with it. So he put me to the right and I stayed.

Q DID YOU HAVE FREE RELATIONSHIP TO TALK WITH THE PEOPLE WHO WERE THE TEMPORARY TRANSIT PEOPLE COMING THROUGH THE CAMP?

A Yes.

Q YOU WERE ABLE TO TALK WITH THEM?

A Yes.

Q OVER THE COURSE OF TWO YEARS AND MORE THAT YOU WERE THERE, WAS THERE ANY GROWING AWARENESS EITHER BY YOU OR BY ANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE BEING TRANSPORTED AS TO THE REAL DESTINATION THEY WERE GOING TO?

A No. No. This was kept very secret except for this one time that this German told me that I was too young to die, and that was that (Meinhausen).

Q WHEN YOU WORKED ON THE PAPERWORK IN THE OFFICES, WHAT SORT OF INFORMATION DID THE PAPERWORK --

A Names of the people. From where they came -- Brussels, Antwerp.

Q AND WERE THEY SORTED INTO ANY CATEGORIES ABOUT WHERE

THEY WERE GOING?

A No, we never knew the destination. No.

Q WERE THERE ANY, I GUESS I AM JUST THINKING AS THE WAR PROGRESSED, PEOPLE HEARD MORE AND MORE STORIES COMING BACK FROM THE EAST FROM A HANDFUL OF SURVIVORS WHO WERE ABLE TO PASS THE INFORMATION. I JUST WONDERED IF ANY OF THIS INFORMATION BACKWASHED INTO BELGIUM SO THAT THE PEOPLE IN THE TRANSIT CAMP WERE HEADING EAST HAD ANY MORE SPECIFIC IDEA AS TO HOW THIS MAYBE WASN'T JUST THE LABOR CAMP THEY WERE GOING TO?

A I think that there is always an iota of hope in all of us, and that maybe if we knew we didn't want to believe it. I think that's what it amounts to; that the enormity of the reality was just beyond us even wanting to believe in it.

I think that it also became harder to find more people to bring into the camp because they had become better organized in the outside world and went into hiding.

And, you know, all these children that have been hidden in -- with the nuns and that -- escaped or that were placed with Belgian families.

You know, those survivors even having a harder time to fit into this society than people like me who were in the camp.

They can't understand why their parents gave them away -- parted with them.

Q WERE THERE ANY CHILDREN BORN IN THE CAMP WHILE YOU WERE THERE.

A Yes, there was. Actually, she was the wife of one of the doctors. She was German -- German, and not Jewish.

And he was German-Jewish, so the child was half Jewish. And this is why she stayed there and he stayed there. And the baby was there and the grandmother was there too in that camp, but she was in the doctors section. The doctors were separate, in a separate section.

Q THE DOCTOR WAS STILL A PRISONER BUT HE HAD MORE PRIVILEGE OR RIGHTS, IS THAT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING?

A Right. For some reasons the Germans are -- doctors, you know, what the doctor says, goes. Because when Dr. (Parnes) said I had to go and be operated for my appendix, they never questioned it and I went out.

Q WAS IT HIS WIFE WHO HAD THE BABY?

A No, it was another -- Reinnäke -- Dr. Reinnäke. No, that was Dr. (Parnes). That was Dr. Reinnäke.

Q DID HAVING A BABY CREATE ANY UNUSUAL PROBLEMS. IT DIDN'T HAVE TO BE HIDDEN?

A Not her, because you see, it was half Jewish. The values -- it was not hidden, no.

Q ANY OTHER INMATE GIVE BIRTH?

A I remember a girl who got married and she was pregnant maybe eight months and was sent out on the transport.

Q WHEN SHE WAS PREGNANT?

A Yeah.

There were some love relationships, but because of their little formula there, it kind of shied me away from anything.

Q LET ME ASK YOU GOING BACK A LITTLE BIT FURTHER THAN THAT. WERE YOU BORN INTO A RELIGIOUS FAMILY?

A It's a good question. No. My father was, my mother wasn't. And actually my mother's father in Russia, in the town of Saint Petersburg, was the French counsel in Saint Petersburg, and he -- already in those days in order to keep his job as the French counsel, he converted to Lutheran -- Lutheranism.

Q THIS IS YOUR FATHER YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT?

A My mother.

Q YOUR MOTHER'S FATHER?

A My mother's father. And actually when they got married, when my parents got married, I am pretty sure they also got married in a temple. But I do have the Russian certificate which I just found two years ago at my sister's house, of my parents being married in Saint Petersburg in a Lutheran church. But it's Hirschfeld-Levienne. I mean they didn't change their name. So, well, there it is.

Q DID YOU HAVE A RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING AS A CHILD?

A No, I didn't, but I knew I was Jewish. My grandmother would take me to the temple. It was the first time I went to the temple. It was the first time with my grandmother. In Brussels it is still segregated sex. I mean the women are on the one side of the temple and the men on the other side. So my father never --

(END TAPE 1)

(BEGIN TAPE 2)

-- I was saying -- you asked me whether I was brought up in a religious family. I said that I knew that I was Jewish and

that my father would go to the temple but would never take me along to the temple because men would go on one side and the women on the other side.

My mother because of her upbringing and her father who was a counselor in Saint Petersburg, she didn't really know much about the Jewish religion. It was only when my grandmother started visiting us from the United States that she took me to the temple, and then I was sitting with the women.

I don't know why I had this strong feeling about being Jewish.

Actually when we got those papers, I remember that my mother tried to kind of, you know, to talk me into it and ask the priest from the Lutheran church in Belgium to give us papers that we were not Jewish. I just didn't want to have any of it. I just didn't want to have any of it. And so, although I did not have religious education, I always felt Jewish -- being Jewish.

Q DID YOUR FAMILY CELEBRATE ANY OF THE HOLIDAYS -- THE SABBATH OR ANY OF THE OTHER HOLIDAYS?

A They did Passover and the Day of the Dead, how do you call that? The holiday -- this is not my area of expertise either. Well, yes, The Day of Atonement and Passover they did and Rosh Hashanah they did. Yom Kippur they did. So there was some religious holidays they were celebrating. We did not celebrate Hanukkah, and this is actually kind of very strange because when I lived in Connecticut and I taught French in Connecticut there was a large Jewish community there. I would

go to the temple there.

They were very wealthy people. The rabbi would say, "And what did you get for Hanukkah?" And then, you know, well, one would say, "A bicycle," and the other guy would say, I don't know,... "A television set."

I would bring my two sons there and then, "What did you get?" "A book." I got so disgusted, actually, with the attitude there about the values put on presents, that I told my sons, we are not going to celebrate Hanukkah any more. They were kind of provoked by that.

Well, anyway, at home we did celebrate the Jewish holidays.

Q WHAT TOWN WAS THAT IN CONNECTICUT?

A New Britain, Connecticut. And I would go to Hartford to the temple, and that was a very wealthy community.

Q WAS THE MAN THAT YOU MARRIED, WAS HE JEWISH?

A No. It was deliberate. I promised myself not to marry a Jewish person after the camp.

Q WHY?

A Because I didn't want my children to go through what I have seen. It didn't work out. I'm divorced.

Q HAVE YOU TOLD YOUR CHILDREN THAT THAT WAS PART OF YOUR MOTIVATION?

A No. No, I haven't. Actually, this is very strange. My younger one feels very Jewish. My older one, I don't think so. My younger son does.

Q DID YOU EXPERIENCE HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE BREAKUP OF YOUR MARRIAGE?

A No. I think that it is very hard for a person with a European background to find the exact person to live with in the United States -- in an American-born person. And my ex-husband was in science, in biology, and I am in literature. I think that intellectually we didn't really match. Then that was transposed into different ways of behavior. It was not really because he was not Jewish. It was just that we had a different outlook on philosophy of life. But I know it was deliberate, because when I went to Israel, I think I had about 15 marriage proposals in one month because they all wanted to get married. It was a young state. I knew already then that I wasn't ready for that.

Q HOW DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR HOLOCAUST EXPERIENCES HAVE AFFECTED YOUR ADULT LIFE, YOUR LATER LIFE, AND THE KIND OF PERSON YOU ARE AND THE WAY YOU MAKE DECISIONS -- THE SORT OF THINGS THAT YOU DO AND DON'T DO?

A It has really affected me that I have learned that nothing in life is permanent, and that actually I am shying away of any permament job. I have taught, and all my teaching assignments would be five years.

Maybe it's a deliberate choice because I don't want anything permanent because I know that nothing is permanent.

And so it has affected my life, and I think I am appreciating life more now, and I am trying to give myself a little treat every day on something. To pause and think -- and think, well, you know, today is a day to celebrate. Every day is a day to celebrate -- a little something every day. I think that. I don't take life

for granted.

Q CAN YOU GIVE US AN EXAMPLE OF A LITTLE SOMETHING THAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT THAT WOULD BE A DAY OF CELEBRATION?

A A day of celebration? Well, to be with friends, to exchange ideas, not to think about material things. I think that friendship and family is very important. Enjoy little things and treat yourself once in a while to something extravagant, even if you feel I can't afford it. Go to a restaurant. Invite friends -- thinking, what am I saving it for? Spend it now. I am not very extravagant, but this "save it for later" is not really my philosophy because later may never come.

Q DID YOU HAVE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AS A RESULT OF YOUR WAR EXPERIENCES?

A Well, I will tell you that this friend of mine has kind of asked me to join this group in Berkeley about the survivors, but these are children survivors. I find it difficult to attend these meetings because I just don't want to hear depressing stories anymore, and I really want to put this behind me. I think that these meetings do me more harm than good. Although, I just feel that maybe we cannot really help those people -- these people. I think these people need personal counseling and that standing in front of a group -- you see, the requirements to belong to that group is that you stand up and tell your story. And I have still refused to do it, and this is why I'd rather come here. And this is why I sat down at home and wrote it out and gave it to my children. I just don't see any purpose in doing that. This is my personal feeling.

I think, yes, it has affected my life. You cannot be the same anymore. There was a time when I was in New York and I stayed with these friends from Belgium, and they immigrated and -- well, their son now is the dean at Harvard and his mother -- I mean, she'd introduce me to people and I'd say, "I'm Jewish." And she'd say, "Would you please drop that, nobody cares." And I don't know why I always had to explain I was Jewish.

Maybe she was right or maybe she was wrong. But I always had to explain I was Jewish, and that it took me a long time. And not mentioning it now, many people do not even know I am Jewish. I figure maybe it's wrong too, but then I don't know how to start explaining it. I do have a little problem with that, when to tell and when not to tell. I think it's a problem.

I don't know if I have answered your question.

Q IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SAY?

A No. I just want to have a little message here to future generations that don't take life for granted. It's a gift, and don't waste it because it's a great gift and you can do great things. Be grateful and be happy.

Q YOU KNOW WHEN YOU JUST SAID THAT YOU WANTED TO PUT THAT ALL BEHIND YOU?

A Uh-huh.

Q DOES THAT MEAN YOU DON'T THINK YOU HAVE?

A I don't think so.

Q HOW DO YOU?

A Little things that remind you of it. And I do have dreams. And actually I have resolved a few of my dreams.

I had this one dream that I want to take a shower. And I stand in line, and I don't know where it is. And I never get to the shower. And I get very frustrated, and there's a friend of mine that says it's because I am guilty that I am still alive. And now I don't dream about it anymore.

I am sometimes guilty that I am here and so many people are not there, and therefore I try to be an overachiever and raise my two children and tried to get a Ph.D.

And why me? Why was I spared? It's a responsibility.

Q WHAT IS THAT REPSONSIBILITY?

A What is that responsibility?

To set out a good example of your life. Life has been given to you a second time -- I guess, to go out and achieve more.

And then, of course, it's in the media all the time. You are reminded of it, and maybe it's not meant to be forgotten because then it can happen again. Who knows. I don't think it will happen in this country, but we said that in Belgium. I don't really care because I've lived my life, and it's just my children and my granddaughter.

I guess this is it. Are you finished?

Q YOU MENTIONED EARLIER THAT A THERAPIST HAD SAID SOMETHING TO YOU ONE TIME. DOES THAT MEAN THAT YOU ACTUALLY GOT THERAPY?

A When was that?

Q EARLIER IN THE INTERVIEW. I FORGET WHAT YOU SAID, BUT THEY SAID YOU HAD --

A Oh, yes. No, it was a counselor when I got a divorce and she kind of wanted to see how I was doing on my own. My children were very small. And then the Ph.D. came up, that it was kind of an obsession with me to try to get the Ph.D. I tried five times. I put myself through the Ph.D. program five times and through the prelims -- the orals five times.

Then she would say that it is this committee of men that remind me somehow of the Gestapo, and this is why I can't get through with this. And maybe she was right.

So I've been pretty hard on myself because you don't go for a Ph.D. and raise two sons and teach full-time and fly back and forth to take your oral exams from the east.

Q SO YOU GOT COUNSELING WHEN THE MARRIAGE BROKE UP AND NOT ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST?

A Right. Oh, no, I didn't ever -- no. Because I don't really consider myself a victim of the Holocaust. I was not in an extermination camp. You see what I mean?

It was just a camp where things were more or less still civilized. I was deprived of my freedom and, of course, you know, from 18 to 20 I had no fun. Then, you know, it could have been so much worse.

Q YOU DO NOT FEEL LIKE YOU WERE A VICTIM?

A No, except that my freedom was taken away from me.

Q DID YOU EVER TELL YOUR HUSBAND ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES WHEN YOU WERE MARRIED?

A Oh, yeah, because I am pretty good in German and all these friends had to pass German reading exam for the Ph.D. in biology, and I helped them all out in getting prepared for this. And when it came to him he claims that I communicated my hatred of the Germans to him and this is why he had a block and he couldn't pass the German reading exam. Pretty good? Yeah.

I will tell you something better. When I was in Connecticut, I taught French, German, and Russian, and I don't recommend it. And I was so good at my teaching in German that my students would ask me whether I was German. Isn't that something that is really the irony of the situation. Yeah. Yeah.

I don't know how I brought myself to teach German, but it was just, you know, that I did it for my two sons.

When they hired me they asked me if I could also teach a German section. Somebody was on a sabbatical leave, and so I did it. But I am not going to put myself through that again. No. You teach two languages, but three? You divide yourself into three. No, I won't do that. I wouldn't recommend that.

Q WHAT ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN? DID THEY -- THEY HAVE THIS THING THEY CALL HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR SYNDROME -- CHILDREN OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR SYNDROME.

A I wouldn't know about that.

But when there was the ceremony at the temple, I don't

remember what the name of that ceremony was. It was the commemmoration. Somebody had given my name, and I was there to light up the candle. I think Mark was out of town. Neither of them wanted to participate. Friends came, but neither of them wanted to participate.

I think my younger son doesn't want to be part of any unpleasant topic of conversation, and he says it's not because he is indifferent to it. It's because it takes too much out of him.

Q DO YOU THINK YOUR EXPERIENCE HAS AFFECTED THE CHILDREN?

A It might. I can give you little examples.

They wouldn't eat, and I would say, "There are children starving in concentration camps," and all that. And they would say, "That doesn't concern me." Or my older son, Greg, he's a high school dropout, but he got his navigator's license. And he is captain of a boat, and he takes people salmon fishing. I couldn't understand this that he would be a high school dropout. I'd give my life, my right arm to finish that high school diploma.

And, well, you know, this is just what happens in Berkeley High in those days. He was a high school dropout, and I just couldn't understand it. Today I still can't understand it, but he turned out all right.

But that this education is given to you and you drop it. You don't finish it. I couldn't understand that.

Actually, we never discuss it anymore. Maybe because in the United States it's not a drastic action. You can always pick up from where you leave. There are junior colleges, but I just -- this was beyond my way of understanding.

Q DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU SAID EARLIER THAT YOU TOLD YOUR SONS ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES --(inaudible) -- DID YOU INCLUDE THAT, ANY OF THOSE THINGS?

A I don't think so. I really blocked it out. Now I can't really remember them, so there are a few things that I really did put behind me. I probably -- it's a good question.

But -- so maybe I did put some things behind me, right. This would answer that previous question, that I must have blocked a few things out for good. Yeah. I don't know whether it was good or bad.

Q ONE MORE TIME. IS THERE ANYTHING MORE YOU'D LIKE TO SAY?

A No. I am just glad I am here, and I'm alive.

And you will see that my story is not really as gruesome as other people's story. And I think that these are happy times now. Although, they are never really happy times.

It was a time to grieve, and there is a time to be happy. And I would emphasize on the happy, on the positive.

Q DO YOU THINK THAT THE DEGREE OF SUFFERING MAKES THE SUFFERING ANY LESS IMPORTANT?

A Probably, yes. Probably, yes. The duration, the intensity. Yes, I would say, yes.

You don't believe that? Because you think that once that you reach a certain plateau and -- you know I identied a lot with the hostages with the hostages in Iran. But then when I started to compute my days of hos -- I was two and a half years in a camp.

But, you know, being a hostage is a very traumatic experience, except that I think I had it better because I had other people to communicate with, very intelligent people. It was really the elite out there, and I think that's what helped us to survive.

And the hostages, you know, if some are isolated, it must be very hard for them. Very hard. Because have one another to communicate with, it makes it so much easier. And I think that's what helped us. Definitely.

Q WELL, I DON'T HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS.

A Well, this it.

Q THANKS VERY MUCH.

YOU DIDN'T HAPPEN TO BRING ANY OLD PHOTOGRAPHS WITH YOU?

A Well, I brought the tape, and I gave it to her.

(End of tape 2. End of interview.)