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We need about 10 seconds here. We're recording, but we don't have tape speed.

See, I'm filing my nails. I have such terrible nails.

Today is April 18, 1994. I'm Judith Antelman with the Holocaust Oral History Project in San Francisco. And today I'm interviewing Elizabeth Bosch. And producing is John Grant.

Elizabeth, I'd like to just start by asking where and when you were born?

I was born in Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

Rotterdam?

Rotterdam.

And when were you born?

1919, in June.

And what were your parents' and siblings' names?

My mother's name was Catherine Egge, E-G-G-E. And my father's Melchior Goldhagen, G-O-L-D-H-A-G-E-N.

Any siblings?

That mean children?

Children, yes.

My children, yeah two.

Your sisters or brothers.

Oh, my sisters and brothers, OK. Two-- two sisters.

And what were your parents' occupations?

My mother was a housewife and my father was in insurance.

And can you just tell me a little about your childhood, your family, school, friends, if there was any religious upbringing?

Yes, we are Roman Catholic. And we did what we had to do, communion and so forth. Went through high school and after that I went to what they call household. That is where you learn to cook, and sew, and clean, and housework, but that's what I did.

And after that, I worked by a very rich family in Rotterdam for one year. And then I became a dentist assistant with a dentist who was from Austria, Jewish, and separated from his wife. He had one son and that was Freddy. That was his son's name.

And my husband is my high school sweetheart. He went to college in Holland. And I always said I wanted to marry a man that was going to Indonesia. So he took a job in Indonesia. And while I was working at the doctor, his brother and sister came over to go to America, because Hitler was already working at that time.

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And his wife-- when the Germans occupied Austria, his wife and son came back-- they were separated-- came back to Holland and stayed with them together in Holland. And then the son, when he heard that I was going to get married to go to Indonesia, he said, oh, that's not a good place to go, why don't you come with me to America? Well, I said I was committed and that's what I wanted. And that's what I did. And in the meantime, he went to America.

And let's see from there, my sister took my place over at the dentist as a dentist assistant. And she told him my parents said too to go to America, but he said, oh, no, he went to the First World War, so that couldn't happen to him. And of course, he got a star. But before that, while I was working there, there was a German girl he had there as a maid, sleeping in from Germany. Because Germany was very bad. And compared to Germany, Holland, in the Depression-- well, Holland was still better.

But anyway, it was always-- this [NON-ENGLISH], that was Germany. And then I caught her one day checking the doctor's passport, what was in his pocket, hanging on the wall in his coat. And so she put it back. And I said, what you doing there? She said, oh, well, that was nothing. And I told the doctor. But that is how he got caught by the Germans.

And so, I left for Indonesia. My husband-- I married by proxy. My husband went first because he had education. They thought him in Amsterdam for the particular job. And he was an officer in the reserves. But the troops were going back and forth to the border. And in the Depression, they had to hurry, not to waste the money. So they sent him off to Indonesia.

And we couldn't get married because then they had to pay for me. And so, they said as soon as you're in Indonesia, you can get married. But that meant that he had to pay or I had to pay for it. And it was 600 guilders. That was a lot at that time. But anyway, a couple of months later, I went to Indonesia too.

And after that-- oh, he worked. We were transferred to [NON-ENGLISH]. I had a baby there, the oldest one, and came back. And then the Japs came over. We just had a little house in a sort of a park. And Antoine was sent out to, at that time, to Jakar-- Jakar--? No, Yogyakarta, for the army, in uniform.

And I was alone with the baby. And when I had to go-- I remember going [NON-ENGLISH]. That lane there, I was on my bike to go to the market, because we had to do it all ourselves then. And the Japs came over, suddenly, out of-- low over and shooting. So I fell off my bike in the bushes, with-- anything can be there, snakes and what have you.

And that is the first encounter I had with the Japs' occupation. And the Japs came inside, into Indonesia, from Singapore. And Singapore was a fort that couldn't be taken from the front. But what the Japanese did, they walked in from the back. That was not protected. And that's how they did it.

And they went over rivers. They drowned their own people. They walked in the river, layer over layer, they drowned. And then on the top level, the rest of the troops went over to the other side of the river. They made bridges out of human bodies. Orientals are different. And they did that for their country. And Orientals, no matter who it is, are cruel-- cruel people. They have different standards, compared to ours.

But anyway, then the Japs-- and my husband came back on bicycle. He fled from Yogyakarta and came back on the bicycle. And then I was living at that time, for a couple of months, with another lady with two little kids. And so we decided we needed our own space. Her husband was coming back too. And we had little house on a hill someplace.

And then he was still working in the office. Then all of a sudden he couldn't work in the office anymore. And then after a while, the natives were not allowed to come in to our house to help cook what we were supposed to do. So my husband took over, because in the meantime I was sick with an infection, to stay in bed. And the baby, I had a sickly baby for one year.

And then they came by and picked him up. Down the street was another family from the same company, [NON-ENGLISH], and they picked him up. And then they came back. They were standing like cattle in an open truck.

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They picked who up?

The Japanese came by to ask everyone if there were men in the house. And his sack was always packed with what he thought we needed, or he needed. And so when they came by, well, just was picking up your knapsack and off you go. And that was the last I saw of him for more than four years.

And I was there-- that same night that they picked him up, they were knocking on my door and the dog was barking. I didn't go out. I didn't go to see. I wasn't even scared. I thought, well, we'll see what's going to happen. I don't know who it was, if it were the natives or the Japanese.

Then a lady down the street, she came over the next day and she said, I heard your husband is in the prison camp, that they picked him up. And said, but you cannot stay alone here with the baby. I didn't know her, but she knew me. Because my baby was sickly and in and out of the hospital. And so from there, she knew me, because her daughter was there at the time too.

So I moved in with her. She had a big house. And it was on a square, four big houses, where the whites used to live. And there were still three families living there, without husbands. And there were the Japanese officers, who took over one of their homes, the whole bunch.

And so I was sitting in the morning when it was cool with the baby outside, and playing with it before we were going in and it was too warm and so forth. And the Japanese noticed that. So one night-- I always sleep like a log, through the whole thing-- and she said come over, come over, come out, come out. She said, and be quiet because they're looking for you. And I said, how can that be? She said, the Japanese are looking for you.

So I got out and they were knocking on the door. And they were calling, where is the [NON-ENGLISH]. That means where is the young lady, that was I at the time. And we didn't have a telephone, but she pretended to have a telephone and calling the Kenpeitai. It's like the Gestapo. And they heard that. We were talking loud on the phone, with the Kenpeitai that we had Japanese officers knocking on the door and we didn't know what they wanted.

So they took off. Because I can say one thing of the Japs, they didn't rape. They have never done anything in my camp or when I was outside, to anybody. That was strictly discipline. Later on-- now I've heard that they went to camps in Manila and raped the girls and whatever they did. But it was never in our camp.

After a while there were posters on the tree and that asked if there were any ladies who wanted to serve the Japanese, go to the gate. And then you could move out and move in with a Japanese officer, but you were never forced. In fact, I had a girlfriend, she was on her bicycle. And here-- that was before we went into the camp. And Jap came over and wanted her bicycle.

Well, you know how it is, your first-- you don't get it, you don't get it. So she was hanging on and they chopped off her hands. They were hanging there. Well, she went to the hospital. They took her to the hospital. It was all fixed up and that was-- it could be repaired. That was OK. But then, of course, the Kenpeitai was after it. And they asked her to come, if she could identify any of the Japanese who did that.

And she said, OK. So she went there and they were all lined up. And she said, that's the guy. He said, that's it. And they shot him there, right in front of her. So that kept everything under control, you see. It was not like it is in Haiti now and what have you, or all over the place. But that was short matters.

And after a while, while we were living there they were talking about camps. And since we had the problem there, that lady with her two daughters, or two teenagers, and we decided to go into the camp. We didn't have to, but we did it, to be protected, so-called protected, with our own people around and the Japs couldn't come in. Of course, there were company commanders and Japanese-- Japanese commanders, but not that they could come knocking on your door. That stuff was over.

She said, I think we are better off. And that's what we did. We took what we could and left the rest just standing there.

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We lost everything, the house, the car-- well, what have you. Everything we owned, we lost. And you could bring in only what you could have in that room at that time. Later on-- and I still have that somewhere, a mattress, and a bucket, and a little suitcase, that is all you could carry from one camp to another.

I was in Kramat camp at that time. And from there, I was in a house. Oh, yeah, we were with a lot of people-- I don't know, 34 people in a two-story house. They were big rooms, but there was no privacy. We made privacy with curtains in between the beds.

And after a while-- and I was sitting-- I was taking care of the [NON-ENGLISH]. I had a [NON-ENGLISH]. I didn't make any money. But it was for people who had to go to work to earn some money. Because at that time, we had to take care of ourselves.

Now, what I have done is, we had money-- not all that much, but money was money-- and I had a bowl of cotton. Inside with my money. And I-- it was a big ball and I was always knitting. If we had to come out by the Japs, I was always-- I hate knitting, I never finished the project, but I was always knitting, because that was my money, you see.

And what else was there? Oh, can you stop it for a minute? So that I--

Oh, well--

Do you want to keep going.

Well, yeah, I'd like to do it as much as possible in sequence, you see, that it doesn't get all too confused.

I can help. I can ask questions.

How about you?

I'd like to ask questions.

Yeah, sure.

[CROSS TALK] that will help [CROSS TALK].

Sure.

I first, actually, want to go back to-- well, while we're on the subject, what year did you go to Indonesia?

'39. That's the year I got married.

OK, and what year did the Japanese attack Indonesia and occupy it?

Pearl--

Pearl Harbor was '41.

'41, I remember. The baby was sick and we were invited to a baby party. And that was Pearl Harbor. It was December the 5th.

December 7th was Pearl Harbor.

7th. Yeah, '41. That's how it all started.

And what happened that day? That was when you were on the bicycle and the Japanese-- you saw the planes attack.

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Yeah, that was later then, of course, with the occupation already. But we were all free. Well, from there, I went into a house. It was a big house, very dark. We had passed many times. And I remember it was one big room. Of course, there were more rooms. Very strange little-- strange people-- Dutch. But they were kind of odd.

And the whole room, everything, were all clocks around, hanging on the wall. And they all had the same time. They were tik-tock, tick-tock, and giving the hours. After that, I don't remember, I really don't. That went by. I was so shocked what was happening.

And then it happened a couple of times that while we were in the house, flying over. And that one time I really grabbed the baby and I really panicked a little. I don't panic very easily, but then I did. After that, I did. And everything, I took it in stride. Well, let's make the best of what we've got. And somehow, the things you go through, you think you never can. When I think back, I can't believe it myself, but you get help from upstairs.

I'd like to go back even further.

Yeah.

OK, back to Rotterdam.

Yeah.

And can you describe Rotterdam before the rise of Hitler, or before you left. Up until 1939, were you living in Rotterdam the whole time?

Yeah. Well, I know people where I worked for a year, before I became a dentist assistant, he was an engineer. And I heard about it, and people were talking about it, they were certain they wanted to renew Rotterdam. It was old, it was old. And a lot of buildings had to go. And certain buildings, of course, they wanted to preserve and still keep it standing.

Now, the biggest surprise after the war was-- after the bombing of Rotterdam-- I wasn't there, of course, I was gone already-- but they bombed Rotterdam totally flat, except the buildings that they wanted to preserve. They were standing. The rest was gone. Now, I wonder. Of course, there were spies. And it was a dirty trick, but everything was gone.

The house my parents were in, they fled the house. And the whole thing was afire. They fled through the fires. And Antoine's parents, my in-laws, they were farther down the road. They also fled someplace. They lost everything. And then later on, through the Red Cross, I did receive a card from my mother.

Now, you can see how far gone she was. She said, everything-- everything is gone. She said, but lucky, she said, I just bought a new garbage can and it's still standing. That was the only thing and she was glad that she had that new garbage can, that it wasn't-- the rest was all destroyed. And then they gave her a house she had to live in, the Germans.

And my father always hated the Germans. He called them mof. That is like you call the British limeys. Or the Chinese have what? And the Blacks call is what? Well, everyone has a name, but for the Germans it was mof. And his brother was married to a moffen a German. And my father couldn't stand it.

So he-- when she came, there was always a quarrel. And then she called him a [NON-ENGLISH], that is a cheesehead. Because that's the way it was going back and forth. Anyway, that's what happened-- Raizy, Raizy was her name, I think, yeah. I've never seen-- well, I don't know what happened to her. But anyway, that is what happened.

And then the other thing is that-- perhaps it is beside the point-- finally, my parents, after moving from here, and there, and there, they got an apartment. And my--

Where?

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In Rotterdam. And that was a Jewish neighborhood. In the meantime, the doctor and his wife where I used to work were picked up. And my parents and my sister always-- my sister visited them and took the clothes to wash. My mother washed and ironed it, then she brought it back with extra food. They were in a prison camp. And then all of a sudden, they were gone. And my parents had the valuables of the dentist and his wife.

She was very educated. She was Turkish. But oh, she had a degree in English, and Spanish, Italian, you name it, bilingual, and she was a pediatrician, very much so. And jewelry and whatever was valuable, and we had that between the ceiling. Nobody knew about that, of course.

And then my sister got another job. Now, if you believe in it or not, but my sister is psychic. She hates it. She's afraid of it. Up till now, she will never be alone in the house. When her husband had to go on a business trip, she asked for a girlfriend or she was going over to a girlfriend. Always a light burning at night, never in the dark.

And I remember as a child of four years old, the lights went out. And well, we were all-- it was summer night it, was dark, and we all had a lot of fun as little kids. And she was about four years old. And I can still hear her crying, mama, mama, come here, come here, I see all kinds of faces, all kinds of faces. Then, already-- and she was always afraid. But she didn't know what it was.

But when she was working with the doctor, he used to be in the-- wait a minute. At that time when we were young-- when Hitler came, we didn't know what it was, heil-- that was the standard for the teenagers, but we didn't know what it was. And here the student was a member of that group. Oh, it has a special name. It will come to me, I don't remember now.

And he never resigned from that group. And she worked for him. But in the meantime, he was working for the Dutch. And used his membership so he could get into save, he could do things, because he was a member. And then my sister was the courier. She brought the messages over. He gave it to her and she brought it over to the other group. So that was it.

And then one day, she said, doc, she said, you have to stop doing things like that, because I can see you are going to get shot. He said, oh, Kitty, you're crazy. How can you say a thing like that? He didn't believe in things like that. While she was working, when you're there, with your [? medicine ?] and you're filling, waiting for the doctor, and he was there, she seen a guy holding a gun over his head. But he didn't believe in it. And she told him for the second time, later, but he didn't do anything about it.

So one day my sister comes home-- and that's what my mother told me-- and she said, oh, I think I better go to the hairdresser, I'll get my hair done. And my mother said-- she said, how can you do that? You just went there. She said, well, you never know what's going to happen, but she knew.

And so she went to the hairdresser and she had a number of little things already arranged. And 6:00 in the morning, ringing the doorbell, there was the Gestapo picking up my sister. And while she was getting ready-- everybody was still in bed-- and one guy was loading his gun over my sister's head-- she's a still nervous wreck about that, she was all shook up-- and they had killed the doctor and put the house in fire.

So then they took her to the Gestapo, I think, or the headquarters. And there were two guys and she knew them because they had been working with her for messages. And they were now working for the Germans. And they said, Kitty, tell the truth, because you know what is going to happen. And he said, well, there is your boss and that's the way you're going to go.

She said, OK, I'll tell the truth, but how about you? I have to name you. So then they backed off and she never told anything. And she was in jail with the whole group for quite some time, in a cell. And one day, they took her-- she's fluent in German, like a German, no accent.

And so they took her out and they had them all lined up. And she said, do you know him, and do you know him, and him, and him, and him, and her? Nobody knew anyone. They knew one another, but nobody recognized anyone. And so

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they let her free. And after that time, there was always a Gestapo guy down below, in front of the door. We were on the second floor, or they were on the second floor. And in the winter, he came upstairs-- not invited, but he came upstairs.

And then my father, hot-headed like I am-- I talk too much and I can't keep my mouth shut. If you like it or not, I will tell you what I think about it. And that was my father. And he brought a piece of salami or so and offered my father. And he said-- my father, he'd rather die than do anything like that.

And he said, well, if you want to be like that, he said, I can-- he said, I know when you go up there, you got a radio and you got stuff that you're not supposed to have. That was the guy-- you were sitting in front of the stove to keep warm. While my sister was going to the bathroom, he was standing in front of the door. She never was free.

So then-- and the messages went, it was so that nobody knew one another or talked to one another, but if the shades were down, or when the plant was moved, they knew what that meant, certain reasons. And that's how they got through the war.

And then my-- after the war, Freddy, the son of the dentist, came back. And he saw my sister. He came back as a translator and still looking for his parents, who were gassed in Auschwitz. And he saw my sister and they were married within 10 days. Then she was waiting for me to come back out of the prison camp, but it took a long time. You just couldn't move to where you wanted to. So when I came back in Holland, she was already in Los Angeles, in Hollywood. But is there anything you want me-- to ask?

So how did-- so your parents lived in the same place during the war? They lived in their house?

Well, after it was burned, they moved in with different Germans-- not a choice, but that was what they could get. Because everybody was looking for a place to live, of course, after burned out, all of them. When I came back after the war, and on the ship you looked right over all of them to Amsterdam, all the way over there. So it was all flat. So there was no choice.

But then finally-- I don't know how they did it, because those things, I wasn't there-- they got an apartment. And it was rather big. So then my grandfather lived in his own house. It was not a big house, but it was all alone by himself. And they said, well, your daughter has a big house, why don't you move in with her. He had the whole street-- whole street of little houses on the other side of the river Meuse. And he had worked himself up from a little kid to be-- owning the whole street and all the houses. So he did very well for himself.

And then my other sister was engaged to one of the twins. And the twins were sent to Germany to work in the coal mines, what they did. And then after they came back from the coal mines in Germany, after the war, then they-- well, his parents were-- they passed away. Move in with my parents. And when we came from Indonesia, the three of us, well, the house was big enough, but that was all in that one apartment.

We had a one big room and we all had our own bedroom, but still it was pretty crowded. And then that family what I knew the engineer from a pretty big position-- had a lot to say, it seemed so-- he got us, when I got pregnant-- he got us a small little apartment all by ourselves. So we moved out. So we were kind of lucky for that.

But in the camp, I had a [NON-ENGLISH]. I told you. That's where I kept my money. A lot of people had money, but it was in the bank and that you couldn't get any more. So they had to work just to get to eat. And I was taking care of all those little kids. And I did that for quite a while.

And then after a while, we were transferred to another camp. And that from Kramat camp, we were moved to Tjideng camp. And that was what they call a [NON-ENGLISH], a three-wheeler, sitting there, whatever you could have, your little suitcase, and your bucket, and whatever, and your baby. We're sitting there and that's all we ended up with. The rest was all-- we had to leave behind, clothes and everything.

And they put the whole camp afire. Now, that is another thing. After the war, we found out that my husband was in Adict and he got sick. And they put him in the hospital. And the hospital was behind our camp. I didn't know that. He

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didn't know I was there. We could have made contact.

And we found out because I said, well, they put the whole fire-- the Kramat camp afire. He said, I saw it because I was in the hospital. So we were so close and so far away. And that was the only transfer I did make. But then we had different camp commanders and that was just something unbelievable-- one after the other. When they were to good, they were sent off, we got another one.

We had one who loved music. And we had Lily Krauss, that was the concert piano player-- famous at the time. And they gave her a wing. And then once in a while we had a concert and Lily was playing. I met her later on in [NON-ENGLISH], when she gave-- after the-- she gave a concert. I went backstage and I still have the program she signed for me from Kramat Camp.

And one after another, and then finally, we did get [PERSONAL NAME]. And that was a crazy man. He was a moon sick man. He had been in the camp by the Aussies. And the Aussies knew exactly what he did, because he was terrible. A full moon, he was crazy. Had a white satin kimono and he would-- [SINGING]-- like the Orientals do, going around the tree. Everybody's scared stiff, because the crazy things he did. And we were looking at him, but we didn't want him to know. Because then you got beat up, you see. You couldn't do that.

And in the meantime, we had to do the rough work, like washing the sheets in the hospital from the dysentery people. And no soap, no disinfectant, and you had to do that sitting like the natives. I couldn't do that anymore, because I'm so stiff as a board. But at that time, you had to do that.

After a while they changed that. We had to do the garbage collecting. And that was when they brought in the cart with the horse and then they took the horse off and we had to pull it. And we had to stand in there on bare feet and the trash. And that was at a time that we still had to do the cooking for ourselves. First, we had to buy the stuff. Later on, they supplied us the stuff.

Before, we did get the community kitchens. But they gave us the intestines, with everything still in it. We had to clean it. And I still have the recipes, matter of fact. That was from the intestines, where you get all the [NON-ENGLISH], or how you-- the bowel movement was in it. We had to clean it all out. Then we cooked it. We ground it up. We made meatballs out of it. Oh, and it such-- delicious. Well, when you don't get anything.

We had to put up barbed wire fences. And they called you on-- I was in a group, what they called the [NON-ENGLISH]. That was for young people. I was in my 20s-- 23, I think I was, or 24. But all the young people-- not the older ones, but the young ones. And we had to put up barbed wire fence. We had to pitch holes in the pitch, hot, barefoot, no scarf, no sunglasses, no gloves.

And in the tropics, your blood is very thin, so after pulling up-- you have to pull the barbed wire with your bare hands-- it's kind of drippy. And someone got hit with a pick in her head. I don't know what happened to her anymore. But that was a disaster.

After a while, we-- there were no cats in the camp. We ate them. It's good-- it sounds-- it tastes-- it tastes like rabbit. Now, I can't stand even rabbit anymore. But anyway, it was good. Then there was a time that-- my son was some better and he was playing now. He was two or three years old. And they were playing with dead mice and rats. And some of his friends did get the plague. He didn't get anything. But a number of them did get the plague.

Then they found out that the kids were playing with the mice and the rats, so they said, OK, when you catch a mouse or a rat, you have to bring it to the hospital for the sick people. They were going to cook that and in exchange of that, you got a sweet potato. So that was another episode.

We had to-- in the beginning, had to make our own coffins-- 17 a day. It was not enough. Later on, there was no wood anymore, so we rolled the bodies, just in those bamboo woven mats. In Tjideng camp, after we moved, first I had a house and then I was taken out and they put me in another very small, little room, a kitchen it was. It was a big house, but I had that little kitchen, with the sink here and there was the counter.

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And I had crates turned upside down with a board, that was my mattress. And the baby bed I still had. Had to turn it upside down and he was sleeping over there. And with a little ladder, he had to climb in there. But neither of us could sit straight up. So we scooted in bed and we scooted out of bed and so did he.

And later on, he was already in high school, in the military academy, and when he came home on vacations, he talked about it-- he doesn't remember-- he blocked it all out. He has had a brain concussion in [NON-ENGLISH], so whatever happened before that, he blocked out, or forgot, or whatever.

He said, but there is one thing. I said, don't you remember, we had to scoot in and out. I never could stretch out. He said, no. He said, but now you say so, he said, you know the big hall in Roswell, in the Military Institute? I say, yeah. He said, every time when I get in that hole, I bend my head, that I'm afraid that I hit the ceiling. In his subconscious was there. Since he knew that, he knew it and didn't do that anymore. But that's the only thing that came about. What else was there? Yeah?

Can you describe the physical surroundings in both camps and first Kramat, What did it look like? What type of beds or apartments did you live in?

We had, in Kramat, private homes-- elegant homes, big homes.

Was it fenced off with a gate?

The whole camp? Yes.

Yeah, the entire camp.

You had to go through the gate. And in the beginning, you could go out and on the bicycle and do some shopping. But you couldn't get out. No, it was all fenced in. But beautiful homes, elegant homes. And we had a home, it was really very beautiful.

How many people lived in a home?

Well, in the one I was in, 37.

And how many could it hold comfortably? Is it a home for a family of four or five?

Yeah. The bedrooms are upstairs, but we had to push a lot more people in it than normal.

Was the gate guarded by men or dogs?

By Japs. And then inside of the gate-- that was Kramat-- there was a shop, where you could buy rice, and sugar, and the bare necessities-- soap, and so forth.

How did you get money to buy these things?

Well, that's what I said, my money was in the ball. And other people had money in the bank. So I was sitting with all those little babies, changing diapers and what have you, so the mothers could work for the ones who happened to have some money and could pay them. And that was for a while. So for me, it wasn't all that bad really.

Then there was another thing, that my husband was picked up and the baby was-- oh, he had been dying several times. We had a specialist coming down from-- even with the occupation, he came down from Bandung, and he said, we cannot do anything about it. We have to pray. He was in the hospital. They gave him one teaspoon of water and then with a bow a whole lot came out. After a while he was dehydrated. His skin was standing straight up. He was skin and bone. And that was just a skull with-- oh, he looked terrible, absolutely terrible.

And when the bombing started, then the nurses-- and that were nuns. He was in a Catholic hospital. And she said, I'm so sorry, but we cannot take him. He had an intravenous-- the IV. She said we cannot take him off, because he really hasn't got much chance to live. And we cannot spare a nun who can do a lot more, to risk her life for a baby but hasn't got much chance. So I was sitting there, you see, with him.

And then after my husband was gone, the baby was home and was sick again. And down the street was a family-- Dutch. But the girls were born and raised there. And their husbands worked for the company my husband was working for, so we had contact.

And, well, the kids who were born in Indonesia or any Oriental place, they took to the servants and they learn a lot, what you never will know, what I never will know. But those kids, they learn a lot. And well, she was, in the meantime, my age. And she said, we should go to a dukun. A dukun is a medicine man.

And I was living at the time with that lady on the square, before we went into the camp. And she was Catholic. She said, not in my house-- not in my house. I said, well, I'm sorry, then I have to do something else, but that is what's going to happen, because the kid is going to die. That's my only chance. If we can have it, I like to try it. So, anyway, she was there.

The dukun, finally, we went downtown. All the things we had to go through. But we finally got the guy interested, that he was coming. He was from Ambon. And he said he had a brother that was a surgeon in the general hospital. He showed it, but if it is true, I don't know.

Anyway, that guy, he came there. And Robbie, my oldest son, was lying there, sick as a dog. Didn't even-- well, he was unconscious. He didn't even react. If I say, Robbie, Robbie, he didn't open his eyes, nothing there, was just the end. So he never touched the child. And she was standing-- she said, I have to see it. I said, well, you're welcome to come up and see it.

And all he did was mumble jumble, I don't know. But that's what he did, going over. And he opened his eyes. And he mumbled jumbled a little bit more. And he helped him sit up. So he said, give him something to drink. So we gave him something to drink. Of course, the whole thing came out. He said, well, give me a jug, a jar, or whatever with water or tea. And all he did was jumble, jumble, jumble. Gave him a glass, he drank it. It never came out.

So you have to believe it or not to believe it, but if you see it in front of your eyes. So that's why some people say, oh, well, and make a joke of it. I never do. Because they can kill you. He told me-- he was the good one, but there are bad ones who can kill you in a mile distance and you don't whatever what hit you. And that happens, I know it.

And so, every day he came up. It cost him money. He had a car he didn't dare to drive. He showed it when we were downtown. He showed his car. He said, I cannot drive it, so it costs-- he never charged me a penny, not a dime. He said, save your money because you're going to need it. He said, you're going to go in a camp. And I said, oh, no crazy. Ever heard of old women in a camp? He said, believe me, he said, you're going in a camp.

And so-- wait a minute. He said that you'll go in a camp. And he came every day. And he said, you think it is over with three months. What we thought, oh, three months-- now, another three months. And then he said, it will be three to four years, you will be in a camp. And nobody believed it, but we went into a camp and we were there for four years-- four years.

He also said, don't worry, you'll come out, that we will live. You will see your husband. He said, you go home very, very unexpectedly and you will never come back. And that's right what happened. They told me the day before the ship was leaving that whatever I had to, to pack, because I was on that ship, going home. He also said I would have another son. And after that, he wouldn't say anything anymore. Well, I lost him.

That's 18 years. There's not a day I don't talk to him. But anyway, later on he gave me medicine for the baby to take, two little bottles-- number one and number two. One hour, number one, another hour, I had to go, until he went to bed at

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night. I tasted it. It had no taste, no color, no smell. To me, plain water. But he said, give him something to eat. He was starting to eat and all that. And the name was Kainama I never forget that.

And then he was still coming. And he said-- I said that we were going into the camp, after a while, after I don't know how many months, that we were going and moving in. He said, but he still need treatment. He said, why don't you go to headquarters and ask for a permit for me to get into the camp.

So that's what I did. When I was in the camp, I went there and I said I want to have a permit for the doctor for my baby and the name is Kainama. The camp commander's name was Nakama. The guy who accepted my-- who gave me the permit, I forgot his name. I forgot his name. But he thought it was a Jap coming in to see me. That's how I got the permit. Well, I never mentioned anything about that.

So then after a while, he took a liking to me-- and another one. After a while, we were settled in the camp. All of a sudden, there was a big car. And we come out. That officer coming to see the young lady and ask me about the baby. So the baby is doing fine, but we still need the treatment. And he was still coming in. And I guess, it was only a couple of days a week, not every day anymore or whatever it was. But anyway, he was coming.

And then later on, he came and he said, do you have a sewing machine? And I said, yes, I have. He said, why don't you take it to headquarters and sell it? I said, no, because from diapers we make blouses and I cannot. He said, believe you me-- all in Malay, because he was Japanese and he didn't speak Dutch, of course, but Malay. We had the conversation in Malay. At that time, I was pretty good at that.

And so I said to the people, I said, anybody wants to sell a sewing machine? We have to take it over to-- what he did. They bought it. Two weeks later, a truck comes in, goes through all the houses looking for sewing machines and took them. And we had the money. So that happened with the radio, with Oriental carpets, with quite a number of things that he said, sell. He just came and tell us.

Now, after that was all-- the rampaging was all over, we had the money. And the whole camp was out of [? cameras ?] and what have you. Then he brought me some ham-- a ham. It was for the baby. So the whole house was eating from my ham. And weeks later he came in and he said, [INAUDIBLE]. Yeah, the baby was doing better. And it was. He did better. He was walking around now a little.

And he said, how is the toko, the shop? Is anything-- said, no. And in the house, they already used me-- they said there is not enough rice, there is not enough sugar, there's not enough soap. So, I said, well, we don't have enough rice. So we got a whole load of rice we could buy. And it went with the sugar and with everything. That was a good guy.

He had been in Indonesia, like all the other officers, for over 10 years. But they were little barbers, cutting your hair under the trees and all those little jobs. But that's where the spies and the officers. So when they took Pearl Harbor, all of a sudden, they were in uniform and we had a country full of military. But we thought that-- that was working there-- that was already way years, years, years ago they planned it.

And so, then he was too good for the camp and they were going to transfer him back. I didn't know that. But then, all of a sudden, it was kind of embarrassing, but couldn't do anything about it. There was a notice from the office that I had to come to headquarters. And that's what I did, on the bicycle, of course.

So I got there and there was a Dutch girl working there as a secretary. And he said, sit down. So I sit there. And he sent her out. Oh, my god, now what. I was scared stiff. There was one thing I always had, was a checked or a plaid dress, white and blue-- white collar and red buttons, so it was the red, white, and blue, kind of. And I had bought three-- a pin, or I had-- somebody made it for me-- I asked them-- three hearts, red, white, and a blue. White was [INAUDIBLE] with the letters on it. But it was red, white-- and I always was wearing that.

So he said-- didn't say anything. And he was looking-- looking me over, and oh, bagus, that is beautiful-- I was beautiful. I was waiting and waiting a long time. And then finally, he said he was going back to Japan and he wanted to marry me. And I said, oh, no. Said, I'm married. Said, and I wait until my husband comes back.

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He said, your husband won't come back. He said, and I'll give you a good life. I said, well, I take my chances. I'm not going to marry you. I'm going to stay here and wait. So he never touched me, or the baby, or anything. What they say what happened to other people, I don't know. I just tell you what happened to me. And in our camp, there is nobody who complained about any harassment of that.

So then he said-- he said, you shouldn't wear that. I said, why not? He said, they're going to kill you for it. He said, take it off-- the red, white, and blue, the hearts, I had to take that off. So I did. We didn't shake hands or anything. And he said, OK. And I went home, never heard or seen the guy anymore. What was his name? I forgot his name.

But anyway, that is another story. And so, several stories. The closer we came to the end of the war, the worse it was getting for us. Because they took it out on us. And the Japs have said, and perhaps you have heard it from other people, that they said if they had to fight the war against the women, they never would have won the war. Because at that time, they thought they were the winning ones, you see. Correct, all those women we're feisty. We weren't giving up for nothing.

And one night-- oh, that was by the end. One day, we got our bread and everybody-- two loaves for 70. That was a smaller house I was living in. I was transferred to another house and that was behind a school. And there was a little gangway, you could scoot in sideways. And in those Indonesian houses, they are open above, with brick with holes in it for air. There was no air conditioning at that time. That came later.

And so was the school. But the room-- the rooms where the people were dying in, were connected to our little kitchen, where we were living on top of one another, sleeping there. And they said-- and you get so callous. Because, oh, oh, my son, or my husband, oh, God help me-- they were dying. After a while, even little Robbie, he said, there goes another one. We knew it. We didn't pay any attention.

There was a lot of medication in the cupboards in the school that was the hospital. And we didn't-- and they didn't get any. They went around the beds-- she's going to make it, they're not going to make it, so they didn't get-- but in fact, nobody got. The people ended up with bellies-- you wouldn't believe it-- water, water.

And when they died, we had to carry them out on the bamboo mats and the water was running out. And then the Japs took over and threw them. If one in your house died, the whole house had to come and that was the funeral. That the Japs throw it up and that was the funeral. You're not allowed to cry. The Japanese don't cry. So we were not allowed to cry.

And a lot of those-- there were all those big bellies. And that was because there was a time that we-- all we did get to eat was rock salt and cucumbers. And because you didn't get anything else, you were licking on the salt and the cucumbers. That was what ate. It was slow killing what they did, really.

Sometimes we got what they call [NON-ENGLISH]. It was sort of soup. That was all water, it was a bowl with water. And in that bowl were two or three leaves of spinach, or [NON-ENGLISH], also sort of spinach. And that was all the green-- that was your meal.

Now, every day we were getting our bread. And that was about that. And it was soggy and flat. I don't know how many loaves we did get. But everybody in the house had a chance to divide it. We did it by the measure tape. So if it was your turn, you could cheat a little, you see-- not much, but a little. Everything helps. And so that is how we divided the bread.

And Robbie-- and the sugar. We got one teaspoon of sugar, I guess, for three days. And that was [NON-ENGLISH]-- what you call [NON-ENGLISH]. That was it. For the work crew, that was working, we got paid. I guess-- how much was it? It wasn't much, $0.02 a day or something. And then we bought a cigar-- can you imagine, a cigar? We smoked it, so we were pretty sick.

And we could save our dinner-- dinner-- for breakfast. But the cigar cost $0.10. Had to work five days to get a stinking cigar. And after two-- two puffs, you had enough, so it had to last for the rest. That's how it worked.

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Then one day, we did go out and got our bread, our everything, in line. Of course, you had to go in line. And something happened in the Pacific. And all of a sudden, we had to bring the bread back to the kitchen and we didn't get anything to eat for four days. They turned off the water. We couldn't even drink the water, nothing.

Robbie was in bed and I had a little book. And I was reading. He didn't know what was going on. Neither did I. Because when I turned my page, I thought what? I had to go back and see that again, you see. We were all kind of what they called [NON-ENGLISH]-- woozy. Nobody knew from-- after four days, there was a call that we had to come to the gate.

So we had to go through the kitchen, which was, of course, at the other end of the camp. Why make it easy, when you can do it how difficult? And we had to carry it all out and pilot on the heap by the gate. Then we had to go out with the bucket, go to the river, the dirty water where everybody takes a bath, go to the toilet, whatever, that water we had to throw over the bread, what was molded in the meantime. And Sony was standing on top of it.

He said, are you hungry? And a lot of the girls fainted right there. And then that was it. Then we could go back again and we didn't get to eat that day either. So after that, we got something to eat, but not all that much.

And then, really coming to the end, that was when we were called up in the middle-- several times, we were called up in the middle of the night. You had to bring the children. Children were not allowed to cry. When you take your little kid out of the bed, you got to be. There was Sony in the middle of the night, 12 or 1:00, moon sick, and telling us all kinds of story. And we had to wait. And then he said, oh, we could go home again, nobody the wiser, but just getting that.

So we had to come to the gate and there, they were waiting for us, the High-Ho's. A High-Ho, that is a native in Indonesia who was working for the Japs. The Japanese name is High-Ho. So we were always singing, High-ho, High-ho. Well, of course, that was out. We were not allowed to sing anymore High-Ho.

But anyway, the High-Ho's were all standing there and there were Japanese standing there and they had the clippers. And one by one, had to come up there. They shaved their hair bald. In the beginning it wasn't too bad, but then the clippers got dull. And they just pulled skin, got it all off.

After that, they said, what kind of [INAUDIBLE]-- then we knew the end was in sight. What kind of attraction do the women have when the men come home? And then you had to open your mouth and all the High-Ho's passed by and they spit in it. They did about 100-- not me-- did about a hundred of the girls who got treated that way. And so, after that was all over, we could go home. And there we were, the bald headed.

But there was a [NON-ENGLISH]-- roll call-- roll call, that was, in the morning and at night. 8:00 in the morning, I think, 6:00 at night, if I'm not mistaken, roll call. Then we all had a number. So they were going-- yeah, we were all there and then we could go home.

Now, that morning here comes the Jap. Had been working all night. And had been drinking all night. His fly was open and his slippers were on the floor. He come and he couldn't believe it. He was looking and looking and he didn't see anything with a bald head. Now, what happened? What we did was, we cut our own hair. We made turbans, sewed the hair together, so everybody had sort of bangs, you see. Nobody could see you were bald. That's another one.

And also, we-- for a long time-- and I did, up until the end-- if you let go, that's the end for you, you see. But I was always in good spirits. I never doubted I wasn't going to get out. I never thought about it. I was just thinking I was going out and I was going home.

But we were all dressed up in the little makeup we had. But at 6:00, then, after a shower, and we really-- that was it for the night. We were dressed for the little-- you had to make the most of what we got. So when it was the rainy season, they let you come and drown out and rain out, that everything was spoiled. They couldn't stand it that we didn't give up.

The people who had the most trouble in the camp, that were the ones-- the heavy set ones, the fat ones. Because they

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were used to eating a lot. They lost a lot. That were the first to go. I was skinny. I was really skinny. I was drinking whipped cream to get some shape. And I didn't eat very much at that time. It didn't bother me.

But eight, nine months before, I started losing weight. And that is a wrong sign. So I was going to go downhill, I knew that. Everybody knows that. But as soon as you started losing weight, there hardly any stopping it. But I came out there.

Another thing is dogs, we had to kill our dogs. Or we had to watch them, how they killed our dogs. They beat them to death. It was terrible. Now, we had to watch that too. We had to see a lot of things. What else was there that I remember? Anything you want to ask me?

Yeah, in the beginning, you said that you didn't have to go to the camp, that you weren't forced to go. What would have happened if you just stayed in Indonesia outside of the camp?

Oh, well, with a fair skin like that, you can't go anywhere. There were half castes-- half Dutch, half Indonesian, with a color on the skin, but for the whites, where do you go?

So although, they didn't really force you into the camp, it doesn't sound like you had much of a choice. If you had stayed on the--

No, I would have less freedom and a good chance to be raped or whatever than being in the camp. But later on, you didn't have the choice, you had to go in the camp. They took you out of the house. But we decided, since we had the problem with those guys looking for me-- the windows are half-- the windows in Indonesia, the bedrooms were like in jail, with wire-- iron-- how do you call that?

Iron, like a gate?

Yeah, like this.

Bars.

Bars, iron bars for the window. Then we had-- on the inside, we did have shuttered windows. You had the half ones and then you had the other ones on top. So when you went to bed, then we closed the other ones and we left the rest open for the fresh air. Like I said, there was no air conditioning so we had to do that.

And then they were coming with the flashlights, at that time, through-- looking if they saw anybody. That's why we were sitting underneath the dining room table where they couldn't find us, until we got to camp. We scared them out, scared them away. But no, later on you didn't have the choice. We did it because of the problem. And then after that, we thought we are stronger all together, with your own.

And you never know who you can trust. They take you in, for one, you cannot get outside anymore. And then all of a sudden, they hand you down. And then you get double the treatment which you never should have had before. No.

What year did you go into the camp?

Let me see-- '39, Robert was born in '42, I think I went into that in '43.

And what year was Antoine picked up before that?

The same year, '43.

Where did they take him initially?

First to Adict, where he got sick and got in the hospital, next to my camp. After that they sent him to-- what was that? It was another camp. He was there for a long time in Adict, though. I really don't know. And he-- all of a sudden, they

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were going to be-- that is what I remember, going to be transferred to Bendo-- on a ship to Japan.

And all those people he was with, they had to go on those ships. And for some reason-- your life is all-- I believe that, it's all written out, no matter what you do. They take him out. He gets a number or whatever and they send him-- he was sick at the time-- and they send him up to Bandung. But those ships, three of them, got out of the harbor-- and I'm sure you can find it out in the history books-- they got out of the harbor, there were the Allies, and they shot them down and the all drowned. Nobody made it to Japan. Antoine was the only one up there.

Then another thing is, when I came out by proxy, I met a boy, half Swedish, half Dutch. His parents were very prominent. Hovers was the name. And his father had a factory of Ford automobiles. And his wife was Swedish. So when the trouble started, the man put everything in her name, Swedish. She stayed outside, because Swiss and Swedes, they couldn't take-- for the Red Cross.

Now, Sven, the boy I met, he was 17 years old. He had to come home because of the war. They sent him to school in Holland. But he had to come back and I met them on the ship. We became very good friends. And he said, oh, my mother will love you, because I didn't know a soul there. Because she always wanted to have a daughter. So I was there, almost like their daughter, you see. And I was there quite often. They were very nice to me. And I needed some help, because I didn't know anybody there.

And then the war broke out. He had to go in service. I don't know where. That is all lost. And she stayed outside all those years because she was Swedish. Then the last six, seven months, there she was put in a camp and the Japs took the house over. And the first thing she said when she came into camp-- there were, oh, I think 1,400 camps, with thousands of women and children-- only women-- all over the thing.

My nickname is Bepp-- that's a Dutch nickname. It's kind of for a boy and a girl. I was a tomboy hanging in the trees, a member of a soccer club, all that stuff. But anyway, she said, is Bepp Bosch here? And they said, yes, she is. And she was an old lady. She was always a little bit sickly I think. So I helped her and went over to see her, for the lonely and whatever I could do. And then all of a sudden she was taken out of the camp, back to her home again. Because that was coming to the end and they had to put her back.

Now, Antoine was taken out. They sent them up to Bandung. And that is a camp with older prominent people. First one he runs into is her husband. So when he-- when it was really over, we never got a declaration the war is over, we just walked out the camp [INAUDIBLE]. When he could go home to check on his business, but he had to come back to-- I don't know exactly how that was. But Antoine said, well, if you hear of Bepp, give her this note. That was a Lucky Strike package, and he wrote a little note on it.

And so he comes home in Jakarta and he said, Antoine was in my camp, he said. And he gave me a note, do you know where Bepp is? She said, yeah, I just got out of her camp. So the first day after the war I knew that Antoine was alive and where he was. Because they right away told me about.

Now, the people from the office, they were Indonesian and [NON-ENGLISH], they came to see me in the camp because they're looking after their employees. And they were hanging around-- yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And finally they said-- and I said, gosh, I got a note from Antoine and he is in Bandung. And I said, ah, good.

Because they had gone to the Red Cross and he was missing on the Red Cross. And a lot of people got fouled up by the Red Cross. You cannot help it. Because after four years, they met somebody else, an Englishman or an American, and they got married and left. And then the husband was coming to the club looking for his wife, who was already married and in America or in England. A lot of things happened like that.

And so I believe very strongly things are all planned for you no matter what you do. What is there? What else? There was something else. Yeah?

Can you describe some of the things. What's his name, Sony? He was the moon sick commandant?

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Oh, Sony.

Sony.

Yeah.

Was he violent? Did you ever see him--

Yeah. Yeah, yeah, he was violent.

Can you describe me for his actions?

Well, in the afternoon, if you had a chance, we went to bed. It is hot. And then he made it a point that he was jumping over the fences and looking in the windows and you got russelled out. He did a lot in big groups-- punishment in big groups. Oh, people got beaten up, yes. He came from the camp, from-- where the Aussies were. And so--

Australia?

Australia. Well, they were also prisoners in Indonesia, but he was the camp commander there. And then we did get him. So after the war, we found out. And when they took him after, I was already out of the camp. But they took him into the camp, they almost lynched him, the women. And they sent them to Singapore, where he died. They put him in a cell with 24 hour lights. They didn't let him sleep. So he got his punishment pretty well.

There was something else that I was going to say. One thing after another and then all of a sudden you have three things at the same time. What else is there? Coming out of the camp-- no. Oh, dear. Can we stop for a minute?

Was there any shooting in the camp?

No.

No shooting.

No shooting, no shooting. But we never were told that the war was over. But the gate was open and we decided to walk out. And nobody did anything so we walked out. And then my girlfriend said, oh, she found a very nice house, a big house. Her sister was there with two kids. It was also in the camp, so her sister with the two kids, she, and the girl and one kid, and I and one kid, we just walked in. It was an empty house. We moved in. And we settled down in that. We just walked out.

Before we talk about the end of the war and liberation, I just have some more questions during the war.

Yeah.

So in 1943 then, you went into the camp, you and your son, approximately.

Yeah.

OK, and that was Kramat?

Kramat.

Kramat.

Yeah.

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OK. And this was the camp where there were beautiful houses.

Yeah.

And you were just guarded by a gate.

Yeah.

And approximately--

No, and also barbed wire fences all the way around. Yeah, we were all fenced in.

And approximately, if you can remember, how many houses were in the camp? And approximately how many people?

I don't know, the houses I don't know. But I think 14-1,500, perhaps even more.

And it was just women and children?

Women and children. And then later on, in Tjideng, when we were-- there was a surgeon. That was the only man in the whole camp, a surgeon.

Do you know why he was there?

No. His wife was somewhere else. He wasn't even with his wife. But this was the only man. And it was funny, in a little room I had a picture of Antoine hanging there and then somebody came by. And I said, well, that's my husband. So little Robbie, he said-- [INAUDIBLE] that's my husband. And then after the war, every man that walked in, he said-- is that my daddy? Because he didn't know anything about his daddy. But he was a kid with a big, fat stomach.

Oh, and another thing is that as hot as it can be, or is in Indonesia, or the whole Orient, that you don't know what to do, because of the heat. It has been before the war that we were sitting out-- getting out of bed in the middle of the night because it was so hot. The mattresses were soaked wet, through. We had to hang them out to dry in the sun. After all that malnutrition that we were so cold, that we were freezing.

We had a blanket over our knees sitting out in the sun, to warm up. So cold was it, because of malnutrition. And I guess that is a part of my problem with the skin cancer. And later on, we had to sit every afternoon out in the open field-- in the dry season, of course. And we were sitting there. And the ground was hard, clay. And you had a little something. And you had to knock all those little bumps of-- getting it-- what is it? Make it fine.

Smooth.

Smooth, again, yeah. So we thought, now, well, if-- well, we hadn't got a choice, we had to do it. But if we can do-- start seeding, you know, and the watering, we might be able to pinch here and there a little to take home. But that never happened.

In the first camp, Kramat, what was a typical day like? How many hours were you allowed to sleep?

Oh, no, that was no problem. No, no, that was very regular. We could go early or late to bed or early or later. There was no-- no roll call there. But I had to be out early, because the other ones was working, so I took care of the kids. And I was always kind of early. But there was no regulation how late you could go to bed or getting up. But when we came to Tjideng, that was when it was regulated. We got our bands, our number. And we had to have the roll calls and all that, yeah.

Oh, there was an old man who came to our camp. And like I said, we kept ourselves pretty well, clean hair, make up a little, and all that. We took care of ourselves. And it was a little old man, who came to the office. And oh, he was dirty. I

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didn't see it, but I heard it. But he was so dirty. They opened a little suitcase and the lice were all over. And he came to a women's camp.

So he sit there and he was waiting that they were going to tell him something or what to do. And he said, did you expect me? And they were kind of surprised. They said, no, why? Because they were all dolled up. He thought they-- they had dressed themselves all up for that one little old man that came into the camp, yeah. Oh, we had fun times too, things to laugh about. It was not all crying. But by the end, of course, there was more crying. No, I never cried. I didn't, I don't know why.

And then another thing is kind of funny. The people there, they said, oh, my husband, oh, I can't wait to see my-- I can't wait to see my husband. Well, I could wait. I was young. And I had to take care of myself and put my foot down. They were running all over you. Your best friends are your worst enemies, believe me. The ones you never expected, they were the best help and friends you can have. But the ones you thought, now, she is my-- that was not your friend.

But anyway, so I got kind of feisty, and self-determined, and nobody was going to tell me anything. Well, and after you're married three years and you don't see him for four years, right? Didn't mean a thing to me. Really. Stone cold. Honest. And you cannot help that. He was changed too, because he had all of a sudden nobody that looked after him. He had to do that all by himself. I mean, after four years and you're young.

When we got back-- I was 27-- when I got back to Holland, you're changed so much that-- it has been rocky. But now, we're still-- 55 years. You get used to it. So, right? Still all on tape? That's going to be a tape.

Back to the beginning a little bit, in Indonesia. When you decided to go into the prison camp--

Yeah.

--what was that process like? Did you have to go register in an office? How did you get to the camp? How would they take you?

No, we just had-- we rented a car with a guy. And we put everything up that we could get up. And we just went there. And they said, well that's your room. Oh, no, no registration, no nothing. Just walk in and out.

No bureaucracy.

No, no, no, everything went very easy. I wish a lot of the things nowaday could go so easy.

How many years were you in Kramat?

Four. Robert was one year when we went in and he was five when we came out.

And so the first camp you were in, you were there from '43 until what year?

I don't know. I cannot tell you. I wasn't there-- not too long, really. But the whole thing together was four years.

Was Tjideng, was that close by?

Tjideng was on the other side of town.

Why did they decide to move you there?

Well, some people got moved four or five times, I don't know. Just get you confused, I guess. And once in a great while-- I guess, altogether I sent two cards and I did receive two cards from him, but we were allowed to write a card. But it was all programmed. You had a choice out of five sentences you could write.

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What about contact with your family, were you able to write to your parents and your sisters?

No. But because the son of the dentist, who was in America, and from America he could still write to Holland, to his parents, before that was totally taken over and his parents in a camp. He could. And so when the baby was born, we wrote to him. And it went to the censors because I had a room like this and it was from top to bottom with orchids, all kinds of orchids that people had sent me because of the baby.

So I said, oh, all those orchids-- well, of course, that was cut out. In America, you don't throw your orchids so freely around, you see. And a lot of things, that was all cut out. But then they sent it over to his father and his father gave it over to my mother. So we had still a little. But then his father was taken and he went in the army.

In the American army?

The American army, yeah. And, well, we went to a camp and we lost all track. I wouldn't even know if I had to find Antoine where to look, to start to look for. They really hustled the whole thing pretty much together. Yep, you're surprised sometimes, the things you go through. And looking back, you think, did I do that? Did that happen? Yeah, it did.

But I take most of the things kind of in stride, though. I don't get all that excited. Even now, what will be, will be. If I go on 75, so how many years-- I don't know. I contracted leukemia, I'm going with that now for 14 years. I don't think about it. I take my pills. And that's about it.

What about your parents during the war? Later, did you find out how your parents and your sisters--

Oh, yeah, that was-- how did that happen? How did we find our parents? I don't know.

Were they-- did they stay in Rotterdam throughout the entire war.

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

How were they treated?

Well, there was nothing. And like I said, with my sisters living at home, and one was under the Gestapo, there was no freedom. You had to watch very careful what you were saying. You couldn't watch the programs on the radio you wanted. No it was a rough time. Because there were no shoes. I remember both my sisters had wooden soles with what you have in your door, [NON-ENGLISH]. There on the side.

Brass.

Yeah, the brass, what do you call that?

On the shoes with--

Can I go? Yeah, I guess. Here, those things. I forgot the name of them.

Hinges?

OK, any time.

Now, after, when the war was over, like I said, we walked out the camp and my girlfriend found that place, where we went in with her sister and the kids, and all together. It was when the war was over. I heard from Antoine, but he couldn't come home. They kept him in Bandung and he had to run an ambulance. Because the fighting started with the natives, whatever. And he wanted me to come to Bandung.

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But we were settled there pretty well. You had the little stores, where I knew how I could get things. And I didn't feel like going up. And I had an funny feeling about going to Bandung. Then his colleague was there too from the office. He was a half caste, I think. And his wife, and the little girl, and they had-- they got a home, a house in Bandung.

And so they said, well, why don't you come? I forgot the name, but her and the baby and you and the baby. And then we sit it out in Bandung until we can go home. Well, I decided I didn't. I said I got everything I want here, I wait until you come down. I don't feel right about it and I'm not.

So she went with the baby. First of all, the train was stopped in the tunnel, going up. And whatever she had, they were robbed of, perhaps even raped. I don't know, I cannot tell you that. But anyway, it was a mess. By the time they got to Bandung, it was all fine and dandy and they live in the house. The men are at work, running an ambulance, to get the wounded from the front.

And the baby is-- well, it was about that time almost four or five years old, playing in the front yard. And the mother is there. And somebody comes by in a motorbike, throws a hand grenade. Killed the girl and the mother is full of shrapnel. See, otherwise my son would have been there too. Sometimes, you have the feelings-- don't. No matter what, can stand on their head, if you feel like, that don't do it. And that's what happened.

So then shortly after that, Antoine came home. It was really nice, but not-- like some people said, oh, I cannot live without my husband. Well, I don't know, at that time I could live with him or without him. So too many things have happened and changed and what can we do about it now. There was something else. I forgot that in the meantime. My brain--

Something about the camp?

Yeah.

About any of the commandants or your friends?

Did you work in the camp?

No-- yeah, I had to do some-- what they call [NON-ENGLISH], the heavy work, in a group like that. Then we got called on that we had to do the washing in the hospital, or putting up barbed wire fences, or collect-- oh, I worked for quite some time in the community kitchen. And well, later on-- first we had to take care of ourselves, but later on, they took over. And we had the community kitchens. And I worked in there, the big drums and so forth.

It's pretty heavy work. And I had to wash a lot of vegetable in cold water. I think that's my arthritis, what I now have to cope with. That's what I-- and then we had-- once in a while, we had a [NON-ENGLISH]. That means that we all had to get out of the house and sit out in the open in the sun, with the babies. And they let you sit there all day. And the Japs went through all those rooms and houses. In Tjideng was all small, small houses, small-- there was a big part that was the Red Light district. And people were living in there too.

And-- no, I forgot it. What was it, what I was going to say? What was the last what I said?

You were talking about the heavy workload that you did and then the Japanese came in.

Oh, yeah. And then they went to all those-- whatever you had, they opened it up. Some people had small trunks with beautiful linen, or whatever, that's what they took. And they just put their swords through it, that it all had holes in it, or ink, threw ink over it. And then there was that you had to get all your money given away to the Japs. And when you went to the bathroom there, you found $100 bills flying around, because they didn't dare to come up with the money. They didn't dare to keep the money. And that went right through the toilet.

Why do you suppose they did that then? They made you give them money and then they threw it away?

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No, the people themselves, they didn't-- I didn't do it, because I had it all in my-- but other people didn't know that. And they didn't dare to come up that they had that kind of money. And I know there are some beatings have taken place, but I really cannot tell you exactly how. I forgot a lot of that. So I don't want to commit myself and make some funny story about it, because I don't really know. But I know there have been beatings, people have been beaten up.

Were you ever beaten?

No, no. But I came out of the camp with a bad kidney. What happened, I really don't know. I was sick after the war. And then I got a medication. And they gave me a double dose of arsenic. So I was getting sicker and sicker. And finally, they sent me home. I got a ship to go home.

And then I got pregnant. And the baby was born. I remember I had a lot of trouble the last six weeks with my back. It was very painful. Before that, no problem. And we were on the third floor. And I know the morning-- the night before the second baby was born, my mother was there. And I was a tap dancer. And so she walked down and I tap danced her down, three flights.

But anyway, the baby was born and nobody knew it. And then Antoine got a job in Curacao, the Dutch West Indies. Because in Holland, it's hard to get a home and everything was kind of-- and he's sort of a traveler, I guess. So we were going to Curacao. And when I was there, the baby was a year, my kidney had to come out.

It was all gone, all pus. And urine that was tapped off was there already, said the doctor, for years. So I must have gotten that in the camp, but I really cannot tell you what-- something must have happened. I don't know, but then I don't remember, so I don't want to lie about it. And so the kidney came out. And it was in '48. I'm still going on the other.

In either of the camps, do you know if there were any Jews in either of the camps?

I don't know. I don't know. I never paid any attention to what people were, if they were Muslim, or Jew, or whatever. I know what I am, but I couldn't care less about the rest. People are good. But like I said, your best friends are usually not your friends. I don't know if you've experienced it, but I did. And the people you least expect-- and that worked out the best.

Did you have any news from Europe? Within your camp, did anybody hear about anything that was going on?

No.

Anything about what they were doing in concentration camps?

No. Because first, we had a barbed wire fence and we thought that was it. And we had to put up another and another. So we had, one, two, three. But by the end of the war, I know then the natives came by and start telling us things, what happened out in the Pacific, not in Europe. I didn't know anything there. That's what we heard lots later. But before that, no.

I'd like to go back a little if you don't mind--

Yeah.

--back to Rotterdam again.

Yeah, sure.

Now you were there until 1939.

Yeah.

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While Hitler was rising in Germany in the early '30s, were there any changes in Rotterdam, beginning in the early '30s? Did you notice any differences?

No. And I don't think anybody knew really what was going on. And then there was-- like they go now to the shopping malls, the teenagers. And the girls here and the boys, and then you're flirt. But that was always heil-- but Hallelujah, we didn't know what heil was. It was just the style to do. Until all hell broke loose and that was the end of that. But that was just for the teenagers.

When were you first aware of what was-- of Hitler, of what he was doing there?

I think when the dentist-- his wife and son came over from Vienna to stay in Holland with him.

Do you remember what year that was?

Yeah, must be '37 or '38. I think '38, that was the year. And his brother and his wife, Robbie and Camilla, they had been there already, but went straight through, after two weeks, to America. And then there was a sister, Liesl. But she was in America and she came back to Holland. And then to Germany after that. I've never heard-- oh, she went back to England, I think. The war years she spent in England. But they were always Jewish.

And the dentist's wife, she was Turkish, like I said-- very, very highly educated. Always went to the Catholic Church. And she left a letter for her son, in case he was coming back. And said that my sister was a good-- would be a good wife for him and that's what happened.

Did you hear about Kristallnacht?

Who?

In Germany, Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass.

No.

Did you ever hear of that in Holland?

No, I've never heard that. There are a number of things, of course, that happened during the war I don't know anything about.

Was your neighborhood mixed Jews and non-Jews?

First, I am born in the center of Rotterdam, right across the town hall. The town hall is still standing. And my father always said-- he said, oh, it was very easy, you opened the window, and he said, I just had to holler your name, and everybody knew. But that was it.

Then we moved out to another neighborhood that was mostly Christian, I think. We never pay any attention. I don't pay attention to religion nor color. I have a special-- in Curacao I have friends that are Black. They're all better than I am. And there are a lot of Dutch or white people I don't want to be associated with. It has nothing to do with it.

And if anybody who has a will can get out whatever problem they have, but they have a chip on the shoulders I think. And, for example, the astronauts, they go up and they go up. Now, finally, there we go, up again. And that has three whites or four whites, one Oriental, and one Black. Big deal. The first Black goes up, nobody mentioned the first Oriental go up. Well, hell, you can see that guy is Black. They don't have to tell me he's Black. Why do that? That's crazy. If people would forget about that, it would be a lot easier.

And you have also your problem about-- that has nothing to do with this-- about abortion. Well, I'm not-- I'm against it and I'm a Catholic. I would never do that. But that doesn't mean that I can tell everybody else what to do. That's my

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business, not yours. You make it out for yourself. But everything is so regulated-- everybody. Oh, god.

I wanted to ask you about your sister, when she was helping the doctor with the messenger.

Yeah.

Was she involved in any political organization? Was there a name of that group that she was--

That I cannot tell you. I just cannot tell you that. That was a big group that she was working with. What the name was, I don't know. And the ones that were going to interrogate her, I think they were the ones who had been in that same group. So she said, well, how about you? Well, she couldn't tell the truth. So that's how she got out of it.

Was she under surveillance-- and in fact, your entire family-- was the Gestapo watching them through the whole war?

Yeah, for the rest of the war, there was always a guy there. And like I said, if she went to the bathroom, he was waiting in front of the door.

Were they able to work, either your parents or your sisters?

Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. What did she do after he-- did she have another-- I don't know, I really don't know. I don't know what she did after that. Well, she did go out on the bike. And of course, she and my sister had to go out and find food-- let's go out in the country to the farmers and see if they had some food to sell or give, on the bicycle, but they were always followed-- never free.

And you had no contact with them?

Oh, no. No, all that, I heard when I came back. But I never knew during-- the minute I went into the camp and the Japs occupied Indonesia, I don't know. Everything was blocked out.

Can you describe the first day the Japanese occupied Indonesia? What you were doing and what happened?

I remember-- no I don't. But I remember Pearl Harbor. That's how it all started, of course. And that day, I remember we were sitting there. And my friend, her baby, was first-- it was her birthday. It was a party. And Robbie, I think he was even in the hospital, if I'm not mistaken, at that time. He was in the hospital, so we didn't go there. No, that's all kind of a blank, really. I spent a lot of time in the hospital with the kid.

Oh, another thing is, I made-- before the war, when he was born, we made movies, black and white, when he was born and baptized, and when he was out of the hospital. We thought he looked good. When you look at it, it was terrible, now. And they took the cameras, of course, everything.

The Japanese?

Yeah.

But one day we had to go to the field to set out in the field, and I took the movies. I have the movies. And I had a marble bag. I put them all in, bind it around my waist and between my legs. And then we had to go past two Japs with the pistol on you. If I had anything-- no, I didn't have anything. Robbie knew I had. He didn't say anything. He almost fainted. He was white as a sheet, because he knew I was going to be killed, you see.

I said, no. Once you say no, you cannot say yes again. So I kept it. And I kept the movies. And Robert has them now on-- I have given them to them, to Robert. And he has them on video. He send them out to take the back-- a lot of it got lost over all the years and we couldn't protect them really, from the climate or whatever. So whatever we brought back, he has it all sorted out and what. From earlier-- Curacao to-- [PLACE NAME] [SIGHS]. Yeah. Those things happen. Don't know what to do, but it will be.

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That got tough, you know. Certain things that people say-- how can you do that? Oh, I can. After a while-- but they also stirred up--

Do you have any memories of any of the camps that you were in? Any very positive memories or terrible violence that you witnessed?

Well, it was not a riot, but they did it in very slow motion. The Orientals take their time-- little by little.

Do you mean when they were killing-- to kill people?

Well, I don't know if they killed anyone in my camp. The other camps, of course, I cannot speak for. But they did not do that. But the treatments they gave you over the years, to keep you on edge constantly. You never knew what was hanging over your head. Got to a lot of people. Probably killed a lot of people too. But like I said, I never thought about it that way. I always had the plan I was going back to Holland.

I didn't-- if Antoine was coming back, I didn't even-- well, I tell you, you get in a state in of mind in that camp there's nobody that count, but you and your child. And the heck with the rest. You only try to survive yourself. If you don't do that, nobody else will. And your husband comes in second place, because he is not there, you don't even know what happened to him. So why worry about him. He might have been dead. So that is wasted energy and what have you. You don't do that.

And that was what most people-- after-- when the war was over, they came over, they brought these eggs and food. And anyone around what I know is, they say, oh, the men, well, we see them later. Food was more important than their husband coming back. Your priorities change an awful lot.

And that was with most of them, really. Some of them made a lot of baloney. I cannot see that-- nobody my age and in my group could see that either. If something had happened to your husband, well that's a shocker, but that's not going to kill you anymore. Not when-- you live together and something happened, it's different. You don't see him for four years, you hardly know how he looks like. No, I mean, there were a lot of people made a lot of fuss about it. And I think that was a lot of baloney.

Why did you decide to go to Indonesia?

Well, I tell you, what a teacher can do to you. That's why special grammar school is very important, what kids get there. That plants a seed. And that did it with me. In grammar school, we had a teacher who loved to travel. And in the vacation, he went to Italy or Spain. Every kid in the room got a postcard. And he also was talking about Indonesia. None of my family have ever been there. None of anyone I know have ever been there. He hadn't even been there. But the way he talked about it, that made me-- I want to go to Indonesia.

What was it that really appealed to you?

The servants. You didn't have to do a darn thing. You just sit there and tell everybody what to do. Well, of course, I wasn't used to that at home. If I wanted something, I had to do it myself. So, no, I didn't know-- then there also was the depression. I guess I wanted to get out of that environment, as a starter. And I thought if I don't go away-- if I don't go far enough, I drag it with me.