

Today is October 16, 2002. We're at the apartment of Joanna Hochman. My name is Peter Ryan, interviewer. And Anne Grenn Saldinger is doing the videotaping.

Could we begin by my asking you where and when you were born?

Yes, of course. I was born in Vienna, in 1918, in the 2nd district of Vienna, in Hollandstrasse Number 1, at home, in my parents' home.

Now, this was an apartment?

It was an apartment, yes.

How big was it?

It had five big rooms, two bathrooms, and a maid's room, and a kitchen, and a big hallway. It was a large apartment, beautiful. It was right next to the Donaukanal that goes through Vienna. The Donau doesn't go through Vienna, but the Donaukanal goes through Vienna.

How many people were in your family?

There were my parents and my brother.

What were your parents' names?

My father's name was Julius Lustig. And my mother's name was Hedwig Lustig, maiden name, because they were second cousins.

And your brother? What was his name?

My brother's name was Xaver Friedrich Lustig.

Was he older or younger?

He was eight years older.

Do you remember your early schooling?

Yes, I do.

Could you describe it?

Well, my first day at school, we were supposed to draw an apple. I remember that. The school was also in the 2nd district, which was always more or less-- I think it had to be the ghetto before, but I'm not sure of that, because it was mostly Jewish people living in the area, which made me very uncomfortable.

Was this downtown?

Well, it was next to the 1st district, which would be downtown. And I was a good pupil. The four years of my grammar school--

Did you like school?

I don't remember that. It didn't cause a great impression, I think, on me. [LAUGHS]

You started at age five?

Six.

Six. Was it a mixed school?

No, it was a girls' school.

A girls' school. Did it have a religious [INAUDIBLE]?

Religion was taught separately in Austria. Austria was a Catholic country, but religion was taught separately in schools.

And this was a public school?

This was a public school.

For girls?

For girls.

What did your father do?

My father was on the Commodity Exchange. He imported grain by the railroad wagon size. He imported major, major quantities of grain. He had a very big business.

Where did the grain come from?

It came partly from Argentina. There's corn that came from Argentina. I don't know where wheat and all the others came from.

You see, I was too young when my father died to even be able to talk to him about his business. I only heard him talk on the telephone. But he was born in Wartberg, which was partly on the Hungarian border. And most of his conversations were in Hungarian, so I could not follow what he was doing. I know that he was making a lot of money and that he was very well recognized at the Commodity Exchange.

There was only one woman at the Commodity Exchange at that time. That I know. And then we had another business. We had a liquor factory where he had two partners. He had one partner in the grain business, but he had two partners in a liquor factory and a big ranch in Styria, near Graz, near Bruck an der Mur, which is in the southern part of Vienna. I know I am stammering. It's very bad. [LAUGHS]

No, no, no.

I'm trying to explain the things well in English, but not everything is very easy to be explained.

Were they a religious family?

As long as my father lived, we were. Religious after my father died, mm-mm.

How old were you when he died?

10.

What did he die of?

He had surgery. His appendix was taken out. And he died of blood clots in his lung-- embolism.

How old was he then?

46.

Was he in World War I?

He was not in the war because I don't think he was, first of all, physically not in the condition, and second, since he was importing this grain and he was doing-- he had the factory. Things were necessary for-- and the ranch, especially-- were necessary for the war effort. He was not in the war.

Now, you say a ranch. What did the ranch--

Well, we had 200 cows on that ranch. And we had pigs. And we had chickens. And we had all kinds of things. And this was all for nutritional purpose, to feed people. So I guess that's why he was not in the war.

I cannot tell you because I was born just before the war ended, half a year before the war ended. So I cannot tell you very much about that time of my parents. My brother was born in Klagenfurt because my parents were living in Klagenfurt at the time. They had their business there. And then he transferred to Vienna.

Was that in Austria, too?

Yes, in canton. these are districts in Austria. These are counties in Austria. Canton is one county, like it would be Alameda County or something, but much bigger than that.

Do you know how long your parents had been in Austria?

My mother was born in Vienna. And my father was born in Old Austria, in Wartberg, which was Slovakia.

And how about their parents?

My grandmother was also born in Czechoslovakia. And my grandfather was born-- I don't know where he was born. He worked in Budapest. He was general director of a factory in Budapest, Hungary. I showed him to you on this picture, yes.

Now, when you were going to school, did you have friends who were both Jewish and not Jewish?

No, I had just one girlfriend, who was Jewish. But I had friends in the country, where we had the house and the factory later on, who were not Jewish at all. They were all Catholics, yes. Because there were only three Jewish families in that area where we had the factory. And there were about 200--

[PHONE RINGS]

--people living there. Oh, my God. I'm sorry. Can you interrupt?

Sure.

Because I never know what it is.

This is going to be with a 92-year-old woman. [LAUGHS] OK.

You had friends who are both Jewish and not Jewish?

Well, mostly my friends were not Jewish.

OK. You mentioned that you lived in the 2nd district and that it was mostly Jews.

Yes.

And you said you were uncomfortable.

Yes.

Why?

Because there was a lot of Hasidim there. And there was a lot of antisemitism in Vienna at all times, way before everything happened. And I was afraid, I guess. And they were saying that for Pesach the Jews drink the blood of the Christians. And that stayed with me till today. It stays with me that I cannot believe that they said that. And it wasn't a comfortable feeling for me.

When I was 12, we moved to the 19th district, where we had this big house which had 14 apartments. And I felt like a different person because I was in the world. And in the summer, when I went to our factory, I also didn't feel that. I felt comfortable with other people. I don't know why I felt--

There wasn't antisemitism in the country?

Oh, yes.

There was?

There was, but it was different. It was very different. I never felt the same way. I cannot tell you the reason for that because I have never figured it out.

How aware were you of your own Jewishness?

I beg your pardon?

How aware were you of being Jewish?

I didn't care about that very much.

Was it talked about at home at all?

At home, yes, and as long as my father lived, we were holding all the holidays and things like that. And it didn't mean much to me.

How about antisemitism? Were you the recipient of any of that?

Not that time, particularly. It just was like it was in the air, that you felt you were different. And I didn't want to feel different. I would have been gladly a Catholic at the time, just not to feel the way I felt. That's very honest what I am saying right now.

Was anyone reminding you that you were different?

I knew that our maids were Catholic. And they took me to church. That's the only thing I could say that happened at that time.

How did you feel about going to church?

I was interested in other religions. I was always interested in other religions. I went to many different churches. Even now-- I went to a Baptist church with this Black woman because I'm interested what people say. They all say the same thing, and it's all the same. And I was very much aware that women were not-- were treated differently in the Jewish temples, that they were separated from the men.

When I was older, when I was 15, I gave it up totally because I believe in God. I pray every night. But I'm doing my own thing the way I feel it. I have never felt the need to go, to be taught religion the way other people do. Maybe it's very bad for me because it's much harder to live like that and if you go in and you believe all the things they tell you. But I cannot do that. I'm a bad Jew.

Was your family political at all?

No.

When you were a girl, were you identified by others as a Jew?

You mean like in school, when I was older? No. I was always mixed up with a lot of Jewish people there. The school I went to later was a private school owned by a Jewish lady. But there were Christians also. And there were fights later on when things started to get-- then I got in a big fight with somebody there, in a fistfight.

I grew up with boys mainly. And so I was very tough outside because I had always to defend my position I felt. The boys were partly Jewish because they were partly sons of our partners, but also others. And so I was always on the defensive, I think. It sounds very strange when I say that now [LAUGHS] because I was so young then, that I felt the same way that I feel now it is, more or less.

How about your brother? Did he have any bad experiences that you knew of?

No. We loved each other. We were not close. We were two different generations.

Yes. So things went along OK until your father died when you were 10?

Yes-- well, OK, yes. I cannot say that I was-- I don't remember being a very happy child like some people maybe. I was always a very serious child.

Serious?

Yes. I have a very serious side, and I have a very easygoing side because I got the heritage this way from my father and from my mother, who were very different.

Your father was the serious one?

My father was the very serious one. And I would never have gotten along with my father, I think, because he was-- I had an experience with him when I was very young and--

What kind?

That he hit me for a stupid thing when I was about five or six years old.

Do you remember what you did?

Yes, I remember what I did. I locked myself in the bathroom with all my dolls. And I didn't come out because I had a-- I

was never brought up by my mother like my brother was because I had a-- you would say a governess.

Yeah, or a nanny.

Or something like a nanny, who brought me up till I was five. And then she wanted to leave because she-- to me, she seemed ancient. I don't know how old she was. She wanted to get married. And I was supposed to have somebody else.

A lady was going to teach me French. And I didn't want to meet this new lady. And I locked myself in the bathroom, and I didn't come out.

And my father said, come out. You won't be punished. And I came out, and he hit me. And I never, never came the relationship like it had been before that.

He gave me everything. He gave me jewelry. He gave me presents. He took us into his bed every Sunday, my brother and myself, and told us stories about a family with millions of children. But my relationship was damaged because I didn't trust him.

He broke his word.

Yes. Yes. I've been very, very-- many times, the word was broken when I was a child. And I have never trusted people very much after that. I just told that to one of my clients this Sunday, so it's back in my mind because she's a sociologist. And she wanted to hear about children and how they were treated in my generation because--

Now, are you saying that you weren't too close to your mother because you didn't really spend a lot of time with her?

I loved my mother more than anything in the world. But I wasn't that close because I had somebody in between.

Right. Did you get close to these people who were in between?

I must have gotten close to the first one very much, but I don't remember.

You wouldn't have locked yourself in the bathroom if you hadn't been.

Yes. And to the second one, we had a good relationship then. She stayed with me for 10 years. She taught me French and piano, which I never learned because I had no talent for it.

And I always wanted my mother. I admired my mother. She was beautiful. She could sing. She could play the piano. She was very elegant. I would have liked to be like her, but I'm not. I'm much more like my father's sisters.

Your father's sisters?

Yes.

[LAUGHS] What are they like?

He had seven sisters who he all married off. My father was a self-made man. He started when he was 14. He married the seven sisters off. They were tall, strong. Each one had a business in Graz, in Styria. They were married. They were very loud. They wanted to be close to me, but I never wanted to be close to them.

No?

No. I was close to my mother's family. I loved them. My mother had a sister and three brothers. I was close to those.

She had a sister and three brothers?

Mm-hmm.

So you had lots of cousins and uncles and aunts?

I had many cousins from my father's side. But, like I said, I wasn't close to that side of the family, especially not after my father died. And on my mother's side, I had only three cousins. And one is still alive, and I'm in touch with him. He lives in Puerto Rico. And he talks to me every week at least once. And he says we are the only ones left of this generation.

How did you take your father's dying?

I was homesick when he died. I had gone to the hospital the day before. I gave him a card. I made a nice card for him. He gave me 10 shillings, which I used to buy a book because I was an avid reader at the time.

And I was home in bed. And my mother came and said, oh, it's terrible what happened, Hanni. Because they called me Hanni. Nobody called me Joanna. And I said, oh, no, Mutti. It's going to get better. You will see. And she said, it can't get better because he's dead. And I embraced her. And I thought from that day on I wanted to take whatever I could on my shoulders and do for her.

You felt that you were elevated in your sense of responsibility?

Yes, that I should be there because my brother had a girlfriend already. And he was very much involved with that. And I thought that it was my turn to take care of her.

Would she let you do that?

Up to a point. One time we were outside of Vienna. We were in a sanatorium because she was a very nervous person. She had migraines. And she was, I always felt, not the strongest person in the world. And one day I came into her room, and she had a gun in her hand. And I thought she was going to commit suicide when I was about 11. It was a terrible experience for me. And one time I was in--

How did she explain the gun to you?

I don't know whether she explained it at all. And one time I was next to her bedroom. I was sleeping next to her, and I thought she was going to have a heart attack. And I thought she was also going to die. So I thought I have to be there as much as I can.

Did you go to her that night when you--

No.

No?

No.

What made you think she was having a heart attack?

Because she said she was having a heart attack. Like I said, she was a very nervous lady. Nobody knew this because on the outside-- like on the outside, I'm a tough person. She was not a tough person. She was a charming person. And people loved her. And she was giving performances. And she was singing and all that. But the other side was--

The dark side people didn't see?

--was that she was afraid. She had a boyfriend then who was a Catholic. He was a dentist. But I don't remember exactly when that started. It was never an open relationship like you would have nowadays. They were trying to pretend they were just friends or whatever. I was the happiest person in the world because I thought she was happy.

And she was happy?

She was happy, yes, for years, till after-- all this time, when I was about 18, things got to be very bad in Germany and in Austria. And he left her, I think because she was Jewish. He found another woman who was not in Germany. And that was bad again. It was a very bad time. I tried to convince him to come back, but you cannot convince somebody for something like that.

You tried to convince him to come back?

Yeah.

Did you like him?

I liked him because he made her feel good. He wouldn't have been my type of a person. We made fun of him because he talked like people used to talk 100 years ago in Vienna. He was a society person.

Formal?

Yes. But I liked him all right because, like I said, she was much better while he was there.

When did you become aware that there was difficulties coming from Germany?

I was aware of political difficulties since I was 13 years old.

You were very what?

Since I was 13, I knew there were political difficulties in Austria also. There was a big turmoil in Austria all the time between all the parties that were-- there were shootings. And there were all kinds of things happening.

Did you witness any of that?

I did not-- I saw just-- that was years later-- bullets in the fence we had in the country because there was shooting there. But we left when that happened and went back to Vienna. And there were shootings in the big buildings where the Social Democrats lived, between the Social Democrats and the Christian party, and also the Nazi Party, which existed already at that time.

And you were aware of this?

I was aware of that.

Did it frighten you?

Not really. You see, I read a lot about the revolution in Russia. And I was somehow prepared for all kinds of things. I don't know how to explain that really.

Were you interested in history? Is that why you knew about Russia and [INAUDIBLE]?

I was interested in history, very much so. Yes. I read a trilogy of a woman-- I don't know the name anymore-- who wrote about the revolution in Russia, what happened to her family. And I had a repeat performance in Vienna after the Nazis came in because they came to our house-- five people with guns.

And they searched in our house. And they were playing with a gun. They wanted to frighten. And it was exactly the same scene that I had read in the book. It made me very cold about that whole situation. This is much later. This is much later.

Now, when there was trouble earlier in Austria between the parties, what party were you sympathetic to?

Social Democrat. But I was not in a party because I was too young. I couldn't even join a party.

Yes, but you had an awareness?

Yes, I had.

So Dollfuss was assassinated in '34?

Yes.

And you knew about that?

Of course. Schuschnigg came in. Schuschnigg was a very good man.

Now, he was a Social Democrat?

No, he wasn't. But he was a good man.

OK. Tell me why you say that.

Because he was trying to save Austria from the Germans, [LAUGHS] which he couldn't, of course. I remember his last speech on the radio. These were these old-fashioned radios one had. This is all later. This is all when I was already 20 and almost-- but I was aware all the time.

And my brother and I, we wanted to leave Austria before these things occurred. And my brother had a visa for Argentina. And our partner, who was Jewish, wouldn't give out the money so he could leave in time. My brother was married at the time. He had two little children.

And when the Nazis came, they took him to the police. And he had to sign that he was going to leave in 30 days, which he could because he had a visa. He left with a two-year-old and a four-month-old baby, with 100 shilling, which was maybe \$10 would be to Argentina. My mother gave him some of her jewelry. And he left in April of 1938.

Now, you didn't have a visa?

No, I didn't.

And your mother? Did she want to stay or leave?

Well, her brothers-- I wanted my mother to leave before the elections happened in Vienna. I wanted her to take the jewelry and some money and go to Switzerland and wait for what the elections would do. And she said no because she was still from the old school. She believed in the emperor still. And she believed that her duty was to vote. She wouldn't want to see what was happening. But I saw it because I had friends who told me get out because you know what's coming. So I couldn't leave. I was underage.

How old were you then?

I was 20. But I was still underage. I had to be declared-- I got married in 1938 to my first husband and had to be

declared being of age then. But that was only in April of 1938, when I was 20 years old.

And they had already come in?

They had come in on March 11.

Now, before that, what happened to the businesses after your father had died?

My father had a partner in one business, like I said. And my mother became a silent partner of the business because we had a lot of money in this business. And my father had picked out a husband for the daughter of our partner. And he came into this business. And he was running the business.

I never liked the man, not from the first day I met him. And he cut down my mother's income, of course. And he didn't give her the money to be able to get out. So he's dead now.

Tell me why you didn't like him from the first day.

Because he had eyes that were so hard. I get these things, Peter. I get the first feeling for a person. If I try to convince myself that I'm wrong, I was always right the first time.

You have good intuition?

My instinct. Mm-hmm.

So really, the business kept on.

The business kept on. Our income was reduced. The other business was run anyway by one of the partners who was an engineer.

The liquor business?

The liquor business. And we had a director in that business who ran the liquor business. And the partner ran the rest of the ranch and all these sort of things.

And were you getting an income from that?

Yes, but my mother gave that income to my brother because he got married so early. He worked in our business in Vienna, where he got a few hundred shilling. So my mother gave him the income from the liquor business.

Can you see me? [LAUGHS] It's really hard. These are hard things to talk about because these things made me very, very angry.

Angry? Who were you angry at?

At the partner in Vienna. Some--

[PHONE RINGS]

May I?

We were talking about the partner in Vienna.

Yeah, the partner in Vienna.

And you were talking about his eyes?

Yes. [LAUGHS] His eyes were piercing eyes. He was not a good person. His wife committed suicide in Montevideo. His mother-in-law committed suicide in Montevideo. So I can't believe that he was a very good person. My first instinct was right.

Why was it hard for your mother to think about leaving?

My mother was afraid of leaving. She was afraid to cross the ocean. She wouldn't have gone because somebody told her once she would die by drowning. She was superstitious.

And then I guess the older generation-- she wasn't old at the time. She was 48 years old-- was not ready to see what really went on. She wasn't the only one. There were a lot of these people. And they were hanging on to their money and to the lifestyle that she had had.

And she couldn't take the money out. My father had his life insurance in Switzerland, and the partner had told my mother to bring it back. If I would have been there, I would never have brought it back, you see, because I inherited my father's business sense. And I guess it was there early, but--

He did bring it back?

Yes. And then everybody blamed me that I wanted to leave my mother because I wanted to go also to South America, you see, with my husband because we had planned that before all this happened.

That you were going to get out of Austria?

That we were going to get out.

Where did you meet your husband?

My husband? In Vienna.

In Vienna?

Yes.

In what kind of a situation?

In the streetcar [LAUGHS] through a friend. I finished high school. And then my mother thought that a woman should-- there she was modern thinking. A woman should have a profession.

And my father had bought a pharmacy for one of her brothers. And my brother was supposed to study to become a pharmacist, but he didn't want to do that. He studied different things. And he let it go because he wanted to get married.

So I thought it was my duty to go in there. But I had gone to a school where I didn't learn Latin, so I couldn't study pharmacy. But they had a major drug license also, so I could have become a druggist.

A druggist?

Druggist, which was not such a high-class thing, but I could have run the business maybe there. So I went to work in the pharmacy to learn the business. And I started to become a druggist. I worked for a year and three months, four months. Then I got thrown out by the Nazis, of course.

So I went to the business on the streetcar. No-- yeah, on the streetcar. I had just started working there. It was in October

'36. '36, yes. And I went on the streetcar with the daughter of one of our partners. And I met a friend on the streetcar who was with a friend. [LAUGHS] And so I got introduced on the streetcar. And then they called in the evening. And they said whether we wanted to go out. And we said yes. And that's how it started.

And my first husband had a doctor's in economics, but he had no job. It was very hard to find a job. And he didn't want to work with his father, who had a lumber business in Salzburg. So he was looking for a job in Vienna at the time, which he found also there-- very low-paid, but.

What kind of job?

A job as an economist for a company. I think it was a-- don't-- what kind of a business it was. I can't remember that now.

OK.

He got 250 shillings, which was very little money [LAUGHS] for a doctor of economics. I have a niece who is an economist, and she's a doctor of economics. And she's president of the university in Puebla, Mexico. So things are different.

She worked for the Brookings Institute. And she worked for the World Bank. And her husband is an economist. And he worked for the World Bank. Things are different. A doctor's in economics in Vienna meant nothing. See? It gets all mixed up, this whole story because--

Was your first husband Jewish?

Yeah.

Would it have mattered to you?

No.

You would have married whoever you felt--

I fell in love with. I didn't believe in money that much, and that's why I don't have any right now. But I believed in love, [LAUGHS] which is a costly commodity.

[LAUGHTER]

Where had you hoped to go in South America?

We hoped to go to Argentina at the time because my brother had a visa. We got a visa also to Argentina, but it expired because I couldn't-- I was the last one in my family to be in Vienna in 1938.

And we never separated our monies. And I would have had to pay taxes for all of us in order to be able to leave Vienna, and also the extra tax which was put on people after the Kristallnacht. And all our money was frozen.

So I was between the wall and whatever. I couldn't move. And it's a very complicated story how I moved in the end.

Tell us the story.

Well, I was there, when I said, on the Kristallnacht. Before that, my husband had a very good friend who went to Yugoslavia with his wife. And he knew the Consul of Uruguay in Yugoslavia.

I got a passport illegally in Vienna. I paid for that. And my husband did, too. And we sent the passports to Yugoslavia,

also for our partners and for about 10 people. And the consul gave the visa, and they got sent back to Vienna. So I had a passport. But I still couldn't leave because I hadn't paid the taxes.

And then came the Kristallnacht, and they took my husband. And he was gone for a whole week. I didn't know where he was.

He was arrested?

He was arrested. I was taken to a barrack, an SA barrack, and my friend who lived with me, who had married my cousin. And we were held for the whole day there.

We were supposed to sort bottle caps, and the old women were supposed to wash the floor. And my friend and I said we're not going to do that. We're going to do the floors. And we did, the whole day.

We talked about that sometimes. She never wanted to remember this, that she was Jewish. She married a Christian here in this country. And she never wanted to remember it.

Where was that that you were taken?

To an SA barrack. SA was the people that wore the yellow uniforms, compared to the SS, which wore the black uniforms. That's how I had the problem with the last interview, you see, to try to explain the difference between that.

And they were German Nazis or Austrians?

No.

Austrian.

They were whoever they were. I have no idea who they were. There were a whole bunch of them. They came to my apartment. And they hit my cousin, who was the husband of my friend.

And our maid was there. And she said that she and her husband lived in the-- that it was her apartment. Otherwise they would have taken our keys and would have thrown out all the furniture, like they did with other people in the building.

They said where were our husbands, and we said we didn't know. My husband had run into the street. And that's where they picked him up. He didn't look Jewish at all. He was tall and blonde and had gray eyes-- green. And nobody would have believed that he was Jewish.

He panicked because they had picked up his father in Salzburg. So he ran into the street and was picked up and was held for the whole week in the Wehrgasse, where there were, I think, 2,000 people standing in their coats for a whole week.

This was a prison?

No, I think it was some kind of a hall.

OK. A public hall?

Yes.

In Vienna?

In Vienna.

And did you know about his whereabouts?

I found an SS Obersturmbannführer Blutorden, which means blood order, highest-ranking person, who wanted me to sell him my part of the factory we had. So he would do things for me. And I paid for the things he did first with the money that I had.

It was very hard to have some money. We had hidden some money in some books-- not very much. And I asked him to find out where my husband was, which he did.

Did you sell your share?

No.

You didn't?

This is a long story, Peter. And then the people who were in this hall were brought in front of three people, I think, either two or three. And they were selected where they were supposed to go. And my husband, since he had the passport with the visa in it, was released-- also probably through intervention of this guy that I met. And he was hurt on his leg because when he was getting on one of those trucks where they took them-- but the father of a friend of ours was sent to Dachau because he had nothing.

So part of the people were sent to concentration camps. And I was very fortunate that my husband got released and came home. But he had to sign that he was going to leave in 30 days. And I still couldn't get out because I wasn't able to pay.

The taxes?

The taxes.

And I have to tell you that my mother got married to her second cousin in August and went to Czechoslovakia.

In August of '38?

Yes. So she got out. And I was hoping that she was safe from that time on. He was a banker, and he had money in this country. And I thought she was going to be safe. Her brothers were in this country already-- one brother, at least. The other brother got killed trying to get from Prague to Paris, and the plane crashed.

So I was desperate because I didn't know what I could be doing to get my taxes, to get a paper that my taxes were OK. And I waited. And then this guy who was after me all the time to sell the part of the factory-- I had already sold the building in Vienna because we needed money.

Who did you sell it to?

To an insurance in Germany. God, I have written that up someplace. Victoria zu Berlin was the insurance company. And so I continued stringing him along that I was going to sell it to him.

Then came Christmas and New Years. And he left for Switzerland. And I took the shares of the company, and I deposited it--

[PHONE RINGS]

--where you put-- where to pay taxes.

With the tax office?

Yeah.

[PHONE RINGS]

And I paid for the tax they had put on us because of the Kristallnacht. They put an extra tax on us for 5,000 mark. I paid that.

[PHONE RINGS]

The answering machine will answer that. That will be worse. I think.

OK, I paid all that off. I got the [GERMAN].

You gave them the shares of the business?

I gave the shares of the business. And I got a paper. And the next day I was on the train to Italy.

To Italy?

Yes.

Now, your mother was already in Czechoslovakia?

Yes, since August of 1930. Yes, I never saw her again. She came back once to Vienna. They had a Czech passport, and they came in a car. And they still didn't know that they should get out of there.

She had a good marriage with her second husband. She was very happy. She had a nice apartment there. She had everything.

This was Prague?

This was Bratislava.

Bratislava?

Mm-hmm.

They were not able to get out?

He had his parents there. And he wouldn't leave his parents. He was a widower. He lost both of his children. They died. And so my mother's brothers arranged for that marriage. And she seemed to have been quite happy with it. And they went to Hungary.

And then, in Hungary, they were caught. She was killed in 1944-- June 17, 1944, in Auschwitz, all the family. Only one youngest brother of her husband came out to Argentina.

Did your mother get taken to Auschwitz?

Yes. I couldn't talk about that for seven years, Peter, that she died there. I was just pregnant with my daughter when I got the news. I always hoped that she was going to come out.

So what else can I tell you about that? I've never made peace with that. I didn't care about the money. But I never will make peace with that. I wanted to go back and kill everybody at the time. But I was pregnant. Yes.

So did you and your husband leave the next day after the taxes?

Yes, we did. We did. We went to Montevideo. It was the only place we could get to. We had already everything ready to be able to go. We took only our clothes. We couldn't take anything else.

There was no trouble getting to Italy?

No.

And you got a boat in Italy--

Yes.

--to Montevideo?

Yes. We had to go first class. And we got a little money because we had to go first class. We had to have some money. We went on a tourist visa. We couldn't get a regular visa. It was for six months.

Good for six months?

What was the date at that point?

I left Vienna on January 3, 1939. I got to Montevideo on the 29th of January, 1939.

I wanted to go back just a minute to Kristallnacht. Did you witness any of the destruction that day?

Yes, I did because they threw everything out of my neighbors' apartments. They took all the keys.

Threw it out the window?

Threw it out the window. I remember the piano being thrown out. And the next day, I went to the Kultusgemeinde because I wanted to find where my husband was. That was in Vienna, in the 1st district. There were hundreds of people there who had been locked out of their apartments, whose keys had been taken away. I can remember that very well.

Did they burn the synagogue?

Yes, but I didn't go to the synagogue. I didn't look at that.

Had you prepared at all for going to South America?

I tried to take some lessons. I didn't know any Spanish. I took three lessons from a professor of Madrid who was also in exile-- exiled to Austria. And he told me 10 words maybe, and a few words that one cannot use in South America but you can use in Spain, which should not be used in South America. That was all my knowledge of Spanish when I got there.

So, nada.

Nothing. [LAUGHS] Nada. Oh, yeah. Buenos dias, buenos noches, that more or less.

Did you know anyone there?

Yes, my friend who had gotten me the visa was standing at the pier with her husband. Also with me came our partner whom I couldn't stand, with his wife and his daughter. We had gotten them visas. And we had gotten our director visas. And, like I said, 11 people, I think, got visas from that consul. And they all came to Montevideo.

And the daughter of our director is married now here to a professor in Stanford. Very strange we met again here. She's younger than I am.

This is the daughter of the partner?

No, of the director of our factory. We had the director for the liquor factory.

I see. OK.

I guess it gets very confusing, my story.

How were you able to get released? You were taken in on Kristallnacht as well.

Yes. Well, they released us, and-- [LAUGHS] we were pretty good-looking girls at the time, OK? We were very tough both of us. We made ourselves very tough. We worked all day there-- I guess at least everybody probably. I'm not sure about that. But they said to us, you both work very well. And I said to them, just don't call me tomorrow again. And they released us.

And we walked home-- a little tired because of carrying buckets all day long and, well, Clean the floor, cleaning the floors. But the old ladies, at least, didn't have to do it, you know.

And then I came home, and my husband was gone. And then I got frantic because I had no idea where they had taken him.

I was just lucky. Don't you see? I never was afraid for myself. I never thought anything was going to happen really. I was just stupid. I never thought anything was going to happen to me. I was only worried about everybody else.

Now, they came to the apartment to take you? And there were five people?

At that time, I think there were three. When they searched our apartment, there were five. That was much earlier.

How much earlier?

That was in April, end of March or April, '38. There were five that came at that time.

So that was right after the elections?

That was right after the Anschluss, after the Germans took over. Yeah. The searchers didn't find all the money because we had put part of the money between books in our library so we had something at least to live on.

But my mother had saved 25,000 shillings for when I was going to get married that she was going to be able to buy everything for me, separately from her income and everything. She was very frugal. And this money we took out of the bank just before everything happened. That was just lucky. And we hid some of it.

But of course, my mother was so afraid when those five people were there, they told them where our safe was, behind a picture. So there was money in there. They took the money out that was in there. Her jewelry was in her wardrobe, so they never found it.

And after they left, my mother wanted-- there you can see how her generation thought. She thought we should take out the money of the books and take it to the people who had searched [LAUGHS] our apartment because we shouldn't have had the money. And I said, over my dead body, more or less.

And her brothers had come. And my husband was there at the time, still when these five people were in our apartment.

And my uncle with whom I worked in the pharmacy was standing behind me. And we had a big chair there. And he had money in his hat. And he said-- he gave it to me. I should sit on it while we had this-- if they would have found it, they would have just taken me.

So they didn't find it. I gave it back to him. And I thought it was totally wrong what he did, under the circumstances, you know. It was foolish. But they were all-- they were a different-- they thought different.

Now, they didn't take anyone away that day?

No. They just took the money.

They took money?

They took a lot of money.

A lot of money. Did they take any objects?

No.

No. Just the money?

Just the money. That was at the very beginning still. If it would have been later, I think it would have been very different, you know. And they were there, standing with a gun all the time. We had to lock our dog into the kitchen because they were afraid of our dog.

You were not afraid?

I was not afraid. I was thinking of the girl in Russia. And I saw that she wrote they were playing with the guns, and they were threatening us. And I thought it's just a repeat performance, and I'm not going to show them that I'm afraid.

But my mother was lying down in her bed. And she was afraid. I guess she must have felt her destiny coming or something. Thinking of it later, you know, because I never thought anything was going to happen to me.

Now, this was shortly after the Anschluss?

Yes.

And then how much later was it when they took you away and your husband?

That was in November.

In November of '38?

Yes.

After Kristallnacht?

Yes. During Kristallnacht, actually, during the time of Kristallnacht.

You got out of the country. You went to Italy. You went to Montevideo.

Yes.

Your friend was waiting at the dock.

Yes.

You didn't speak Spanish.

No.

And where did you stay?

Well, I stayed in a room, in a room with all my luggage in there. And since then I always want to have a big bedroom because I got claustrophobic because all the stuff that was in that room. It was in a typical Spanish house, where they have a patio in the middle and so forth. But it was cheap.

And we didn't stay there very long. We changed into apartment with somebody else, with another refugee who was a couple with a child. No, first with a girl who-- my husband and I were watching for this girl. She was German, and she was alone. She was only 18 years old.

So we took an apartment together, in the same building where my in-laws took an apartment. My in-laws had a little money. We had very little.

This is your husband's parents?

Yeah. They also came with us on this ship and everything.

How did they have a little money?

I guess my father-in-law took out a little money. He never told me. We were not very close with my father-in-law. I took a job because my husband didn't take a job or didn't work at the time, of course. I took a job with a British family to take care of their children during the day.

Now you were the nanny.

Yeah. They were very nice. But it was very little money. And I found another job full-time, living with some people to teach their sons French. I was 20. The sons were about 12 and 10.

Now, you lived with them?

I lived with them for six months.

And your husband-- where was he?

My husband lived in the apartment. But he didn't work. His parents said he has to wait to find a good job.

Would you see him often?

I saw him when I was off.

And that was what? One day a week?

Yes. I don't know how much French the children learned. But I learned Spanish because nobody spoke anything else. After six months, I spoke Spanish pretty good.

Was that hard, to be separated from your husband?

Yes, it was. It was very hard. And after six months, I started a business with another girl to have sweaters made. And we decorated them. And I went out selling sweaters to the biggest store in Montevideo, which still exists.

I have a friend in this building who is Uruguayan. And I asked him whether the store still exists. It's in a different way, but it still exists. And we didn't make very good money with that.

And what were you selling?

Sweaters.

Sweaters?

Mm-hmm.

How would the sweaters be made?

The sweaters were made by somebody, and we decorated them. We designed them, and we decorated them. And then I went out selling them. And the girl was taking over the production, the other girl.

It didn't work out well. So I took a job in a store that sold clothing, women's clothing. And that was better. I made better money. And then I was modeling. And we made shows outside of Montevideo in the country. And that paid me good money.

What was it?

It was modeling the dresses we were selling, and selling at the same time.

Was your husband able to speak Spanish by then?

Yes. He spoke Italian. He studied in Italy. He got his doctor's in Italy. And he spoke Spanish, yes. He found a job after a while.

Doing what?

I don't remember what. It was in an office, an office job.

Now, were you living with him again?

I was living with him. And I wanted to have a baby. And I got pregnant. And he forced me to get rid of the baby. And I had an abortion in a horrible way. And it broke, somehow, the relationship and the marriage. But I stayed with him anyway. And then we moved from--

Why did he want the abortion?

Because he said it was not a time to have a child. And I thought it didn't make any difference. But that's the way it went. And we lived in the same building still with his parents. And from that time on, I wanted to move somewhere else because his parents influenced him so much.

So we moved to Pocitos, which is a very nice area in Montevideo near the water, near the beach. We got an apartment there. And my friend who had stood at the pier and I-- we lived in the same building then for a time.

We could live very cheap in Uruguay, but it was very difficult to make money. I don't think that has anything to do with what happened in Europe though. [LAUGHS]

It has to do with how you coped.

How I coped-- yes, it has to do with how I coped. You could go to the beach and eat for a peso a hot dog and have a nice time. There was a lot of young people at the time in Uruguay who were, more or less, in the same situation that I was.

Jewish?

Jewish, yes-- refugees. At that time, we were always only with refugees. We met a few Uruguayan couples and people. They were very nice. To Uruguay, I have the greatest respect for the country. And I love it. I couldn't go to Argentina to see where my brother was because of the war because I had a German passport.

Well, I had one good day there when they sank the Graf Spee and watched that from the roof of the building I lived in.

Really?

Yes, I did.

Because that was in Montevideo harbor.

That was in Montevideo harbor, yes. There were three cruise ships-- British ones.

Destroyers?

Small ones, destroyers-- the Ajax, the Achilles, and the Exeter. And the Graf Spee was inside of the harbor. They wouldn't let him out.

You got a good memory.

Yes, I do. And this was a memorable day.

Oh, yes.

That's why I have a good memory of it.

And you saw this?

We watched when they went--

You saw them scuttle the ship?

They didn't do anything to the ship. They didn't let it out of the harbor, so the ship sank itself. The captain sank the ship. The crew went mostly to Argentina, who accepted the Germans, of course. They were neutral, while Uruguay was not neutral. And the captain sank with the ship.

Yeah. Scuttled, they call it.

Yeah. Yeah. It was a happy day for me.

[LAUGHS]

Very happy day. It still is a happy memory for me.

Now, you're there on a six-month visa?

Yeah, but we fixed it. With money, you could fix it.

You could make it longer?

You could make it--

But you couldn't get citizenship?

No, but you could get permanent visa.

You could get a permanent visa for money?

Yes.

OK. So graft is high on the list in Uruguay?

You could get in Uruguay and in Argentina much more. Everywhere in South America you could fix things with money most of the time. So I was working with that company for quite a while. I went into the provinces.

You were showing clothes?

Selling clothes.

Dresses?

Dresses.

Did you design any?

No, no. That was a store. They were from Czechoslovakia, and they had a store. And I worked there as a salesperson.

So you were a salesperson?

Salesperson. And my husband lost his job. He never told me. I found out after a man said he had lost his job.

And then the restrictions were lifted. One could go to Argentina. And he decided he wanted to go to Argentina because there was more of a chance to be able to find a job there. And he did. I don't know how long--

Did you want that?

Yes, I wanted to go to Argentina to see my brother.

Did you want him to go?

You know, at that time, my marriage was not a good marriage at all because I didn't trust him anymore because he had lied to me about his job. He went out every day like he was going to work, and he didn't. And after the abortion, it was never the same anyway. It was never the same.

Did you think when he left for Argentina that you would break up?

I had lots of admirers. I had a guy who wanted me to get divorced and marry him. He made a lot of money. But I wasn't ready for that at that time. I wanted to help my husband to find a good job or something.

I had a very nice apartment in Uruguay, which I furnished very nicely. I sold one of my diamond rings for that that my

mother had given me, the one, because I felt it was more important to have a good home than a diamond ring at the time. And, well, I gave it up. And I went to Argentina and started all over again.

Did he go first and then you joined him?

Yes, he went first. Yes, he went first because I don't know how long later I went there. I know the day I went to Argentina because it was my brother's birthday. I remember that. But I don't remember how long was in between the time that he went, yes.

I was sick at the time. I had hurt my back when I was-- I was cleaning, not-- I hurt my back, and I was laid up for six weeks with an injury in my back. When I got up-- I don't know how long after that I went. I sold everything I had, and I went to Argentina. And there we started over in a pension, where you had rented the room.

Now, did you have a passport to go to Argentina? How did that work?

No, I had a [NON-ENGLISH] from Montevideo. This is an identification paper you get when you're a permanent resident.

And that allowed you to go to Argentina?

That allowed me to go to Argentina.

And could you stay as long as you wanted?

No. I had to fix everything again in Argentina.

About what year was that?

'42. I went to Argentina on the 13th of August of 1942. You would think I have a good memory, but that was my brother's birthday. My brother didn't do well ever in Argentina financially.

He what?

He never did well financially in Argentina, my brother.

Didn't do well?

No. And he had the children. And his wife supported mostly the family, having taken care of other children.

So I was living in a pension, which is where you can get food and a room for the beginning. Then we got into an apartment, which was the most horrible thing than ever because it was full of cockroaches, because South America has a lot of that sort of thing.

Cucarachas.

Cucarachas. "La Cucaracha." It's a nice song, but it's not nice to live with them.

[LAUGHS]

And I didn't stay long in that apartment. We moved to another apartment. And then my marriage was starting to break up.

And I had a boyfriend who was a friend, actually. We were friends since the first day he met me. He said he was going to marry me, but I wasn't thinking about that at all. We became just friends because we liked the same kinds of things,

like music and books and so forth. But he pursued me for years.

And then I was ready to break up with my husband because we got him a job. He had a good job. And I thought now is the time that I could leave him. And this friend of mine was making very good money at the time. And I thought if my mother comes out, I can give her everything she had before, which was calculating, I would say, if I look back.

I never loved him. And I never wanted to marry him. He asked me 50 times to marry him. And the 51st time, I looked down, and I said OK.

Were you divorced?

I got divorced. I got married, but not in Argentina-- in Montevideo, by proxy because I was never going to get married in Argentina because I knew you could never get a divorce again.

But you could in Uruguay?

Yes. But many things fell under the rules of the Argentine laws because I had big trouble when I got divorced from this man. I was married three times in my life. The last time, I was married 49 years.

You were married how many times?

Three.

Three. This is husband number two now?

That was husband number two.

He was Jewish?

He was Jewish, but he never wanted to be Jewish. And because he wanted me to-- because of many other reasons besides that he wanted me to change my religion, which was also one of them, we got divorced.

What did he want you to change it to?

He didn't care about that. His family lived in this country and changed their religion wherever they lived. So he wanted me to change my religion.

Did he change his?

He changed his religion like you would change a shirt.

Oh, yes?

[LAUGHTER]

Today I'm a Methodist?

[LAUGHS] Yes. He made my children Methodists when I divorced him. And that I will never forgive-- not forgive, but forget also. Yes, because they got confused from that moment on, and it was very hard for them. My son became Jewish afterwards again because he married a very religious girl in Mexico.

But this is all stories which they wanted to hear from me the last time I gave the interview. They said it must be much more interesting to hear your story after you left Austria than before. But they never asked these questions, how I coped in South America, no. Is that important, do you think?

It's part of your life story.

It is.

That's what we're talking about.

Yeah. But I just thought you were interested in the Holocaust story, which was only in Vienna.

No, actually one of the things that we are interested in and hear about a lot is how people managed to leave a country and go to another country that they knew nothing about, couldn't speak the language, had no money, and how did they deal with all that.

Well, I would think that my third husband would be a prime example for that because he studied medicine five years in Vienna. Had to let it go. He went to Bolivia, only country that would accept him, because he was born in Czortk³w, which is Poland.

And he went into the mines to work there, in the company. He was there a week, and he was a citizen of the country because the mining company could do that for him, to make him a citizen to give him a job.

He worked for Hochschild, who was a German Jew who owned the copper mine up there. He brought out his whole family. He saved their lives. They lived there 11 years in Bolivia. You know, they're 3,000 meters high. And he worked- he went into the mines to work there for days. I respected him a lot for all the things he did.

Tell me how long your second marriage lasted.

49 years.

The second marriage?

No, the second, five years.

Five?

Yes.

Where did you meet your third husband?

At the Viennese party in Argentina.

You remained in Argentina?

Yes, 22 years. I lived three years in Uruguay and 22 years in Argentina.

And what were you doing most of the time in Argentina?

Most of the time nothing because women were not supposed to work there. I worked also in a dress shop at the beginning. And at the end, I started working again at the same store because I wanted to get practice to work again.

Because you were going to come to--

Because I was going to come to the United States.

How did that happen? How did you decide to do that?

I decided because there was a very, very great restlessness in Argentina. At the time, my children were 18 and 16 years old. There were continuous--

Disappearances?

Not yet.

Not yet?

Not yet. But they were taken out of-- my daughter went to the American School, and my son went to the British School. My daughter was taken out of a bus. And they were making barricades out of the buses because they were fighting at the border of the city. And the school was in the province. And my daughter and her friends would have been having a lot of trouble-- I'm sure of that-- because of their political orientations.

And my husband's business was doing very, very badly because of all these things. He imported drugs for the leather industry. And it wasn't doing well.

And so we decided-- my husband had worked for the FBI in Argentina during the war because he wanted to volunteer to come into the war. They wouldn't take anybody. But he worked for the FBI. And he was spying on the submarines in Uruguay. I couldn't have told you that the last time because this was classified. But now, after years, a friend of his called up and said that it was all released, and that he's writing a book about this. He was an American. And we got a visa to the United States for the last time. If he wouldn't have taken it at the time, he wouldn't have been able to get it again.

Why?

Because they wouldn't give it anymore. Things changed then, you know, with the FBI and the CIA and all this kind of thing. He worked for the CIA for a while, which I didn't know at the time. But then he told me.

So this was what year? 1964 are we talking about?

1964, we decided we're going to leave Argentina. And we came. And I left him in New York. I had to come up because we both had to be here to be able to take full care of the visa. And a cousin of mine paid \$3 to the bank for us that everything would be OK paper-wise.

So I came up in December. But I had my children still down in Argentina with my ex-husband for the summer vacation. And I went back. And they went to school. They had finished their school year there. So my husband was here six months without me.

I left him in New York. And I thought I was going to live to go to New York because I had family there and friends. He had his brother over here in Oakland. His brother said, come over here. It's easier to find a better job.

Did your brother stay in Argentina?

He stayed. But he came five years later.

What were your children's politics that you think they would have gotten in trouble?

Well, they had friends who-- there were the Nazis in Argentina also, you know, the right. They were not to the right, my children. They were more to the left-- my daughter. My son was too young. He wasn't interested in politics.

So both your children were born in Argentina?

Argentina, yes.

And what are their names?

Monica and George-- Jorge. I put it down in Spanish because there was a way-- he's buried here, too, in the cemetery.

And then my husband got an offer to go to Texas. And I was still in Argentina. And I said, if you're going to go to Texas, I'm not going to come. I cannot go all over the United States with my children. So he stayed here, and he took a job at the Claremont Hotel. [LAUGHS]

At the what?

The Claremont Hotel.

The Claremont?

Yeah.

Doing what?

He was a dining room manager. There were sometimes 4,000 people in that dining room. And then I came up, and I lived six months at the Claremont Hotel because we all could live there because he worked there. But his job was so strenuous that I didn't want him to stay there. In the meantime, I had taken a job in San Francisco already.

Doing what?

I started in the production department of Fritzi of California, doing a very silly job-- adding columns. I got the job because my husband left his resume with that company when he first got here. In the meantime, he got the job at the Claremont.

But the company belonged to two refugees, Fritzi and Ernie Benesch. And they hired refugees. And my husband took me over there with my children because he thought maybe my daughter could get a job there.

Well, my daughter was 18, and she used the makeup like in Argentina. And Mr. Benesch objected to her. And she had a very big mouth. They got into an argument. He said, I would never hire you. And he asked me, what are you doing? I was here 10 days at the time. I said, I have not a clue what I'm going to do. I'm going to look for a job.

Did you speak English?

Yes, I spoke English ever since I was 12. And so he said, can you multiply with dozens? I said, I don't know. I haven't done it since I was in high school. But maybe I can. He said, you look like you have a good head-- Jewish head. Report to the personnel manager on Monday. I think we can find a job for you.

There was no personnel manager. There was only a vice president in charge of production, who was not Jewish, but she had been married to a Jew-- very smart woman. I reported to her. They gave me a job. They didn't explain much about the job. And it was adding columns in big ledgers. Everything was done manually at the time.

So you were doing accounting work?

Yeah. It paid \$75 a week. I came from the Claremont by bus. And that was very lucky. It was right next to the bus stop. And I worked there.

And I had another job over the weekends because my husband was still at the Claremont working. And I worked in a boutique with ladies apparel. [LAUGHS] They wanted me to work for them full-time.

So I had a choice. But I made the choice to stay there because they had a profit sharing plan. And they had a bonus plan at the time. It seemed more secure for me to work that way.

But I didn't stay in the department. I moved into the order department because at least it was more interesting than adding columns. You entered the orders into the big ledgers which I had added up before. But I was pretty smart in business. We sometimes got orders in for \$1 million a day, you know. It was a big job.

What kind of business was it?

Ladies apparel and sportswear-- sportswear manufacturer. Well, in the long run, I went through every department in the business.

You stayed there a long time?

I stayed there 16 years. I was officially office manager, but I was more administrative manager than office manager. I had 40 people directly under me. And I managed the outlet stores. I supervised the outlet stores because I was in charge also of the inventory.

You were serious, like your father.

I was very serious. I was very serious.

You're serious even when you talk about it.

I was very serious in business. They trusted me. My former bosses lost all their money to their daughter, \$60 million. But my former boss's wife still calls me. I was a trusted person.

Did your husband stay at the Claremont?

No, my husband went also to the same company because they had known him before. And he started there as a salesman. And he worked there for a salesman for 16 years. He made very good money in the end. At the beginning, it was very hard because the refugees were always confined more to shipping departments and other things like that. I think we were the only couple that made it.

Advanced.

Yes. In the end, I made \$33,000 a year in the office. You have to think about that. That was in 1980, when I retired. That was pretty good money. My husband made much more than I did.

Was he always frustrated that he never became a doctor?

No, he was a happy-go-lucky person. He was the easiest-going person in the world that you can possibly imagine.

That goes good with a serious woman, huh?

In the end, it worked out very badly because, you know, we went bankrupt 10 years ago. When I wasn't watching out-- I was only watching out for my son's health and for his health-- he lost everything. And he never told me. I don't know why that happened to me every time with people. But he was very good to me. He loved me. I loved him.

Where did he have the money that he lost it all?

We bought some real estate.

He lost in real estate?

No, we didn't lose in real estate. We made very good money in real estate. I don't know where he lost it. He never told me. He lost it probably in businesses. And he also gambled. His father was a big gambler. He lost a lot of money. So usually I was watching out for everything.

We had good money when we retired. We had houses. We had three houses. Now I'm renting here for years. I was telling you that. [SIGHS] It was very difficult. I loved my husband a lot. He loved me a lot. But after we went bankrupt, it was very difficult.

But you see, he had a heart condition for 18 years. And I tried to take care of him. And my son was a manic depressive and had a very big problem. So I was not watching out for money at the time. I was watching for health.

What happened to your son?

My son had a heart attack. He died in my daughter's apartment.

How old?

48 years old, three children in Mexico. He was divorced. And he lived with us for a while. And he lived with my daughter.

I don't want to go into that part because that is too painful a time. Also, for my daughter's sake, I don't want to talk about that. She loved her brother more than anything. And she did everything for him.

I did everything for my husband till his last day. The three days in the hospital when he was in the hospital, I stayed to him till he closed his eyes.

You said what?

I stayed with him till he closed his eyes. I was alone with him that time.

What did he die of?

He had prostate cancer, and he died of the heart. We took him to the hospital. He was a courageous person. He was never afraid of anything. I'm a very fearful person.

You're fearful? Tough you?

Did he?

You said you were tough.

I was tough outside, but inside--

But fearful inside?

--not very tough.

Because when you describe the people coming to the apartment with guns, you weren't afraid. When did you begin to get fearful?

When my husband died, when I was alone. I was never alone in my life. I never lived alone in my life. Now I have very bad anxiety attacks sometimes. But I don't project them. I project the image that I want to project. Otherwise I couldn't

work with all these people I work with.

What is your country?

Do you think that I have a country?

I'm asking. You don't?

I have no country. I love being here. But I don't have a country.

It's not your country?

It isn't my country. I always loved the United States, even before I ever lived here and before I came here. I love it, but I'm a citizen of the world. I'm not a citizen of any country.

Did you ever go back to Austria?

Twice.

Twice? When was the first time?

I wanted to go on my father's grave. How was it?

When was the first time?

The first time was 30 years after I'd left Austria.

30?

30.

You left in '40? No, '39?

I left in '39.

So you went in '69?

No. Yeah, something like that.

And what was that like for you to go there?

I had some very good friends in Austria, some aristocrats who came to Salzburg when I first came to Austria. Was a good visit.

When I went into the house-- they arranged that I could go into the house that we had in the country-- that was not good. It wasn't good. It was the same antisemitic. They still had the same Hakenkreuz in places where I went. I would never go back to live there, never.

It didn't feel good to be there?

It felt good when I was in the castle with my friends because they had invited me there. That was good. And then I was in their house. That was good also.

And I liked Vienna. I personally liked Vienna. I knew the streets like-- I don't know them any other place as well as in

Vienna.

Were they still the same?

They were the same.

Of course, there was a lot of bombing there, wasn't there, in the war?

The building I was born in was bombed out. It didn't exist. But our house exists. These pictures are taken after, when I went back.

So you have no country that you really feel is yours?

No.

And you have no religion?

No. I have religion. I have my own.

Yes, OK.

I talk to God directly every night. I ask him for guidance every night. Should put on a light, take my hand, and tell me what I should be doing, why I'm still here. What can I do that justifies that I'm still alive?

Do you think that your experience of having to leave Austria the way you did and go to various countries-- Uruguay, Argentina, and then United States-- how much of an effect has it had on the life that you-- been an emigre and--

I think it was good. I learned a lot. I told that to a person when I came back. We had one bookkeeper in our factory who I knew was a great Nazi. And when I came back, they arranged that I should meet her. Wasn't my idea.

And she said to me, oh, I'm so sorry for you that you had to leave and that all these things happened to you. And I said, don't feel sorry for me. I am very happy with all the experiences that I had. I would never have had the opportunity to do all these things that I did and to see all the things that I did. There, you see, I am tough.

That's the tough one talking.

That's right. The tough one is always outside. It's always watching.

I mean, that answer was almost like, it was a good thing that had happened to me, that I was kicked out of my country.

I wasn't going to give her the satisfaction because she said, oh, because the daughter of our partner who committed suicide, she was so unhappy that she had to leave Austria. I said, well, don't say that to me because I feel different about it.

Where does your daughter live?

In El Cerrito.

El Cerrito? You're close?

Yes.

And you see her often?

Once a week now. We are not so close since my husband died because I was in very bad shape. And I think that had a very bad effect on her. But it's better now because I understand better that I shouldn't lean on anybody. But at the first moment, it was--

That's a funny thing to say. You have so many people leaning on you in your life.

Yes, that's better for me. They want to give me things. And I just don't want them, you see.

No?

No, because I was always somebody who gave. And I was never somebody who took. And I don't want to change now at 84. It's a little late in life to change.

You don't want to start now, huh?

No. Is that funny?

I always think it's funny that people who are so giving can't take.

They tell me I should learn, but I don't want to learn that.

What do you think would be hard about it?

I would be weak, and that would be hard.

Taking is weak?

Yes.

Do you really feel that about the people who take from you--

No.

--that they are weak?

No, I think they need my help. But I don't need their help. You see, I have a counselor. I was there just this week. And I wanted to discontinue it. They offered it to me for free at the Jewish Family Services-- I know they charge a lot of money for it-- because of what I'm doing and what I have done in my life. And I said to her-- I don't know whether you know [PERSONAL NAME]

No.

She's a wonderful lady. But I said, I don't think I want to take it from other people who might need it much more than I do. I think I can go on on my own.

You're taking time away from other people?

Yeah. She said, don't think that. You're not taking from anybody.

But you think that?

But I think that. I was going to give it up, but I decided that I'm going to go maybe once a month so I wouldn't lose contact with her.

Good.

She's wonderful. You know, the people at Jewish Family Services amaze me-- what they're doing. They are really, really wonderful.

I believe it.

So now they're going to write an article about me. They called me from the Jewish Bulletin, which I never expected in my whole life. I thought when I die there's going to be a notice in the newspaper. And I didn't say what I said to you. Now I should have said that. But they asked me questions. And so I just told them about the work I'm doing for them and how I'm doing it.

But they really would deserve a lot of credit. They are not well-known in the area here on this side of the Bay. They are well-known in San Francisco. And they have, I think, 156th anniversary of the Jewish Family Services in the area. So I'm telling you that they really help. They try. And for me, it's the first time that I feel that I have somebody who will back me up in my life.

Good.

Here, since my husband died.

Yes.

The girl that is my caseworker-- she's in charge of the Holocaust survivors. Her name is Lola [? Frank-Lloyd. ?] She's a very good person. And she tries so hard. I think she's not going to be able to do it for a long time because she tries so hard to help you.

You think she's wearing herself out?

Yeah, I told her this morning when she called me. I said, think of number one sometimes, because otherwise you're going to not be able to do what you're doing.

Did you ever wish that you weren't Jewish?

Many times.

Many times?

Yes.

How about now? What do you feel now?

No. Now I wouldn't want to be a different person than what I am. That was when I was young, when I was very young, when I was feeling it so badly.

Yeah. And you wanted to fit in with everybody.

Yeah, but I would never have changed because of my mother dying in Auschwitz. I would never, never, never change my religion. I mean, not my religion-- who I am. Because if I would do that, I would lose myself, you see. And I cannot afford that.

Do you think that there could be another Holocaust?

I'm very afraid for Israel. I never wanted to go to Israel because I feel it's a trap.

Because you feel what?

It is like if you would be sitting in a rat trap with all the Arabs around. I'm afraid for them.

It's like what you felt being in the 2nd district, huh? Yeah.

Yes. But I'm not afraid of being here or someplace. I know all the things that go on here. I'm well aware of what goes on in the whole world, you know. I'm not that I'm closing my eyes to what's happening. But you're free. It's your choice. You can try to do something for yourself if the need arises, which is a big difference.

Now, you were interviewed once before by our project.

Yeah, but I was never asked about my life after what happened when I left Austria.

And I wondered if you could compare the two interviews.

It is very different. It is very different because you are interested in my whole life, while when they were doing it, at the time, they were just concerned about my family, my background of my family. And I gave them all that. I can give you the tape, if you like. I have it. I gave them all the data about all my family-- my father's family, my mother's family. They asked about these things.

They didn't ask what happened-- the man said to me-- who took the film at the time-- he said to me, I wish I could interview you about the rest of your life. It must be very interesting. But it never came up. They were never interested how I survived after I got out of Austria.

Are you glad that we did?

Yes. I mean, I cannot tell you the whole story, every little bit of it, because it is so many different things. It's 60 years, over 60 years. But I'm glad that you took it.

My niece took once a movie of me telling about things that happened, the one that is an economist. She is a very brilliant person. But it is different. You are going to keep this, and maybe some people can learn from it.

What have you learned in your life that you could tell us?

How to survive.

Say more.

Survive under any circumstances.

Is there something in particular from what you've learned that you would want to pass on to the next generation?

That you have to be a very flexible person. That you should do what you believe in. That you can look in the mirror and say that what you're doing is, you think, the right thing. That you should help people as much as you can, all the time. That I have learned.

That you shouldn't be too materialistic in your life because money comes and money goes. Other values are much more important. That if you can be religious, it's great for you, if it helps you. Sometimes I wish I was, but I cannot be different from who I am.

What do you think people need to know from me? What do you think that would be important to them? What do you think?

Hearing your truth as you're giving it now. That's what we want.

That's the truth. That is the truth about me. Don't think I'm an angel because I have a different side, which likes to have a lot of fun and which had a lot of fun in life. I had a great-- I had a great life. I had some great setbacks. But all together, if I die today, I would be a happy person to die.

I had a good life. I had a lot of people who loved me. I have a lot of people who love me now. What else can you wish for?

I have an apartment I can live in. I have enough money to support myself more or less well, which took a lot of effort on my part in the last two years. I've had a lot of help from friends, from family. So I'm a very lucky person.

If many people want to help you and do help you, they must really feel that you are a good person and deserve it, yeah?

I try to be a good person, Peter. But I have also bad streaks in my character. I'm not all good, you know.

I have one, the Black lady in the building, when I first came to her said to me, are you an angel? I turned around. I said, look at my back. No, I'm not an angel. I just want to help you. And we become very close friends ever since. It's over a year now. I try to be as good as possible.

You learned that at an early age.

I did. I gave things when I was very young.

Like 10.

Younger than 10. Younger than 10. I never wanted everything for myself. I never did. And I still wouldn't want everything for myself. And I've never known that I want to have more money or riches or something like that. Just to live comfortably, that I'd like to do. I do that.

Like I said, I'm a happy person, even though I'm a Holocaust survivor. But they tell me that I'm very unique at the Jewish Family Services. They would like to see more people like me because they say that the Holocaust survivors, in general, are different from me. But then they also are some that had much worse experiences than I have had, you know.

So do you think that's it?

Had you talked to your daughter? Have you talked--

I told them from a very early age about it. They know. And my grandsons also know. Yes. They know about my mother. I told them that. I didn't ever tell them about my experiences, actually, I think. They didn't seem so important.

I want to thank you very much--

I want to thank you.

--on behalf of the Holocaust Oral History Project for telling your story.

Do you think it is relevant, what I tell?

Absolutely.

I think it's a very wonderful tape. And I'm glad that we did it.

Thank you, Peter.

And I hope that it was an OK experience for you.

It was a very good experience for you because you understand. You understand. And at the first time, people didn't understand what it is about. It's not only about having been there. It's about the rest of your life is affected one way or another.

Thank you so much.

Thank you.

You're very welcome. You're welcome.

Should I start?

Yes.

This is my mother and my grandfather. My mother, Hedwig Lustig, and my grandfather, Max Lustig, her father. The picture must be taken someplace in Karlsbad. And it must be beginning around 1920, 1922.

The next picture is my grandmother, Anna Lustig, [PERSONAL NAME] And she's the wife of my grandfather and mother of my mother. And this picture-- I don't know when it was taken. But it seems like it's still in maybe before I was born.

This is Villa Lustig, the house my father had built in 1924, in Pernegg an der Mur, in Styria. It was a beautiful house. We went every year for summer vacation and Christmas and so on. I loved it. Good enough?

This is my beloved mother, Hedwig Lustig [INAUDIBLE], who I loved more than anything and who was killed in Auschwitz on June 17, 1944. She was 53 years old. I can't say much more about that.

This is my father, Julius Julian Lustig. He was born on May the 4th, 1882. And he died in 1928. And he was a very good husband, very good brother, and very beloved by his family. That's as much as I can say about him.

This is my mother, Hedwig Lustig, and my father, Julius Lustig, on a pleasure trip on Lago Maggiore in Italy, probably in 1926, having a really good time. And I'm happy they did.

This is my beloved brother, Xaver Friedrich Lustig, who was eight years older than myself, whom I loved very, very much, and whom I miss. He died 28 years ago. And I miss him like yesterday.

OK.

This is me and my beloved, beloved husband, David Dolfi Hoffman, at our wedding anniversary. It must have been the 46 or something, in Sausalito at the Spinnaker. We had a great marriage with all the ups and downs that everybody else has. I'm grateful for it.

These are my beloved, beloved children-- Jorge Julio Krieger, who died six years ago at 48, whom I miss every day of my life, and my daughter, who I love more than anything else in the world, just like my mother. I used to love my mother.

That's Monica Krieger Farias. She is a Brailist. She does a lot for other people. She translates books for blind children. She has a great heart.

And you had mentioned you have grandchildren?

I have two grandchildren by my daughter, Monica-- twins, 36 years old, Sasha and Sergei. And I have three grandchildren by my son-- Willie Krieger, [? Moyer ?] Krieger, and Celia [? Abadie. ?] And I have a great-granddaughter called Sylvia [? Abadie, ?] whom I have never seen yet. She's a year old. She lives in Mexico City.

And I want to thank you. This concludes our pictures.