Interview with JACK BOAS
Holocaust Oral History Project
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Q. I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY ASKING YOU, JACK, TO TELL US WHERE YOU WERE BORN AND WHEN.

A. Okay, that's fair enough. I was born in 1943 in the Netherlands in a transit camp in that country. So it was called (Westerbork).

Q. (WESTERBORK)?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. I RECALL A CERTAIN BOOK BY -- "AN UNFINISHED LIFE" -- THE NAME IS NOT QUITE AT THE TOP OF MY TONGUE RIGHT NOW.

A. "An Unfinished Life"?

Q. "AN UNFINISHED LIFE"?

A. "An Uninterrupted Life."

Q. "AN INTERRUPTED LIFE"?

A. "An Interrupted Life," right. (Etty Hillesum). Yes. Uh-huh.

Do you want to know something about it? Or do you want -- she was a Dutch woman and she wrote a diary at the time, during the war. And of course she was ultimately killed. In fact, she even wrote, well, letters from this camp that were published actually in English, too, a few years ago, called "Letters From Westerbork."

And so she is, you know, her book and her letters have been very well received. She has been called an older Anne Frank. So the camp, I guess, is better known now than it was a few years ago, at least among the reading public, people who read these type of things.

So did you want --

Q. YES, I WANT TO, FIRST OF ALL, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CAMP THAT YOU WERE BORN IN.

A. Okay. Well, it's the same camp that she wrote about. It was a transit camp. That is, it was a place in which people were stored prior to being sent off to a place like Auschwitz, Sobibor, primarily. Some went to Eisenstat. And even Bergen-Belsen.

But most of the people there, I would say in the course of the war years, from '42, that is when the camp started functioning as a transit camp as such. In the space of about two years, approximately 100,000 people passed through this camp which is about, I would say, about 80 percent of the Dutch Jews. Well, maybe a little less. But, anyway, it was a chief kind of gathering point, so to speak, for Jews. Of course being shunted there by the Nazi authorities.

So in Holland especially, of course it is very well known as the main, principal camp from which people were deported to be killed. So it was, the camp

itself was not awful in the way that we have come to know the camps. It had its own particular trauma, but conditions there were not as they were, say, in a place like Auschwitz or the other camps that we have come to know. They are notorious or synonymous with brutality.

But in a way -- well, the reason for that, of course, was that the Germans didn't want to show their hand. And as you are probably aware, in the west, western part of Europe, the Germans tried to be somewhat more delicate in their treatment of the Jews in order not to inflame any kind of local passions or -- unlike in Poland and places in Eastern Europe. So things were done in a less kind of conspicuously brutal way.

So in the camp itself, people did not starve. There were no shootings as such and there was a very good hospital, but all of it kind of playing to the German game of making it seem as if indeed people were going to be

Q. TO ANOTHER GOOD PLACE.

A. -- to another good place.

Well, also made it seem like -- because a fiction they maintained throughout this period was, of course, people were not being sent to be killed but to be resettled with their families.

Q. THAT WAS _____--

A. Right.

Q. GOOD MEANING _____--

A. Right.

Q. IT WAS NOT A CRIMINAL --

A. Right. So, but on the other hand, it was a very horrible place in a sense that every week or so, a thousand people would be shipped out to Auschwitz. People didn't know exactly where they were going. So the camp had its own rhythm of trauma. Every week a list would be made up as to who would be deported. People knew instinctively, I think, that wherever they were going would be worse than they were now. They not only knew it instinctively. They had also heard of course through the grapevine that things were happening in Poland that were not desirable from their point of view, and so they did what they could to stay in Holland, of course, which was at least, even though they were concentrated in a certain area, it was more likely they would survive there than elsewhere. So it had every week, and sometimes twice a week, it's own horror to cope with.

Q. OF COURSE.

A. Yes.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO GET A LITTLE MORE PERSONAL ABOUT YOUR HOME SETTING AT THE CAMP.

A. Okay.

Q. WHO WERE THE PEOPLE WHO CARED FOR YOU? WERE YOUR PARENTS WITH YOU FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME TIME?

A. Okay, what happened was we -- my parents, who were then in the early 20s, they had one child, a boy, who was a couple of years older than I am. Was born in 1941, so during the war. They lived in Amsterdam at the time.

And, of course, the thing was the Germans would always be -- well, they tried to do it two ways. One, they had set up a Jewish Council, of course, to take care of their dirty business and this Jewish Council would call up people that they wanted to show up at the railway station and be taken to this camp we just mentioned, Westerborg. That didn't always work because a lot of people didn't want to pay heed to these (summonses) from the Jewish Council. So the Nazis started picking up people, (streets) and (streets) called (ratzias), and they would just block off certain quarters at certain streets and just pick up all the Jews they could find and take them to this camp.

So my parents eventually got a call up, after being able to kind of slip through the net for a while by various -- by luck, primarily. Luck plays a big factor, I think, in all survivors' cases. But eventually they were called up.

My mother was pregnant at the time with me so this must have been in I think March '43. But they were sent to another camp first. And my father was a tailor and there was a camp in Holland called (Furth), which was a much more brutal place than this transit camp I mentioned. He was sent there first and they spent a couple of months there before they were sent on to Westerborg itself.

So this must have been sort of mid-1943. Let me see if I got that right. Yeah, I was born in 1943, so it has to be right. Yeah, they were together for a while.

Q. IN MARCH --

A. They went to the first camp. Yes, Furth it was called, Furth. And then a few months later, they were sent to Westerborg. My mother then was in about, I guess in her fourth or fifth month pregnant. And at the time they had a rule that if you were, I forget what the cut-off date or cut-off month was, but if you were pregnant beyond a certain point, you could deliver first and then I guess then be sent on. So I forget exactly what the cut-off month was, but it turned out such that we were able to stay at Westerborg. Because Westerborg, usually if you had no way of dodging the transport train, that is, by that I mean there were all kinds of official -- well, they

called them (Shterers), that is, there were ways of at least temporarily, provisionally postponing your deportation, depending on whether you had a certain certificate. Let's say if you, say if you had a Palestine certificate, that is, that there was some place for you in Palestine to go to, or if you could buy your way into one of those lists, that would curtail or at least postpone your deportation.

And there were lots of these various lists floating around. Some of them, of course, were German -- or all of them really were with German approval, but some of them they made a lot of money on. But eventually every list or every such exemption they called them, would collapse and the people would be sent on to be killed anyway, except in very few instances. Now, if you did not have any of these kind of pseudo-protections, then you were put on the train immediately.

And so when my father first arrived he didn't have anything to protect us. And then according to his story he told us after the war, is that at a certain point while we were in the camp, the Germans asked people -- like I said, he was a tailor -- asked people to volunteer, that is, volunteer but of course in a --

Q. TO GET AT THE FRONT OF THE LINE?

A. Well, not so much. They asked for people who would be willing to work outside the camp as tailors. And so, being young, I guess he was about 24 or something, and being promised that while he was outside the camp working as a tailor, of course for whatever German enterprise, you know, his family, that is, of course, his wife and son and son-to-be, would not be deported. That's what they promised. And, like I said, he was young enough to believe this promise. And I guess it was a good thing he did because if he had stayed in the camp -- and he and a number of other people who were tailors did go outside the camp and worked in the Hague. And while he was gone, overall the promise was kept, except a couple of times not he but his superior, the Nazi in charge, had to call up and make sure that we were not deported while he was out there. So it's really luck. And this enabled him, basically, to miss the deportation or to -- although there were a couple of other very close calls initially when he was in the camp.

They had these huge card catalogs with everybody's name in it. And he had a friend who worked in that particular section, that was before he was sent out to work, who used to sell -- my father, like I said, was a tailor. So he used to sell -- before the war, this person, he used to buy buttons from this

person. And this person was working and a couple of times took our names out of the card catalogue so we wouldn't be conscripted for the journey east. So overall it was very lucky.

One time he was in a hospital in the camp with pneumonia, and he heard -- occasionally they would just clear out the entire hospital and put everybody on the train. And he just left, put on his clothes and left, so he wouldn't be caught there. So it was basically luck and a little bit of I guess ingenuity or a feel for how things were going that enabled us to survive, at least as a unit, whereas most -- because at the end of the war, there were very few people left in this camp. Most people had been deported, including our entire families, of course outside of the sort of nucleus of the family. I mean my parents --

Q. COUSINS, AUNTS.

A. Cousins. Everybody. Everybody. You know, I think my mother had two nieces that came back who were in Auschwitz and returned after the war. But that was sort of the extent of the people who survived.

Q. YOU AND YOUR BROTHER?

A. Right. My parents and one -- my father had an uncle who survived because he went into hiding. That was the only member of his family.

Q. WHAT WAS YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'S

NAME AND YOUR UNCLE'S?

A. Oh, his name was, well, Anglicized, Bernard really was his name. My mother's name was Ann. My mother is still alive. My father died a few years ago. And his uncle's name, his uncle's name was Jack, like mine, like my name. But really these were the only survivors.

Q. I SEE.

A. Well, it's like any other story in that sense.

Q. NO STORY IS --

A. No, I know, but I mean in terms of the --

Q. _____

A. In terms of the survival rate, it's so minimal. So that's essentially how they managed or we managed to ride out the storm, so to speak. Of course, I have no memories myself. I was just too young.

Q. I GUESS WHAT YOU ARE DOING FOR ME, I DO RECALL THIS BOOK, ENTIE HILLISON'S BOOK, AND WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS ENLARGING ON THIS ONE CASE STUDY, WHEREAS IT WAS MUCH MORE CONCERNED WITH HER RECRIMINATIONS AND ALL HER PROBLEMS.

NOW I DID FOCUS ON THE PARTICULAR CASE STUDY THAT YOU HAD TO DEAL WITH AND YOU WERE ONE OF SO MANY, AS YOU SAY. 100,000 WERE --

A. Yeah, 100,000 Dutch Jews, approximately.

Q. _____IN SOME WAY OR ANOTHER.

A. If you really want to get a feel for what this camp was like, I think -- I mean I wrote a book about it, but I am going to refer you to Entie Hillison again. She has one letter in her "Letters From Westerborg," it's a long letter and it's about the night before a transport and it is a really, really excellent description of what it was like. She is a very powerful writer, very intelligent. That letter I think conveys better than any other piece I have written about what it was like, the trauma that was involved. And so -- in fact, it's in that, if you read that book, I believe that particular letter is in the edition that has a diary. It's in two separate books. But I think that letter is contained in that. It's a very good letter. Very.

Q. NOW, YOU WERE THERE FROM THE TIME YOU WERE BORN?

A. Right, November 1943 until liberation was April 1945. So it's about a year and a half.

Q. SO YOUR RECOLLECTIONS OF THIS CAMP ARE REALLY THROUGH THE SOUNDS OF YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER TELLING YOU THIS OVER AND OVER AGAIN?

A. Right, exactly, and my own research. Like I said, I wrote a book about this camp for which I did

research about ten years ago. So I interviewed people, of course, and also did research at the War Documentation Institute in Amsterdam. So it's based not on my personal recollections, obviously, but based really on the -- well, of course like my knowledge that I gathered just by living with my parents and interviews and research, scholarly kind of research into the nature of the camp. So that's what I know about it and that's where I gathered my knowledge.

Q. WELL, I WOULD LIKE TO REALLY ASK YOU a LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE CONDITIONS IN THE CAMP, EITHER -- IT HAS BEEN IN YOUR BOOK, BUT FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE PEOPLE WHO SEE THIS INTERVIEW, I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF CARE YOU MIGHT HAVE HAD WHEN YOU WERE SICK OR THE KINDS OF FOOD THAT WAS AVAILABLE.

A. Okay.

Q. THE EDUCATION.

A. Well, okay. Well, like I said, you know, this camp cannot in any way be compared with any of the annihilation camps and even with other transit camps, because there were transit camps all over Europe, in that conditions were fairly good, of course using a very relative kind of standard.

Q. THE CROWDEDNESS.

A. Crowdedness, yes. You know, every week or

so, especially in the first year, so many people would come in that the camp which had been built was only about half of -- well, the entire size I think was about half a kilometer squared, with, oh, I would say maybe about 50 or 60 large barracks. And people would come pouring in and there was no room for them.

Each barrack was divided into men and women: one side to men; one side to women. Two toilets or something like that. And then there was -- it was not a good situation.

Q. YOUR JUDGMENT ABOUT IT WASN'T SO BAD AS THAT IT WASN'T GOING TO BE THE CAMPS OF EXTERMINATION?

A. Right, exactly. Like I said, this is relative. It is all relative. I mean, it was horrible for the people that lived there in that they, you know, it was located in one of the worst parts of Holland, it was in the summer, it was kind of dry and dusty and flies. A plague of flies usually every summer. Winter was just muddy. It was very hard to -- you know, it was (drafty). There was a lot of illness.

Q. NO HEATING?

A. There was some heat but very little really. So conditions were not good. It was usually overcrowded. But, of course, every week this train would leave and siphon off quite a few people.

Let me see. You asked about food. It was

adequate. But nobody really -- nobody went hungry, although there were times that food wasn't plentiful. But, again, compared to the other camps, people were not going hungry. A lot of the amenities were missing, of course, if you read letters that people had written from the camp.

I just finished reading a whole bunch of them by a woman who was in the camp for a while and then also deported and killed. In fact, a book based on these letters is coming out in this country soon. And she is always asking for like toothpaste and all kinds of things that you take for granted in everyday life, but -- combs.

Q. WERE THESE OFTEN FURNISHED BY FAMILY MEMBERS OUTSIDE OR FRIENDS --

A. Furnished?

Q. THEY WERE LIKE CARE PACKAGES?

A. Right, yeah. You were allowed to receive packages although sometimes the things that were sent didn't arrive because the Germans would go through them and there were certain restrictions on how often you could receive these. There was a lot of sort of thievery going on, of course. But, yes, you could, if you had friends, you could receive packages. So these were furnished. But if you had no friends or everybody had been deported among your circle of acquaintances,

then you didn't have a whole lot of chance to get anything. So there were a lot of things missing in the camp. But, like I said, compared to other camps, it was bearable.

As far as care for us, I was born in the hospital and then sent back to the barracks afterwards.

Q. IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS?

A. Yes, immediately afterwards. I had to have soy milk because my mother did not have any milk. That's part of the -- people forget that even though this was not an extermination camp, things were extremely tense and --

Q. HOW WAS THAT LOOKED UPON AT THAT TIME? TODAY SOY MILK WOULD NOT BE SUCH A TERRIBLE ALTERNATIVE. WAS THAT CONSIDERED A VERY DANGEROUS THING?

A. To do what?

Q. TO DRINK SOY MILK, FOR A BABY.

A. I'm not quite sure.

Q. THERE ARE DIFFERENT ATTITUDES ABOUT BABY FEEDING.

A. Right.

Q. BUT I IMAGINE YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER DIDN'T THINK THAT WAS THE BEST MILK TO FEED A BABY.

A. Right. You know, I was quite sickly the first year I was there. Apparently I had pneumonia a

couple of times because things were drafty and not ideal. But even so, she was able -- I think she told me she was able to get some extra rations for us because we were two kids. And so, well, here I am. Obviously I didn't starve or anything.

And the care, medical care was quite good. We had a hospital that was staffed by, of course, Jews, and it was sort of the pride of the camp as well in terms of the Nazis who would come and show other Nazis what a wonderful camp this was. The hospital was probably better equipped in most instances than the hospitals outside the camp, and certainly in terms of expertise. It was probably the best place in that sense in all of Holland in terms of --

Q. WERE THEY INTERNED PHYSICIANS?

A. Yes.

Q. WERE THEY PEOPLE WHO WERE ALREADY INTERNED?

A. Physicians, right.

Q. WERE THE_____.

A. There were schools in the camp.

Q. THESE WERE ALL PEOPLE WHO WERE ROUNDED UP?

A. Right, exactly.

Q. SERVING THEIR TIME?

A. Right. Right.

And there were schools in the camp. But

of course the horrifying thing about the schools was that every week or so a lot of people would no longer be in the school because, like I said, I think it was a kindergarten and there were some educational facilities and then there was even, what, they called it kind of a, what did they call it, day-care I guess we could call it now. I remember one of the pictures where they had the day-care center, with all the cribs and the background was the Pied Piper of Hamlin. You know that story?

Q. YES.

A. Yeah, so it was kind of a very eery --

Q. GHOULISH.

A. -- ghoulish kind of.

Q. BACKGROUND.

A. Right.

Q. APPROPRIATE.

A. Right. Right. So that was of course the maddening thing about the camp as a whole, that no matter what kind of -- you know, they had an orchestra, they had cabarets. It was sort of like an Alice in Wonderland kind of quality.

Q. VERY UNREAL WORLD.

A. Right. But at the same time, every week or so, like I said, a lot of these people would be gone. They would organize chess tournaments and next

week, of course, your chess mates, half of them wouldn't be there.

Q. NOT ELIMINATED BY THE PLAY.

A. Right, Exactly. And so it had that kind of very tense, tense-ridden. Plus there were all kinds of frictions between the different nationalities in the camp. Because not only Dutch Jews, German Jews were interned there as well. German Jews would come there before the war, that is to Holland, escaping from the Nazis. They were interned too, of course. And because they spoke the language and they had been there longest, because (Westerborg) was started by the Dutch government really.

Q. _____.

A. Very few.

Q. _____.

A. Who was there? Yes. Yes. There were many different nationalities, but the main ones were the Dutch Jews and the Germans Jews. And the German Jews had been there longest. Westerborg was started by the Dutch government actually, in '38 I believe, '39, as sort of a holding center for refugees from Germany.

So when in 1942 the camp officially became sort of a German transit camp and the Dutch Jews came pouring in, the German Jews were pretty well settled in and it led to a lot of bad blood. Because first of

all, they spoke German, they had better relations with the camp commandants, they kind of ran the camp in their way. And so there was a lot of bad blood between the Dutch Jews, on the whole, between the Dutch Jews and the German Jews.

Q. JUST AS A LITTLE CURIOSITY ON MY PART, AND I AM ALMOST SURE WHAT THE ANSWER MUST BE, YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER BOTH WERE INTERVIEWED?

A. No.

Q. THEY DO NOT HAVE AN ORAL HISTORY RECORDED?

A. No. My father is dead now.

Q. YES, YOU TOLD ME.

A. My mother is still alive. No. But she doesn't live around here. She lives in Canada, in Vancouver. No, she has not been interviewed.

Q. WELL, I THINK IT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THEN WE ASK YOU SOME MORE QUESTIONS ABOUT HER STORIES WITH YOU, PERHAPS. IF YOU CAN RECALL SOME OF HER RELATIONSHIPS; SOME OF HER BAD TIMES WHEN SHE LOST a FRIEND; PERHAPS SHE HAD TO SAY GOODBYE TO SOMEONE FOR THE LAST TIME.

A. You mean in the camp?

Q. YES. IF YOU RECALL ANY STORIES LIKE THAT.

A. Well, I recall them not in specifics but certainly sort of in general. And of course she lost her family. She had a brother -- two brothers, I

believe, and let me see. Two brothers, right, who were older -- no, she was the oldest. Yes. And one of her brothers was picked up during one of those (Ratzias), that is, one of those --

Q. ROUND-UPS?

A. Round-ups, right.

Q. AS WE CALL THEM.

A. Right. Because they were -- he wanted to go to Palestine, and I am not quite sure whether he had a certificate or not, but he was deported and killed. And, yeah, you know, after the war, they didn't know, you see, my mother and my father didn't know what had happened to their relatives, their brothers, sisters, relatives, etc.

Q. TELL ME --

A. Well, that's what -- I am trying to get into that.

Q. -- FIRST WHERE THEY WERE AFTER THE WAR?

A. Right. Well, you know, they didn't know what had happened until after the war, when of course as news was broadcast and then it became a certainty and they would go and look at these lists the Red Cross would put up about people who had come back from the camps. And, you know, she told me that she would go and look at these and see if anybody she knew had returned. And most of the time it was of course

negative.

Q. WHAT WAS THEIR CITY?

A. Amsterdam.

Q. SO DID THEY RETURN TO AMSTERDAM?

A. Yes, after the war, after the camp was liberated -- I think they had to stay there for a little while longer -- they returned to Amsterdam and that's when they found out what had happened. But, you know, as far as saying goodbye, I really don't know. In the camp itself, I am sure it was a terrible thing; people leaving, didn't know where they were going. And I think what kind of saved them in a sense is that they were very young and perhaps did not think about the ultimate kind of resolution of this thing at the time. Just to stay kind of alive themselves. They couldn't afford, I think that is true of most people, people who were in the camps, you couldn't really afford to think the worst.

Q. WERE THEY GETTING STORIES, THOUGH? WERE THEY GETTING STORIES THAT FORCED THEM TO KNOW NOT TO GET ON THAT TRAIN?

A. Well, this is sort of a very gray area. There are people who say that they knew what was happening, people who say that certain of the Jews in the camp who were in higher positions -- because the camp was basically, the commandant left things more or

less to the Jews themselves to run as long as they -- in fact, they even had to make up the quotas for the trains. This was in Jewish hands. As long as they delivered the quota, the commandant wouldn't interfere a whole lot. And there have been rumors and, like I say, speculation that there were people who knew what was happening even in the camp, but didn't pass it on, or didn't believe it, felt it was like rumors.

Because if you think that even like you look at Anne Frank, that in her diary entry in October 1942, she had been listening to the BBC from England and she mentions gassings in Poland. And this was -- I am sure this news came through, that people had to know but didn't believe it, you know.

There are lots of instances where some people who had escaped from these camps, in fact, contacted the Jewish Council, not lots but certainly a number of them, contacted the Jewish Council, even non-Jews. I remember one case that I know about, I think he was a gardener who accidentally wound up in Auschwitz as a sort of political prisoner to work for the Germans, was actually released, came back to Holland, contacted the Jewish Council, told them what was happening. But they wouldn't believe it; they didn't do anything about it. Whether they didn't want to believe it because they felt that if they spread

this news as the truth, they couldn't foresee what the outcome would be in terms of how people would respond or what. Because they had kind of their own stake in making things run smoothly because their own lives were in jeopardy.

And, like I said, you know, my research is, I have read cases where people said, "I knew," but this is all (ex post facto), you know, "I knew." But at the time when I look at the diaries that were kept there and other documents, I have not come across a single instance where they said flat out, "This is what is happening in the East. You know, Jews are being killed." So although I am sure that this was in the air in the camp --

Q. IT WAS THE FEAR.

A. It was the fear, it made them deny that ultimate realty they didn't want to face because, I mean, what do you do? You know.

Q. WHEN YOU TALKED TO YOUR FATHER, WHO HAS NOW PASSED AWAY, DID YOU EVER GET A GLIMPSE OF HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE INVOLVMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, THE LACK OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES IN TRYING TO GET THE PEOPLE OUT OF THE CAMPS OR TO DESTROY THE CAMPS? HOW DOES THAT RELATE WITH THE WAY HE FEELS A RESPONSIBILITY OF THE REST OF THE WORLD TOWARD THE JEWS?

A. Well, I don't think he ever expressed himself very strongly about that aspect. One thing he did, it's not a United States thing, but he felt that as a whole nobody really cared about the Jews. Not necessarily the United States or whatever.

Q. IT WAS EVERYONE?

A. It was sort of everyone. And that did color his view of the world. I would think that he became much more -- and I think that is true of many survivors -- much more, perhaps you can use the word illiberal in the sense that everybody foresook them, why should they care about anybody else? You know, that kind of attitude which I found quite a few survivors. And of course whatever I say, you know, it doesn't apply to everybody. But I think in some sense from many survivors, it has narrowed their kind of, it has a narrowing effect.

Q. The bitterness.

A. Right, the bitterness, the legacy of the Holocaust, which is, I think, well, justifiable in a certain sense that you go through this horrible trauma where you are left to your own devices and where you have been left in the lurch and, you know, your families have been killed, it tends, I think, to make you less open, perhaps, to other experiences. On the other hand, there have been people who have gone

through this who it has broadened. But basically I think it has had that kind of effect I described in the case of my father, that became --

Q. SO SOMETHING LIKE BUILDING A WALL AROUND YOURSELF, THAT PROTECTIVE WALL?

A. Right. That the world wasn't there at the time, why should they care that much about --

Q. SO THEY ARE CARRYING SORT OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIER --

A. Uh-huh.

Q. -- AGAINST OTHER RELATIONSHIPS?

A. Well, against, you know, the outside world. You know?

Q. Um-hum.

A. Of course, you have to get along with the outside world but I think they learned from their experience that --

Q. I AM TRYING TO GET A LITTLE MORE PERSONAL, JACK, ABOUT, FOR INSTANCE, YOUR OWN FAMILY.

A. Yes.

Q. SUCH AS THE KINDS OF ADVICE YOUR PARENTS WOULD GIVE YOU IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PEOPLE.

A. You mean relationships with other people --

Q. WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD, WHAT KIND OF FRIENDS YOU MAY HAVE OR WHO YOU SHOULD ASSOCIATE WITH.

A. No, they never put any limits on that, as to who I would associate with.

Q. THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN OPENNESS.

A. Right. But I don't think it was a conscious kind of effort. My father worked very hard after the war. He started a tailoring business.

Q. WHERE WAS THIS?

A. It was in Amsterdam. With a partner who had also survived, obviously, sort of under similar circumstances. And the interesting thing is, his partner was not married to a Jewish woman and this woman was almost deported. In fact, they had to measure her skull just to, this is Nazi racial science, before she got on the train, and this kind of kept her off the train because they claimed -- she was half Jewish really. It is a big, long story. That she was the daughter of some affair that her mother had had with a non-Jew and that she was fully non-Jewish, that type of thing. So they had to go and measure her skull and make sure this was true, that type of thing.

So he worked very hard and there was very little -- really there wasn't a whole lot of even relationship between, you know, the father and the sons in that sense, because he was usually gone.

Q. DIDN'T SEE THAT MUCH OF HIM?

A. Didn't see that much of him, right.

Q. BUT YOU GET ADVICE FROM PARENTS, I THINK. THEY ARE GOING TO TELL YOU, EVEN WHEN THEY DON'T SEE YOU VERY OFTEN, HOW TO SPEND YOUR TIME, WHAT KIND OF GOALS YOU SHOULD HAVE.

A. Didn't really need advice in the sense that we grew up after the war in Amsterdam. There was still quite a bit of anti-Semitism, strange to say.

Q. IN HOLLAND?

A. Yes. Yes. And when we were growing up, we were really the only Jews or very few, One of the very few who lived in the neighborhood and went to the school, neighborhood school, and people knew who you were and knew you were Jews, and there was a lot of anti-Semitism. Kids would call you names, "Dirty Jew," this, that. And people would say, "It's too bad they didn't get you." That type of thing.

So you are very aware in your own terms. You don't have to have advice from your parents as to who you are going to associate with. Of course you are not going to associate with people who make these kind of remarks.

Q. FROM THE NETHERLANDS.

A. No.

Q. ONE DOESN'T -- I MEAN --

A. No, but it has a tradition. I think the anti-Semitic tradition grew after the war because of

Hitler. I think it was less, probably, before the war. People were maybe less aware of it.

Q. MORE UNDER WRAPS?

A. More under wraps. But Hitler, because, and one of the things he did, and this is true throughout Europe I think, that he raised this whole thing, made it such a, well, such an overt type of consideration that people became much more aware of Jews. And I think much of the lasting damage that he has done is to propagandize this very anti-Jewish, sickly or sick, sickly anti-Jewish attitude, propogating it, spreading it around. And I think this is still very much a part of the European, Western European climate today.

Q. IN THE AFTERMATH --

A. Right. Even though there are very few Jews.

Q. HE UNLEASHED ANTI-SEMITISM?

A. Right, right. Unleashed it or made it worse than I think it was before, at least in Western Europe.

So we did have to live with this. Like it wasn't something that kept us from doing anything. But we were very aware of it at a very early age that we were different, even though we were not religious or anything like that. We kind of fit right in with I

guess the people as a whole in that sense. We were not religious, but people knew who you were. And we were very aware of the fact that we were, even as children, that we were very different or at least considered different by surrounding folks, you know. So, you know, you pick your friends. I didn't pick my friends -- there were no Jews around really. I had friends and they were non-Jewish and they were fine. And in that sense I didn't suffer any kind of an aftermath or my parents telling me, "You shouldn't associate with so and so," or whatever. It was pretty clear to me --

Q. YOU HAD NO CHOICE?

A. I had no choice, right. I wouldn't associate with people who called me names or tried to beat me up, or whatever. I wasn't a masochist, you know. So ...

Q. YOU HAVE ONE BROTHER?

A. Right.

Q. AND WERE YOU VERY CLOSE WITH HIM?

A. Well, I think it was like any brothers, especially if there is a gap between --

Q. LOVE AND HATE?

A. Right, a gap in age. It's not large enough to make any significant difference. It's like any siblings; I mean, we fought a lot. And now we are

fine. But when we were kids, we would always be fighting.

Q. SOUNDS QUITE NORMAL.

A. Right.

Q. QUITE COMMONPLACE.

A. Right. People tend to think the Holocaust would make the families close up and be much --

Q. I HOPE THAT THAT WAS THE INTENTION.

A. No. No. -- much more caring. But I think really that doesn't really happen.

Q. IT SEEMS --

A. Things take their normal kind of course in that respect.

Q. TELL ME ABOUT HOW LONG YOU WERE IN AMSTERDAM AND WHAT SCHOOLS YOU WENT TO.

A. Okay. Well, I lived in Amsterdam until I was past 13, so that's a sizable time.

Q. DID YOU HAVE A BAR MITZVAH?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. ALTHOUGH YOU WERE NOT RELIGIOUS?

A. No. I think it was the only I guess token kind of thing we did.

Well, we did go, actually the stranger thing is, I did go to a Jewish school too. I went to regular elementary school six years -- at the time, six years -- right in my neighborhood, across the street

from where I lived. And then for about half a year I went to a Jewish high school, the only Jewish high school in Holland, which was a very small school, of course, but which had existed before the war, and which opened again after the war, sometime after the war, but a very small group of people.

Q. HOW MANY STUDENTS DO YOU THINK WERE THERE?

A. Oh, I think there were about, let me see, one class there were only like four -- well, there are five grades in all. Then I think there was one for each -- one class for each grade. So you can figure out, maybe 20 each class. Maybe a hundred students or so. It was a fun school and it was nice, I had a good time. It was not religious. Of course we did have to take religion.

Q. WAS IT A GOOD QUALITY SCHOOL?

A. Very good quality.

Q. DID IT HAVE A _____.

A. Yes, it had a very high -- it was very highly regarded. In Holland, the schools were not like over here. High school there does not mean the same as over here. At the time you had -- this was a school that could prepare you for college, for example. They had, in the European system they have certain schools.

Q. THE JEWISH HIGH SCHOOL?

A. Right.

Q. AN ACADEMIC SCHOOL?

A. Right, right. You had certain schools that don't do the preparation; where you prepare more to take your job or prepare you for life.

Q. DO YOU THINK IT WAS SELECTED FOR THAT BASIS OR YOU FELT IT WAS JUST MORE COMFORTABLE TO BE WITH OTHER JEWISH KIDS?

A. No. You see, at the time I didn't make the decision.

Q. DID YOU SELECT IT?

A. No. I didn't make the decision. I guess my parents did. They did it probably -- and I only infer, only speculate -- somebody came to them from the Jewish community and said, "Why don't you enroll your kids in this Jewish school," and they did. So we had nothing to do with it. But, I mean, my brother went there too and we liked it well enough. Of course, there was a Catholic school across the road and there would be fights and names and everything called.

Q. ANY ATHLETIC COMPETITION?

A. No, no, just intramural, pretty much, between Jews, basically. They weren't too much into sports at the time. It was more, it was heavily academic. Actually, it was too academic for me. I was getting out of elementary school and suddenly have like 13, 14 subjects and you go to school from a quarter to

9 to a quarter to 5. It was kind of a lot. You know, you take languages; English, French, German, Hebrew.

Q. ONE MORE BURDEN FOR YOU TO CARRY?

A. Right. So it was just kind of a difficult thing to make the transition from elementary school to this school.

Q. WELL, HOW ABOUT, WAS IT AN ALL BOYS SCHOOL?

A. No, boys and girls.

Q. MIXED?

A. Mixed.

Q. AND WERE THERE ANY SOCIAL --

A. Oh, yeah, it was a lot of fun. There were lots of social things, and it was -- I had a good time, even though I was only there for about half a year. I left in March --

Q. LEFT A LASTING IMPRESSION.

A. -- in 1957 when we went to Canada. It was, you know, I always look upon it as a very good time.

Q. TELL ME AGAIN THE YEAR YOU WENT TO CANADA.

A. 1957.

Q. SO THEN YOU WENT TO WHAT CITY?

A. Montreal. Lived there for about ten years, myself, ten years, Montreal.

Q. WAS THAT AN EXCITING ADVENTURE?

A. No, not really. I mean, initially I didn't think it was exciting at all. I hated it. Because I was 13 years old and, you know, I had to leave people behind who were friends. Or, you know, you just become aware, kind of, of yourself as a person with some independence, form certain friendships. You know, it was really kind of a crucial period. I wouldn't recommend to anybody to take someone who is in their teens, early teens or mid-teens, and take them to another place to readjust. I think it's not a good policy from my own experience, although I adjusted fairly quickly, but it was a difficult period.

Q. Did you live in a Jewish community there?

A. Well, yes and no. Montreal at the time -- I haven't been there in a long time now -- there were a lot of Jews in the city. Many more say than we were used to in Amsterdam after the war. And it was kind of a fairly vibrant I guess Jewish life, although we were -- but it was mostly Eastern European Jews. And Western European Jews tend to look down on Eastern European Jews. And my parents being Western European Jews, they really didn't mix with Eastern European Jews.

Q. THEY DIDN'T FEEL THEY HAD ANYTHING IN COMMON.

A. Yes, anything in common. They basically

mixed with their own kind, Dutch Jews primarily, who has also settled in this area.

Q. WHO WOULD BY DEFINITION BE ANOTHER SMALL COMMUNITY?

A. Right. So these became their friends.

So there was -- and I went to a school which was a Protestant school, but in name only. Because I lived in a certain area of town that was mostly Jewish, but 95 percent of the school were actually Jewish kids. So you had this strange sort of anomaly of having to say the Lord's Prayer in the morning and there are all these Jewish kids, most of, nearly the entire class was Jewish. So in that sense, yes, it was much more of sort of a Jewish element than there had been before.

Q. IT IS IRONIC THAT YOU COME TO THE NEW WORLD, IN QUOTES, SUPPOSEDLY THE FREE WORLD, AND THEN ENTER A SCHOOL WHERE YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SAY A PRAYER OF SOMETHING THAT YOU ARE PROBABLY TONGUE-IN-CHEEK ABOUT.

A. Right. Right. It's -- it was strange.

Q. IT'S NOT AN OFFENSIVE PRAYER.

A. No. No. I didn't mind.

Q. IT'S NOT LIKE READING FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. It was very different.

Q. DID YOU HAVE TO DO THAT?

A. No, we didn't. It was mostly Old Testament. Every day after the Lord's Prayer they would read a little bit from the Old Testament, which was fine, you know, I didn't mind that.

But the thing was, there was more religion there in that sense than there was in the Jewish school I went to, except at those times we had to take a religious subject. At the Jewish school in Holland, that's when you learned about Judaism, etc., and religion. But the rest of the time there was no religious order at the school. Whereas there, you know, first thing in the morning, Lord's Prayer, and then you read from the Bible. It was sort of more of a religious element there.

Q. YES.

A. Very ironic.

Q. SO WHAT ABOUT THE FRIENDS YOU MADE IN MONTREAL?

A. Oh, I made a lot of good friends. They were mostly Jewish because I lived in a Jewish neighborhood and, like I said, went to a mostly Jewish school, so inevitably you made a lot of Jewish friends. It was only after I started going to college that my friendship became more, you know, integrated in that I also had non-Jewish friends.

Q. I SHOULD HAVE ASKED YOU THIS BEFORE, BUT IF YOU DON'T MIND THIS, GOING BACK A LITTLE BIT, WHAT PROMPTED YOUR PARENTS TO GO TO MONTREAL?

A. Well, that's -- I figured you would ask that. Okay.

Well, if you recall, in 1956, basically -- well, at least this is the version I get from my dad. In '56, you had the sort of threat of war hanging in the air. There was the Suez Canal crisis and there was Hungary, and my father, at least that's what he told us, that's the reason he gave to us, is that he feared for a war and he thought we would be safer in North America at the time. So he gave up really what was a very good business, that was doing very well. He didn't want us to go into the Army, at least that's what he said, and being exposed to some kind of war situation. And so he packed up and went to Canada and left behind quite a good, solid kind of business and started from scratch, essentially, in Canada.

So that at least is the -- but I think what it also had to do with, we had no family there really after the war; some friends. And that I am sure made it a lot easier to leave the country.

Q. BUT HE WASN'T WAITING FOR HISTORY TO UNFOLD. HE WAS TAKING HIS SIGNALS.

A. Right. Right. And for better or for

worse, it's hard to tell, you know. It's --

Q. DID HE HAVE TO STRUGGLE IN MONTREAL?

A. Well, somewhat, like every person who immigrates. But he would never let on that it was a struggle. It was sort of a pride, I would say. You know, he would look at -- it was strange to me, looking back -- things in a very optimistic kind of way or at least not let on that things were tough. He would always be, almost like a Candide, you know, in that sense, sort of the best of all possible worlds. And I'm sure this was a front, essentially, you know. But it was something he had to do.

Q. AND DID YOU FEEL YOUR COMFORTS OF LIVING HAD GONE DOWN IN MONTREAL?

A. No, not really.

Q. DID YOU SEE IT AS AN ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE?

A. No, I think it was an economic disadvantage in terms of, well, I think he made less money. At least initially.

Q. _____.

A. Right. So these were a few lean years. We came there, we had everything to start with. He shipped all his furniture over in this huge crate; arrived there one day with just everything packed, basically everything up.

So we didn't start out like sort of your typical kind of immigrants who come and have to live in sort of a ramshackle kind of place. We found a place that was pretty good immediately. So we lived, our standards, all the income went down, yet the way we lived was not a typically kind of immigrant family. You know, he found a job eventually. Well, actually right from the start, he became like a salesman in a department store, men's clothing, and did pretty well after a while and became manager, and did okay on the whole.

Q. WHAT ABOUT YOUR OWN FEELING ABOUT LIVING IN THIS COUNTRY AND YOUR RESPONSE TO PERHAPS SOME EVENTS THAT HAVE HAPPENED IN -- WELL, WE UNDERSTAND YOUR RESPONSE TO THE HUNGARIAN CRUSH THAT, YOU KNOW, THE SIGNAL YOU TOOK TO MOVE.

A. Um-hum.

Q. WHAT ABOUT AFTER THAT, FOR INSTANCE, WHEN SOME DIFFICULT THINGS WOULD HAPPEN, SOME OF THE ASSASSINATIONS, FOR INSTANCE, IN THIS COUNTRY, KENNEDY AND MARTIN LUTHER KING?

A. You mean my personal response?

Q. YES. DID THAT HAVE -- DO YOU FEEL THAT IT WAS A TRIGGER OF ANOTHER FEAR FOR YOUR SETTLEMENT OR --

A. Not really. I left Montreal in '67 and came to America, actually, or the United States to

study, continue my studies of history at the University of California. And I was going to school during this time of these assassinations. I felt much more that, well, I was a part of the situation and even though I'm not American and, you know, I have lived here for a long time, longer than I ever did in Canada or Europe for that matter, and I just know I was part of, I guess -- at the time it didn't stir up any kind of fears in maybe the way you are thinking of fears.

But it certainly was, I felt, a step -- it was, you know, as everybody said, it was a bad kind of omen for the future. And I think that it has been proven right. Well, when Kennedy was killed, of course, I was still in Montreal; I was actually going to school there, at the University. But Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, I was already over here. Let me see, Martin Luther King was killed when? In sixty -- actually before. Let me see. What was the year he was killed? I am trying to recall where I was at the time. He was killed after Robert Kennedy, right?

Q. YES.

A. So I was here. This is all part -- I became involved kind of in -- I was against the Vietnam War. I kind of settled into, you know, sort of the more liberal causes, I would say, on the American

campus at the time; the opposition to Vietnam and trying to better the country in the way we saw it, perhaps move ahead, as opposed to the Reagans and the others that tried to hold it back, so to speak.

Q. YOU WEREN'T REALLY TAKING THIS WHOLE POSITION OF YOUR FATHER, WHO WOULD PROBABLY -- HOW DID HE FEEL ABOUT VIETNAM?

A. I really don't know. I really couldn't tell you.

Q. YOU DIDN'T TALK ABOUT THESE THINGS WITH HIM?

A. Well, I was -- of course, you have to understand, in '67 I was already in the United States, when some of these things happened. Maybe the only time we communicated was on the phone, mostly on the phone, for a few minutes, so we really didn't have a chance to talk about a lot of these kind of things, these things.

Q. YOU WERE OF THE OPINION. WERE YOU REALLY INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. DEMONSTRATIONS?

A. Yes, demonstrations, and different --

Q. AND HE DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THIS?

A. He knew about this and didn't think I should really be involved in any of this.

Q. BECAUSE?

A. For some of the same reasons I mentioned earlier. Probably because, well, why be exposed? You know. Why be exposed? Because obviously there were others who didn't look kindly on this kind of activities and you are just sticking your neck out, so to speak, if you do anything that goes sort of against the established ways or that can land you into trouble or whatever. So he was never very comfortable with taking up any kind of cause and really being involved in these type of things.

Q. How about your mother?

A. My mother, I never -- she just basically parroted my father. It was one of these type of things.

Q. THEY AGREED?

A. They agreed on this. But I think it was more because he was kind of a dominant personality and because what he said basically she agreed with for reasons of loyalty, or because she didn't want to speak out, or whatever.

Q. WHAT ABOUT YOUR BROTHER? WAS HE INVOLVED?

A. Well, see, I didn't have any contact with him for a long time because, well, he was traveling around a lot. He lived in Asia for a while. Sort of in a lot of ways perhaps typical of families that have

been uprooted in that, you know, we can never kind of find our bearings and we keep moving around or we have moved around quite a bit. My brother was in a phase where he was traveling and working.

Q. WHAT KIND OF WORK DID HE DO?

A. He was like in journalism and, you know, living -- he lived in Japan for a while and, oh, he was all over the place; England. So I didn't see him for years really, so I had no contacts except an occasional letter or whatever. But, no, for years we didn't have any kind of contact.

Q. LET'S HEAR MORE ABOUT YOU. AFTER YOU COME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, YOU WERE IN THE COLLEGE?

A. Right, I was in a graduate school. Graduate school in history.

Q. YOU CAME HERE TO GRADUATE SCHOOL?

A. Right. Because as an undergraduate, I finished at McGill University in Montreal. Then I taught for about a year, taught high school for a year in Canada and decided I didn't like to do that, and then I moved over here. I was married at the time, I had just gotten married, and my wife had a stipend at U.C., actually at Riverside, and I figured, well, I will go too.

Q. SHE WAS A TEACHER ALSO?

A. No, she had just graduated from McGill University and she was a psychologist, so she was going to study psychology. So we both came down there. I went to the history department and she went to the psychology department. And then about a year later, I was still in the history department, she was still in the psychology department, but we were no longer together. So --

Q. BUT YOU HAD A CHILD?

A. I had no child with her. No, no, no.

Q. I SEE.

A. So we parted and then I got married again after a while and so ... But I was there for four years at the University of California, Riverside, and studied European history primarily, mostly modern European history. And then I left in '71 and did my dissertation which actually dealt with German Jews under Hitler and got a degree in I think finally in '77, a P.h.D. in modern European history or history as such.

Q. AND NOW WHAT DO YOU DO?

A. Now, I work part time at the Holocaust Center where I am associate director, basically working on research and education, or research and education department or fields. And I also teach English at an ESL school for adults, an adult ESL school. Plus I do

a little writing, mostly reviews now because I don't have a whole lot of time to write, embark on any large projects; a little writing here and there, research.

Q. IF YOU HAD THE TIME TO WRITE, DO YOU HAVE A SUBJECT THAT YOU WANT TO ATTACK?

A. Well, a number of things. One I have been toying with deals with children in the Holocaust, a book based on diaries of children or diaries of children left in the Holocaust, or left by children in the Holocaust. Not just Anne Frank of course, but there were about five or six other very good, powerful and intelligent diaries that we have. And I was going to do, or maybe I still will, a book based on these diaries, giving these children a voice, so to speak. You know, because it's very interesting because you have about four or five or six of these children and they all range in age from about 12 to about 17.

Q. DURING THEIR INTERNMENT?

A. Not just internment. But that is interesting in that they are all from different kind of countries, different countries with different kind of backgrounds. There is Orthodox; there is totally non-religious, almost non-Jewish; and then there is from Poland; and it is in Hungary and it is in Lithuania; and it is in just different parts of Europe at the time. And I would like to weave the history of

those localities into their story. It's not just of course the diaries but the picture you build around them and at least show what kind of conditions prevailed at the time, and how different they were from place to place, and how the personalities, different stamps, that they put their own stamp on the times through their personalities.

Q. DO YOU FIND IT AMAZING OR NOT SO AMAZING THAT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, THERE IS SO MUCH LITERATURE AND SO MUCH FILMING, OF "SHOAH" AND ALL THESE FILMS, AND HOURS AND HOURS OF THESE STORIES?

A. Yeah.

Q. WE ARE NEVER REALLY FINISHED WITH OUR CURIOSITY ABOUT THIS PERIOD.

A. Well, I think, you know, this has been going on, as you say, for quite a while, the sort of fascination and in some ways titillation, I feel, with this period. But, you know, it will, like everything else, stop. Everything has a kind of period and with the way things are going now, I think that there is a plethora of books and films and what have you.

Q. I DIDN'T MEAN TO SAY THAT WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH.

A. No, I know. Some of it, of course, is very legitimate but I think some of it is not so legitimate. I think that some of it, I think, is meant

to titillate, to sensationalize, especially some of the things that appear.

Q. WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?

A. Oh, what do I have in mind? Some of the films that have come out recently, which I haven't seen, actually. But some of the things I have seen on television. Some of the more popular type of, the popularized versions of --

Q. OH, THE MINI-SERIES TYPE OF THING?

A. The mini-series, you know, I find -- well, first of all, I think if you really tried to show things as they were, you know, nobody would watch it. I mean, it would be just too --

Q. IT IS TOO HORRIBLE?

A. -- too gruesome. And so what you get often is, like and I think in one series I did watch was in (Sobiborg), which wasn't bad actually as far as commercial television goes, but people were walking around, inmates, in what looked like pressed levis.

Q. THE BEST THEY COULD DO.

A. Right. Kind of stylish in a certain way. And I think it conveys somewhat of a, you know, often kind of a wrong image.

Q. YOU ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH THE FACT THAT IT IS NOT QUITE REAL AS -- TALKING ABOUT ELIE WEISEL, HE ALWAYS FEELS IT IS TRAGIC TO TRY TO RECREATE

SOMETHING AND DO IT, IT IS DOING SUCH AN INJUSTICE TO IT.

A. Yes, of course, but it is true I think in most instances you are trying to create a historical event. In this, I think he is right in saying that you try to recreate it and you really can't and then you try to recreate it and --

Q. THE SIGNATURE _____.

A. -- try to sell. Basically what you are doing, though, is selling products with this. You are not really showing or you are not -- you don't have a genuine kind of interest in showing things as they were, try to approximate conditions as they were, try to tell or have somebody learn something about this period in sort of a sincere kind of fashion. What we have, especially in T.V. programming, commercial T.V. programming, is really trying to sell products.

Q. HE IS ALMOST SAYING THAT YOU ARE MAKING TRAGEDY MORE TRAGIC AND IT IS A TERRIBLE AFRONT TO THE PEOPLE WHO DIED IF YOU DARE TO BE CREATIVE IN A FALSE FASHION.

A. Yes.

Q. IT IS A TRAVESTY --

A. Um-hum.

Q. -- THAT YOU CAN'T DEAL WITH, OR HE DOESN'T_____.

A. I think it is important to isolate, obviously, to convey the knowledge or the horror, but I don't think it has any impact really. Of course the ostensible reason for doing this type of thing is to show the world how horrible it was, and, you know, inevitably the cliche follows, so that it can't happen again. But I sometimes feel that some of these programs really kind of glorify what happened in a sense that are not from the Jewish point of view, but from the other point of view; that a lot of people are fascinated by violence.

I think in some sense it, rather than doing the thing that I mentioned, it often serves as an example to other people and gives them ideas, which I think is not such a good idea. So I have mixed feelings about this, about how it is done.

Q. WHO DO YOU THINK GOES TO SEE THESE FILMS, THOUGH? I MEAN, ON TELEVISION IT IS OPEN TO CHOICE AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE RATINGS ARE ON THESE THINGS. I WONDER IF THEY ARE ALL THAT OVERWHELMING. SOME OF THE SERIES HAVE BEEN VIEWED. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE FILMS? ARE WE NOT ALL --

A. You are talking about the commercial films?

Q. YES.

A. Well, that's true. I think most people do

who have some interest in this period, do go see them.

Q. IS THE GENERAL PUBLIC? I DON'T THINK THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS GOING TO THOSE FILMS.

A. No. I think you are quite right.

Q. AND THE WORST THINGS ARE PROBABLY DONE ON THE TELEVISION.

A. Yes, the spate of films that have come out. I haven't seen yet because I try -- because eventually I will see them, I know. But I deal so much with this material that I don't want to really spend some of the free moments that I have, you know, I would like a break sometimes. So I try not to, when we go out, my wife and I, we try not to see these movies because -- I will see them anyway at some point, but not make any kind of a special effort unless I feel like in the case of this movie about the (Lodz) ghetto, which I feel was very well done, yes.

Q. I AGREE.

A. Yes, that's a really well done movie. Not only artistically but also --

Q. _____LINKED TOGETHER --

A. Yes, in its point of view. And you know, because one thing, the Holocaust, I think you have to be somewhat honest, and I think that was an honest movie. In other words, what I am trying to say is not -- you know, you have to show every side, even like the

Jewish side, it may not be so attractive to the world. And I think in that particular film, the director, I think it was (Adelson), has done a good job of conveying that, the reality as it was.

Q. IT WAS MADE UP MOSTLY OF THE ACTUAL PHOTOS.

A. Photos, right.

Q. IT WAS BEAUTIFULLY LINKED TOGETHER PHOTOS.

A. Yeah, I thought it was --

Q. A LITTLE BIT OF STORY LINE AND RE-CREATION.

A. Yeah, I thought it was one of the best films about this period I have seen, and it is head and shoulders above some of the -- most of the stuff that comes out.

Q. REAL RE-CREATIONS, TOTAL RE-CREATIONS.

A. Right. I think you have to rely on the documents and on the stills and whatever footage there is to recreate it, rather than try and invent your own setting. I mean, the "Shoah" which I saw, the nine-and-a-half-hour series, was also very well done and it didn't have any footage in the past. But --

Q. IT WAS AN INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE.

A. Right. Right. The interview technique was good and I thought he succeeded in a very difficult area, in conveying the horror without ever being

sentimental, you know, because there are a lot of pitfalls in this area. Without being sentimental or working on our, whatever you want to call it, pity or what have you, you know. It was, I thought, quite --

Q. GOING AFTER THE STORY.

A. Right. It was -- of course there have been a lot of complaints about it, but I don't see -- I think, again, he was being honest in his portrayal of not just the Jews but I also the Poles. I think it was basically an honest film. That's about all you can ask from these things, is that they are honest. And very few succeed in doing that.

Q. WE ARE JUMPING AROUND A LOT IN TERMS OF THE WAY I HAVE LED YOU BACK AND FORTH HERE, BUT I AM STILL CURIOUS NOW ABOUT YOUR OWN CHILDREN, YOUR WIFE AND HOW YOU REACT WITH THEM, ADVISE THEM OR TELL THEM ABOUT WHAT THEIR PLACE IN THIS WORLD IS.

A. Well --

Q. OR ENCOURAGE, DISCOURAGE.

A. Well, that's a tough one. I mean I have two daughters, older.

Q. AND THEY ARE AT THE AGE NOW WHEN YOU HAD TO -- ABOUT WHEN YOU MOVED.

A. Right. 12 and 15.

Q. ABOUT WHEN YOU MOVED.

A. Right. They are not with me all the time

but I see them a lot, practically every day, but they don't always stay over. And on the whole, they are a pretty good relationship. You know, you cannot teach -- I mean you can certainly plant some seeds, but at this stage you are not going to -- whatever you tell them is not going to make any impact.

Q. ARE YOU LIVING IN THE SAME HOUSEHOLD NOW WITH YOUR DAUGHTER?

A. Well, we live -- not all the time. That is my two daughters. I also have a little son. My son is with us all the time. And my two daughters are from a previous marriage, so kind of half and half with my ex. But I see them a lot. And, like I said --

Q. BUT YOU ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO THEM, FOR SURE?

A. Well, I don't know. Sometimes I wonder.

Q. OH.

A. No, but it's -- yeah, it's okay. They are fine. And, of course, you know, I tell them things because I know about -- I would hope I am old enough to know a few things. But you really cannot tell them anything. And that goes for everybody, I think, because they basically have to go through life themselves.

Q. HAVE YOU TOLD THEM a LOT ABOUT THEIR GRANDPARENTS AND YOUR LIFE THERE?

A. Oh, yeah. They know about all that, yeah. I have not overburdened them with the horrors and tales of horrors. I don't think that is right to do that. But they are certainly aware. They know I wrote a book and --

Q. HAVE THEY READ IT YET?

A. Well, I don't know. I don't think they have read it. I don't think they are ready for that yet. And they know I am active in writing about these issues. They see my reviews in the paper sometimes and they have lots of books at home that deal with this period. So they are certainly aware of what happened.

And the interesting thing is that their grandparents on the other side were also encamped, except in internment camps over here. They were Japanese-Americans.

Q. OH.

A. So they get it kind of from both sides.

Q. TOO MANY TALES OF WOE HERE. IT IS HARD ON CHILDREN.

A. Right. So they are in kind of a unique position in that, you know, both sides of family have had some kind of, well, a brush with --

Q. REJECTION?

A. -- with rejection and, you know --

Q. AND INTERNMENT.

A. Right. So they are very aware of these kind of events in life, but I have never tried to, like I say, you know, I have never tried to tell them or make them read about the horrors. I mean, my oldest daughter has read Anne Frank, but I don't think these type of things make too much of an impression at this stage. I think you have to be somewhat older to be able to deal with the complexities that are involved. It's very hard for children who grew up here in a kind of middle class kind of environment where they have everything, to project back and see what it was like; or even to, you know, even to make that imaginative leap in your imagination. That's true for everybody, essentially, is to recreate or be able to recreate in their minds the horrors of the past. And I don't think that is really what they should be learning at this stage. Anyhow --

Q. WELL, SOMETIMES -- I THINK WHAT MY DIRECTION WAS, I THINK WHAT THEY PROBABLY HAVE, WHETHER YOU SAID IT OVERTLY OR NOT, IS A SENSITIVITY. IT'S PART OF THEIR PERSON.

A. They are very aware of race, ethnic kind of identities. They are very open. They are not prejudiced in any way. And they have had this from very early on. They have gone to schools where it has been always a mix of people, black, white, Asian; and

so they are -- that is sort of like hopefully new Americans in seeing the injustices and realizing that racism and prejudice are dead-ends. And I'm very happy about the way they are growing up in that, with that kind of perspective. Hopefully, the fact that they come from this kind of background and that they themselves are mixed has made them more sensitive in all these areas. Much more sensitive, say, than we were perhaps when we were younger. So I am very happy whatever little bit I did towards that. I mean they have seen me with lots of different people, with every kind of, when I was single, every kind of person and hopefully that had something to do with their, you know, acceptance of or at least their ability to relate to other people and to understand, you know, racism and how terrible it is. So that I think is a very good thing that has come out of all this for their lives.

Q. WELL, AT THIS POINT, I WOULD SORT OF SAY, IS THERE A DIRECTION YOU WANT TO GO THAT I HAVEN'T --

A. Well, all right. If I may say so, a direction in terms of this? What?

Q. WELL, NOT NECESSARILY.

A. I just want to make a footnote.

Q. ANY PATH YOU WANT TO TAKE THAT I HAVEN'T LED YOU ON THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BRING UP.

A. One of the things about the Holocaust,

especially having been immersed in it for a long time, is it can become very straining and draining. And I have reached a point, I think, where of course I have done so much work in it and thought --

Q. PERSONALLY.

A. Personally involved both in research and writing and all kinds of other things, that I am sort of at a kind of a crossroads and I do want to shed some of that and go into areas that I was a little more involved in before I became kind of absorbed by this whole thing because of my background and everything. Well, my involvement came about in my mid-20s, when I was in my mid-20s, I guess.

To go back to kind of, sort of a cultural kind of European history as kind of a release from some of these issues that I have been involved with and working on for 20-some years, you know. So I would like to maybe take a break for a while and get back to some other things that I have neglected -- or not neglected, but rather that I would like to pursue as well. Because it can be, as you probably are aware yourself, but if you are always involved in this, it can -- it is not the healthiest kind of thing, I think. So you need some kind of --

Q. YOU WANT SOME MORE PERSPECTIVE?

A. Not just more perspective, just some other

areas -- well, a little relief, let's put it that way.

Q. SURE. I CAN APPRECIATE THAT.

I HAVE ENJOYED INTERVIEWING YOU.

A. It has been likewise.

Q. I HOPE THAT THIS FORMS A GOOD RECORD OF YOUR THOUGHTS AND DIRECTIONS AND HOW YOU WERE FORMED.

A. Well, okay. Good.

Q. HOW THE HOLOCAUST FORMED YOU.

A. Right. Okay. Thank you.

(End of interview)