

HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW

of

ISABELLE KUHN

December 10, 1991

San Francisco, California

APPEARANCES

Ms. Sylvia Prozan, Interviewer
Mr. Richard Kirschman, Interviewer
Mr. John Grant, Producer/Director

TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES PROVIDED BY:

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1 MS. PROZAN: This is the second interview
2 with Isabelle Kuhn for the Holocaust Oral History Project
3 in San Francisco.

4 My name is Sylvia Prozan. The second interviewer
5 today is Richard Kirschman.

6 A. Okay. Oh God. This is the beginning of my
7 new life. I am lying there on the sofa. Oh, what am I
8 going to do?

9 Q. That's fine. You are there in Prague?

10 A. And I am sick and alone and I start thinking
11 after two weeks -- Did I tell you how they brought us
12 back to Prague?

13 Q. Why don't you tell it again.

14 A. Yes. We were in Germany, in a small town in
15 Germany. We escaped. Did I tell you that?

16 Q. Tell us again.

17 A. Yeah. We were on a death march the tenth
18 day from Birkenau. That was the camp after Auschwitz,
19 working camp they called it. A business logger. We were
20 in the midst of the wilderness in the woods, cutting
21 Christmas trees and digging ditches for the enemy tanks.

22 There I am in a worse condition. Every morning
23 naturally we stood appel. You know what appel means?
24 They counted us. We stood about three hours until they
25 came to count us.

1 Well, that time was unbearable too. Although we
2 didn't have the crematoriums there. But we were living
3 in tents in the middle of the winter and those winters
4 are so severe that they don't have them in America. They
5 don't have such severe winters. It's Silesia. We are in
6 Silesia. It was so cold.

7 Well my hands are still -- Everything was frozen.
8 My toes, my fingers and it was just running pus. And we
9 were digging. And the Germans came to see if we are
10 doing our work, you know. If they weren't satisfied they
11 would hit those frozen fingers.

12 Well, we just went on and dug those ditches and
13 went back to our tents in the evening. We looked like
14 snowmen. We were just covered with snow and we had
15 nothing but a blanket and one piece of clothing
16 underneath. A man's shoe that we put straw in because
17 they were too big, the shoes, and that's all we had on
18 during the whole winter.

19 We arrived there in November from Auschwitz. This
20 happened October the 23rd. We were standing appel. All
21 of a sudden we see a lot of movement. You could see over
22 to the freeway. Not freeway. Highway. And we saw a lot
23 of movement, cars, wagons, horses moving. We look at
24 each other and we think "God, what is going on?" It was
25 a good feeling somehow. We knew there was something

1 happening.

2 And then the lookout who came to count us she
3 said -- She announced that we are leaving. We are
4 leaving this morning. We are each getting a blanket now
5 she said. We didn't have a blanket each of us. We are
6 each getting a blanket and we are going further into
7 Germany.

8 Well, she didn't say where. They gave us a piece
9 of bread, our daily ration, and off we went. We are
10 standing there for hours. And then we started out on our
11 journey a thousand of us. There were always a thousand
12 people to a group, always thousand.

13 We left the tents, which was our home from
14 November to January the 23rd. December, January, yeah.
15 Two months. Three months. We were marching for ten
16 days.

17 Now during those ten days every evening we stopped
18 at a barn and they had the tea urns and we made some tea
19 and we went and dug out -- You see in Europe the peasants
20 put away vegetables in the ground in order they shouldn't
21 freeze and we dug out those vegetables and that was our
22 daily ration. And then after we got our ration they
23 locked us up in a barn. Not a stable. A stable is warm.
24 But a barn is empty. There is nothing there. That's
25 where they keep the wheat, you know. But there was

1 nothing there.

2 On the bare floor we lied down. Not a floor.

3 That wasn't a floor. It was just ground. And those were
4 our sleeping quarters. But after we were once locked in
5 we couldn't go out to the bathroom or anything. So we
6 just did it under us. It was unbelievable what went on.
7 And hungry and cold.

8 Every morning we got up and went further and
9 further into Germany. The tenth day -- The hunger was
10 unbearable. When you are hungry you can't think of
11 anything else but to get some food no matter what, just
12 something. We were passing by. All of a sudden we saw a
13 frozen cabbage field. I told this story. And we ran at
14 this cabbage field, all thousand of us.

15 And the SS men who were guarding us, they had
16 these big sticks that they were walking with. They came
17 among us and hit us every which way with those sticks
18 that we should get back into line. Everybody wanted to
19 grab a cabbage first, you see, because that meant food.
20 And I grabbed the cabbage from the ground, frozen
21 cabbage, and the SS hit me in the back with this big
22 piece of wood that he was walking with. It was thick
23 like this (indicating).

24 When he hit me I fell to the ground and I couldn't
25 get up. Three times I turned around and tried and tried.

1 Finally I got up. But I was in such excruciating pain
2 that I couldn't walk. But we had to get into line. We
3 had to get into line. There was no other way. So we got
4 into line and I told my sisters I cannot walk and I am
5 going to stay back. I am in terrible pain. Well, the
6 only one that was really with it was Lensie. She was in
7 age next to me, but she was nine years younger.

8 She said "Well, if you don't continue I am not
9 going to continue." She said "I can't do it by myself"
10 because the other two, Elsa and Lillie, they gave up
11 already in Auschwitz. They couldn't fight. Those were
12 kids 17. They weren't 17 yet. Lensie said "I can't
13 manage; I can't do it without you."

14 I said "Lensie, you have to go on because you are
15 young. You go on. You have a whole life if you
16 survive."

17 She said "I am not going." Because if you stayed
18 back they shot you. There were so many bodies on the way
19 you just had to step aside not to step on them.
20 Everybody who couldn't go, you know, was shot.

21 So Lensie said "No, I am going to stay back."

22 I said "You know what, Lensie, we have nothing to
23 lose. Let's try to escape. Let's try it." I don't know
24 how. I don't know how. The mind was working. As I say
25 this, and I can't walk and I am in such pain, I say "You

1 see there is a little house standing out on the road. I
2 don't know what it is, but I am going to walk in there."
3 A little house, a little tiny house. I said "The whole
4 line walks after me. If the whole line walks they might
5 not notice that we left."

6 Well, this was agreed on and that was like a turn.
7 The SS men were in the front. The SS men were in the
8 back but they were not in the middle. This was our luck.
9 They didn't see us in the turn that we went into this
10 little house. The whole line followed me. And that was
11 a pig sty. Pig sty. Empty. The Germans, they
12 evacuated, they were the ones leaving because they feared
13 the Russians and they left way before us. Everything was
14 empty. The town was empty. So there was -- This was a
15 empty pig sty. There we were stooping. We couldn't even
16 straighten out. I couldn't straighten out. I was so
17 short, you know. There we were and we heard all the
18 troops going by us by the thousands; they evacuated these
19 camps. They were marching all day long and there we were
20 in this little stable, pig sty, and nobody saw that we
21 escaped.

22 You see, they saw in front of us and back of us,
23 but nobody would give away each other. That was
24 somehow -- that's the way it was. Nobody would give away
25 the other, you know.

1 This was in the morning. I imagine it was in the
2 morning because all day we were stooping there. Well, we
3 had no time. All of a sudden it was starting to get dark
4 and the steps stopped. There was nobody coming anymore.
5 Because in the dark they would always find a place for
6 all these people to shut them in.

7 I say "Lensie, I think we made it. They didn't
8 find us, they didn't notice we are missing and we are
9 free. I think we are free."

10 There were two other girls in this pig sty and
11 they were from our country, Czechs also. We couldn't
12 believe it.

13 We started out -- We said "Let's slowly start out,
14 look around what's out there." Now out there there was a
15 small town. All in dark, pitch dark. The snow was this
16 high (indicating). When we stepped out of the pig sty we
17 fell into the snow to here (indicating). And it was a
18 ditch. Over the ditch was the town. As we went we saw
19 the dark houses and we broke into a house. We broke the
20 window and one of the girls went in or two, I don't
21 remember, and they opened up the door from inside and we
22 went into this house where there were two beds. Two
23 beds. The beds, that was something else. And there was
24 clothes in the closets. They left some old clothing
25 there. And we were bedecked, you know, thick like this

1 with lice because for ten days we never washed. There
2 was no possibility, nothing, to wash. At least in the
3 camp we washed. You know, we ran out and put some water
4 on us. Not soap. We never saw a piece of soap. But we
5 did wash. Two o'clock at night I washed, you know. And
6 here for ten days we never saw water. Just the tea they
7 gave us in the evening. We were just thick. Thick with
8 lice.

9 And we threw off all that clothing and there was
10 running water in the kitchen. We washed. Oh, we
11 couldn't believe it, you know. And we put on old
12 clothes, but it was clean. Clean to us. Everything was
13 clean. We put on the clothes and whatever we found in
14 the house -- You see, Europeans put away food, not like
15 here in cans. They put it away in jars. Now it's
16 probably cans. We opened the jars. There was pigs feet.
17 There was, I don't know, just something to eat and we
18 ate - The seven of us - Whatever we could put our hands
19 on. And then we went to bed, seven of us in two beds.

20 I said, "You know, if it's only for this one night
21 it was worth it." I didn't know what tomorrow brings,
22 but I knew this was wonderful. Seven of us. We woke up
23 in the morning. There was nobody there. We were on our
24 own. But we didn't dare to get out of the house. We
25 didn't dare.

1 At night we needed food again. So we broke into
2 the next house and got some food. The third night, you
3 know, we always found a place to break in and get food
4 because hunger, when you are hungry, that's what I always
5 say, people are hungry beware. They don't know anything
6 but the hunger.

7 This was going on for about a week. Every night a
8 different house. We got some food. We found food in the
9 homes.

10 One day somebody knocks on our door and they say
11 "We were watching you. We know you are here. They were
12 Poles, Polish peasants who worked for the Germans during
13 the war. They were also like we, but they were free, you
14 see. They weren't in a concentration camp. These were
15 gentiles. They said "And we are going to report you. We
16 know who you are."

17 I said "How can you do that? You are not free
18 people either. How can you do that to us?"

19 He says "There are some German authorities here.
20 We are going to give you over to the German authorities."

21 I talked to them. My sister Lensie says she never
22 heard anybody talk like that. I begged them. I pleaded
23 with them. "Please don't do it. The war will be over
24 and we will be free, you know?"

25 No, no, they wouldn't listen. Well, finally they

1 did promise me that they are not going report us. But
2 pretty soon -- Pretty soon we found out that they did.
3 And we ran up, what do you call that, where you keep the
4 hay on the top.

5 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Hayloft?

6 A. We ran up and we hid there and the Germans
7 knew where to look for us. They said "You come down one
8 by one and if not we are going up to shoot you all."

9 They came with revolver out. Did we have a
10 choice? We came down. There was a ladder and we came
11 down. They took us into a school and locked us up, to
12 the school house. No food, nothing. And then we were
13 sitting there and -- This was the tenth day of our
14 freedom, so-called freedom. We were sitting in the
15 school house and the night passed and in the morning we
16 saw some strange soldiers. One of the girls that was
17 with us yelled out. She said "The Russians are here.
18 This is a Russian uniform." God, it was unreal, you
19 know.

20 We ran and opened the doors. There were no guards
21 because the Germans were guarding us, you see. No
22 guards. Nobody was there.

23 We ran out into the school yard and there were the
24 Russians. Well, naturally they hugged us, they kissed
25 us. They evidently knew that we were prisoners, you

1 know. They said "You can go into any house, take
2 anything you want." The Germans were all gone.

3 I couldn't do it. I could never take anything
4 away that didn't belong to me. But the girls did. They
5 went and they brought back bedding and they brought back
6 towels and they brought, you know, things that we needed
7 really.

8 So anyway, we were with the Russians. That was a
9 new battle with the Russians, because the Russian
10 soldiers came at night. During the day they brought us
11 food. And they wanted us to drink with them wine. They
12 were drunk. They were drunk all the time. They were
13 behind the front. See, we were 20 kilometer from the
14 front. Naturally they were drinking. Their lives was,
15 you know, they didn't know how long. At night they came
16 back and they wanted us to sleep with them. Those kids
17 were such young kids, you know.

18 I started to fight. I started to fight the
19 Russians, would you believe that, to drive them out. I
20 just wanted to protect the children. Lensie said I was
21 fighting like a lioness, and I did. I did. I got them
22 out. I was hitting right and left, you know. I just
23 wanted them out. Finally we could lock the door again.

24 This happened every night. They broke the door.
25 But then we learned they broke the door and we went out

1 the window. We escaped out of the window. Excuse me. I
2 am sorry. This was going on. We were under the Russians
3 for three months.

4 This was a new battle to be fought. But they did
5 feed us. We were not hungry anymore. And they wanted us
6 to pay for it. The two Czech girls did pay for it. They
7 were just right in front of us there. Two Russian
8 soldiers attacked them. How we got away with it I don't
9 know. I will never know. But we did. None of the girls
10 were attacked. I mean none were raped. These two girls
11 were.

12 It's funny, we were free for ten days and all of a
13 sudden I got very sick. I didn't know what is happening
14 to me. I had a high fever. I was delirious. One day --
15 Yeah. When the girls saw that my sickness worked so well
16 with the Russian soldiers, when they saw me lying there
17 in bed and I was a goner, they turned out from the door.

18 They said "She is very sick, you know." Well, we
19 spoke Russian, we spoke Polish. We are Czechs, you see.
20 The Slovan language, we could communicate with them.

21 They said, like they didn't want to have anything
22 to do with us as a person. So they walked out. When the
23 girls saw that this worked so well they all became sick.
24 One of them put something on their neck, the other one on
25 the teeth, the third one, well, my sister Elsa, she had,

1 I don't know how you call that in English.

2 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Abscess?

3 A. Abscess. Thank you. She went to the
4 infirmary, to where the soldiers were, and they cut it
5 open with a knife. She had to put a sling on her to hold
6 her arm. And that worked. So when they came in they saw
7 a bunch of sick people. They didn't like what they saw
8 and they turned out and that worked for us. But at night
9 the soldiers that came at night, we were in bed. So we
10 ran out the window. They came in the door, we ran out
11 the window.

12 They put us up in a room, the Russians, seven of
13 us in one room. That was heaven, just plain heaven.
14 They brought us food. The girls watched the cows out on
15 the fields. You see the animals were left behind.
16 People ran for their lives, but they couldn't take the
17 cows along and everything. So there were the cows to be
18 watched in the fields. So for that we got food. They
19 brought us some bread, they brought us -- Milk we had
20 from the cows. They were milking the cows, the girls.
21 They learned to milk. So we were not hungry.

22 They brought us sometimes potatoes. Potato was
23 the greatest thing, you know. In the camp we said if we
24 could only once fill up with potatoes, only once, you
25 know, that was the greatest treasure. So they brought us

1 potatoes. They brought us bread. They brought us, not
2 ham.

3 Q. Sausage?

4 A. Some food. We were not hungry anymore.
5 That was going on for three months.

6 One day this Russian soldier comes in. I am all
7 alone and I am deadly sick and he is drunk. I don't even
8 know what is happening.

9 All of a sudden I feel he starts to kiss my arm up
10 and down. I couldn't even move.

11 He says "You know, I am a doctor." He says "You
12 have typhoid fevr. I am going to write you a
13 prescription and send whoever you have with you, send
14 them to where you can fill this prescription."

15 So the girls came home and he left. The soldier
16 left. The girls came home and I told them here was this
17 doctor. He prescribed for me Quinine. The Quinine --
18 Well, I was just gone, you see. I didn't even know. I
19 was lying. I didn't talk anymore. I was just -- It was
20 like I was in the air. When I told the doctor after I
21 was liberated he said "Yeah, that was death." I was just
22 how do you say it?

23 Q. Floating?

24 A. Yeah, floating. It was a very good feeling.
25 That's all I remember. I was floating. That was for

1 three days the girls said, three days. I never talked, I
2 never ate, I never drank, I was just lying and they were
3 terribly worried, Lansie especially because she was in
4 charge then after I got so sick. She said "I was worried
5 how am I going to bury you? I don't want to tell them
6 that we are Jewish. We were so afraid to tell that we
7 are Jewish." She says "That was my biggest worry."

8 So anyway, I didn't die and I survived that too.

9 Pretty soon it was spring, you see. From
10 December. No, January 23rd. The reason I know that
11 date, that was my first husband's birthday. As spring
12 came it was so beautiful. Spring was so beautiful there.
13 We saw flowers again and we saw green leaves and God, I
14 love nature. I couldn't believe it that we lived to see
15 that. Slowly I was recuperating and getting back my
16 strength. I went out and I made walks and I went to the
17 river. I put my feet in. It was living again. The
18 girls went. I was very weak, very weak and I tried to,
19 you know, eat. It didn't work very well. Anyway, my
20 feet were like sticks. No meat on it at all, like sticks
21 when I got out of bed.

22 And I watched so much the girls, it's very
23 contagious. Typhoid fever is very contagious. As sick
24 as I was, I took out -- They had an outhouse. I took it
25 out myself every day as sick as I was that they shouldn't

1 touch anything that I touched. I had a separate dish.
2 Anyway, these are details. I was very happy that nobody
3 got it from me.

4 So what if all nine of us got sick? All seven of
5 us, I mean. Anyway this didn't happen. After three
6 months, you know, it was spring and that was February,
7 March, April. April. The soldiers come in and they say
8 the war is over. It was April the 8th.

9 First we heard Roosevelt died and that was a
10 terrible shock. Terrible shock. The soldiers told us
11 the news. After awhile, I don't know how long in
12 between, I think a week or what, the war ended. And they
13 said the war is over.

14 Well, that was wonderful, the most wonderful news.
15 We stayed two more weeks because we had no way of
16 leaving.

17 The soldiers told us they are going to take us
18 back to Prague on a truck and deliver us to the West
19 Canalis Square. I don't know if you have ever been in
20 Prague. That is the most beautiful square. The most
21 beautiful square. I have never seen anything more
22 beautiful. There we are after so many months. Everybody
23 was carrying something. Everybody had a bundle.
24 Something found a loaf of sugar, a sugar loaf. They
25 thought that was the smallest bundle and I couldn't carry

1 because of my back and my typhoid fever. I was so
2 weakened. I carried that and that was very heavy for me.
3 Very heavy.

4 Anyway, they saw us off these soldiers and they
5 saluted us with 12 gunshots when we left. In style, you
6 know.

7 And then we traveled, I don't know how long. It
8 didn't make any difference to us. You know. They put us
9 on a bus to go and then we were to go. Nobody was
10 waiting for us. It was getting late. I don't know. We
11 met somebody who said there is a Red Cross, there is
12 this, there is that, they are taking care of the
13 refugees, because the refugees were coming back from all
14 over, the ones that survived. They did put us up in an
15 apartment. So we had shelter. But we had no food. You
16 could only get food in Prague if you worked. You could
17 only work if you got a job. Then you got some coupons to
18 buy food.

19 Well, we found out on the street, everybody was on
20 the street, who came back to find each other - Everybody
21 was looking - We found out that our very best friend and
22 Emoric's cousin, who was a doctor, is in a hospital. I
23 don't know, we got in touch with him. He provided us
24 with food. He had access to food from the hospital. So
25 every day the girls went there. I couldn't walk. The

1 girls went there for food and brought it back to me in a
2 little container.

3 That day when I heard the radio it said that there
4 is going to be a big parade in Prague, our liberators
5 will march. And I was thinking what it's going to become
6 of my life.

7 All of a sudden it went through my mind that
8 Emeric is going to be among those. I didn't hear from
9 him since 1939. His mother didn't know about him because
10 we were enemies, you see. He was on the western front
11 and we were on the eastern front, you see. We never
12 heard from him. That day I just felt that he will be
13 here.

14 Now he was my childhood friend. All my life he
15 was my friend. I thought if he comes back, he is going
16 to help me. As I think about this, I think I told you
17 the girls arrived with my food and they say to me who do
18 you think is here?

19 I said his name. Kuhn Emeric. That's in our
20 language. And he walked in, would you believe that? He
21 walked in. Well, that meeting was unforgettable. He was
22 in love with me all his life. He said that's why he
23 survived because he always thought of me. And he heard
24 what's happening to the Jewish woman. He says he didn't
25 care if the whole Army went through. He said he just

1 wanted to find me.

2 Anyway, there he was. My hero. We just didn't
3 want to separate. It was a meeting not to believe. He
4 right away was in charge. Right away he took over. He
5 said "I am going to help you. I will get the girls jobs.
6 I will see that you have food."

7 You know, I was married to another man. I said
8 "But you know I am married."

9 He said "Sure." He knew my husband too. He said
10 "Sure. I will take care of you until he comes back." We
11 didn't know who was coming back. Anyway, that evening he
12 brought us food. He got the ration from all his buddies,
13 all his buddies. They got rations for the parade, you
14 know. They gave everything to him and he brought it to
15 us. There was food on the table, cans. That was the
16 best food we could dream of, you know.

17 The reason I always emphasize food is because that
18 was so important to eat. You see, we were so hungry.
19 Anybody that came into our house was always fed. We had
20 a small apartment. But that was the address to everybody
21 from our area. That was the only address. That's where
22 everybody came. We always had food on the table. Emoric
23 saw to it that we shouldn't be hungry anymore.

24 The next day, yeah, I have to tell you this. I
25 had no clothes. I had a size 40 shoe on. I had a skirt

1 and a blouse that the girls sewed up from bedding.

2 Emoric said "Try to get out of bed."

3 I said "I can't."

4 He said "I will help you."

5 So I put on that skirt and that blouse and the
6 shoes and we went to a friend. He took us to a friend,
7 who he use to know in Europe. I know him too. He was a
8 big shot at the ministerium.

9 He right away got a job for Lensie, you know.
10 Anyway, this man helped us a lot. And then he took me
11 there. I couldn't walk. But he made me walk. I
12 couldn't get on the tramway, what do you call?

13 Q. Tram?

14 A. I couldn't. But he lifted me up. And put
15 me, set me there. He took me along. He wanted me to
16 live again.

17 You know how Emoric found us? I have to tell you
18 this. He was coming in for the parade the day before.
19 He was hanging on. He came in with the last street car
20 from where they were stationed to Prague and he was
21 hanging on the streetcar, you know, outside like here on
22 the cable car, you know. This woman who recognized him
23 from our town, gentile woman who lived in Prague, she
24 recognized Emoric.

25 She said "Emoric. Emoric, get off." You know, he

1 jumps off. That was the last streetcar for the night
2 because ten o'clock everything stopped and it was war.
3 Everything stopped.

4 She said "Come onto my house and you can sleep
5 there and I will tell you about everybody. I know about
6 everybody who survived." She was a gentile woman. She
7 knew about me. I didn't see her, but she knew.

8 She told him I was alive and she told him his
9 cousin was alive, the doctor, and that we go there for
10 food every day. And he should look him up. She gave him
11 the address of the hospital. That's how Emoric was there
12 when the girls came for the food the next day because he
13 arrived there and the doctor said, our friend Louis was
14 his name, he said "Wait, because the girls will be here."

15 Anyway, it was such a coincidence. He didn't want
16 to come to the parade. He is not a parade man, you know.
17 He didn't want to go to the parade. He wanted someone
18 else to go. They said no, it's your turn to go and you
19 are going to go. The coincidence is what I am talking
20 about. There he was in Prague to meet me, you see. From
21 that day there was a big turn in our life because he took
22 care of all of us. All of us.

23 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Were you still seven?

24 A. We were still seven. But the two Czech
25 girls left because they were home. You see, that was

1 their home. Prague was their home. So they left. We
2 were five of us then.

3 MR. KIRSCHMAN: From March from the pig sty?

4 A. From the pig sty. Yeah.

5 Q. What happened after he put you on the tram?
6 He put you on the streetcar?

7 A. To take us to his friend.

8 Well, you know we were in a civilian house again.
9 This friend said he will help us. He got Lensie a job.
10 He said he will help us. Elsa went to college. She
11 right away went to college, Elsa. She was going to
12 graduate that year from gymnasium, but see she was taken
13 in May and she was going to graduate in June. She was
14 admitted to medical school. In Europe it's different,
15 you know. She was admitted to school, to medical school.

16 Life started to get normal. Emeric came that
17 evening. He brought me home from this friend's house.
18 We had food and Emeric stayed over. For a soldier to
19 sleep on the floor it doesn't matter, you know. It
20 didn't matter where we slept. He stayed over and he said
21 to me "I will take care of you from here on."

22 He knew I was married, but he brought us
23 everything. Everything he could get a hold of for us.
24 He got some cigarettes from his buddies. You know, the
25 soldiers always got cigarettes. He went out the next day

1 with me and got me clothes. I was the first girl dressed
2 up. I was the oldest and the sickest and I came home in
3 a beautiful dress and trench coat, in a turban for my
4 hair, because I had no hair, and shoes to fit. Shoes I
5 had. You have no idea what that meant.

6 Then he got all the soldiers, you know, his
7 buddies, and all the girls got clothes. All the girls.
8 He got cigarettes for them and that was black market.
9 For cigarettes you could get anything after the war. And
10 the soldier in uniform had entry everywhere. They let a
11 soldier in, you see. They were the heroes. So a big
12 turn.

13 Q. Now this is the summer of 1945?

14 A. This is the summer of 1945. It's May the
15 29th. May the 29th. Two weeks after we arrived to
16 Prague.

17 Q. When did you start thinking about your
18 husband?

19 A. All along. We were waiting. We were
20 waiting. People were coming back. We knew our parents
21 were not going to come back, because when we were in
22 Auschwitz, and they separated us. I told you the story
23 on that. We were standing appel the next morning. It
24 was May. The snow was falling. That is how cold it was
25 in Silesia where the camp was, Auschwitz. As we are

1 standing there in one piece of clothing, our
2 Blockhostess, she was Jewish, but she was there already
3 four years and they were very hardened. Very hardened.

4 She said "Do you see that smoke going up? Those
5 are your parents going up in smoke."

6 Well, you know, you can't believe it. I mean the
7 human mind just can't. You can't. We thought they are
8 out of their minds. But we felt the stench, you know.
9 They were burning day and night. There were four
10 crematoriums. And we saw the flame. We knew our parents
11 weren't coming back. You see the older people did not
12 survive. Well, my mother was only 50. But that was old,
13 I guess. So we were not expecting our parents back. But
14 I was expecting my husband back. Emeric knew it.

15 I said "You know, I am married."

16 As time went on I found out some people who were
17 with him together in Mauthausen. That's where he died of
18 typhoid fever. After the war so many died because they
19 were so weakened.

20 My uncle came back, who was my age almost, he said
21 "I saw him die. He was with me." So we knew he is not
22 coming back.

23 After a few weeks, that was after sometime. We
24 were so terribly lonely, both of us. He didn't have
25 anybody and I didn't have. So we decided we are going to

1 get married. It wasn't easy to get married because you
2 had to have a certificate that your husband died. I
3 don't know, but they did let us get married. Not in
4 Jewish.

5 Q. Civil?

6 A. In civil. So we got married. Pretty soon
7 because it so happened that, you know, they scared us all
8 the time. From where we are that's Russia now, you see.
9 They are coming and they are going to gather us up and
10 take us back to Russia. Now we didn't want to go back to
11 Russia. We are not Russians, but we knew the Russians.
12 We were so afraid because we knew what the Russian
13 soldiers were like. We didn't want to go back home.

14 One day we went to a camp near Pilsen. That's
15 where my husband was stationed, not far away, and we were
16 again staying, sleeping in bunkers, three like in the
17 camp and getting ready to leave Czechoslovakia and go to
18 these D.P. camps. You see, D.P. camps in Vienna they had
19 them, in Germany, and we were ready to go.

20 I think, well, before I leave I have to call
21 Emoric. I did get in touch with him. I don't remember
22 how. At his base. He left his base that minute when he
23 heard from me. I sent him a telegram. There was no
24 telephone. I sent him a telegram and I told him where I
25 am. He received that telegram.

1 He said he was lying on his bed. He didn't ask
2 anybody, just the way he was. He said on a motorbike and
3 he was there in no time at the camp where we were
4 gathered.

5 He said -- We talked it over. That's when we
6 decided we are going to get married. If I am married to
7 a Czech soldier they cannot remove me from
8 Czechoslovakia. So this is how we married so fast.
9 Emoric said I talked him into it.

10 Q. Shotgun wedding.

11 A. That's when we married, a civil wedding. We
12 right away applied and we had to wait a few days.

13 I went home to Prague and then -- No. No.
14 Emoric never left. Never left. He came back to Prague
15 with me and we went back to Pilsen and we got married.
16 He didn't ask for a permit to leave his base. Nothing
17 was important to him, only me, that he shouldn't lose me.
18 We got married and he came back to his post.

19 He told who was in charge, you know, he had to
20 report. He told him what happened and he said to him,
21 his officer, whoever was in charge, he said look, if you
22 got married that's enough punishment. I am not going to
23 punish you. Because he could have been court marshalled.
24 He left without leave of absense. He just left. He said
25 "I couldn't think of anything else, just that you are

1 leaving" because I told him where we were. Anyway, we
2 came back to Prague. So did Elsa. You see Lensie and
3 the other niece wasn't with us anymore. They went back
4 home to see if they can find something. I never went
5 back home. Never.

6 First of all, I was sick physically. I was sick
7 in every which way. I just couldn't see myself go back
8 home and face the emptiness there. I thought "What does
9 it all mean to me if there is nobody there any more?" I
10 never went back. You see, I had things dug away. I
11 didn't care. I just didn't. Nothing mattered. Just
12 life. I couldn't face what I left behind. My parents,
13 my brother and all my relatives, God, such a big family;
14 I lost so many people. There were eighty people, close
15 relatives. They were big families. I stayed in Prague.

16 I had grandparents in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.
17 Emoric sent them a telegram from his base. There was no
18 communication. There was no postal service or anything.
19 You couldn't write to America, you see. He sent them a
20 telegram from the Army saying we are alive and saying
21 that we want to come to America. Do you know that pretty
22 soon we got affidavits. My grandparents were very old.
23 They weren't very well to do because they lost everything
24 in the depression and they couldn't make it back. They
25 were too old. They sent us everything, my grandparents.

1 They sold their war bonds and they brought us here.

2 So you know, that was quite a luck. It was big
3 luck. After a year, we lived in Prague for a year,
4 Emoric, myself and Elsa. After a year we arrived in
5 Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.

6 Q. How did you travel there?

7 A. By boat. We came from Sweden. We came from
8 Sweden, from Goteborg, to New York. We traveled a long
9 time.

10 MR. KIRSCHMAN: How did you get to Sweden?

11 A. We flew or did we go by train? What was in
12 1946? God, do you know I can't remember. No, we went by
13 train. Sure, by train.

14 Q. Was that from Prague?

15 A. From Prague we went to Sweden.

16 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Who went?

17 A. Emoric, Elsa and myself, the three of us.

18 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Who from your family stayed?

19 A. Lensie. But she wasn't with us anymore.

20 Lensie went back home because, you see, we were three
21 kinds of children. Minadinaunsala, do you know what that
22 was? I was my mother's, Lensie was her father's. We are
23 not really sisters, but we grew up together so we are
24 real. Elsa was the child between them. I had a brother
25 who never returned. So Lensie had a sister who survived

1 back in Siget. She lived in Siget. You know where Elie
2 Wiesel comes from. She very much wanted Lensie to come
3 home to her and she did. And the niece too, Lillie, who
4 lives in Texas now.

5 Anyway, what I wanted to tell you about my coming
6 to America, I was here as a little girl with my mother.
7 My mother was a widow. She was a widow at 19. And I was
8 nine months old. We survived the first world war in
9 Europe. My history is not so simple, my background. My
10 mother was so young. There was a big war. And there was
11 nothing to do with in Europe in a small town for a widow
12 with a child. It's not like here that you get married
13 again.

14 In those days, you know -- My grandfather was here
15 in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. He left before the war by
16 himself and he left his family back in Europe. But they
17 had no -- They never had any communication because the
18 war broke out. There was a big war for four years.
19 That's way before your time. So after the war they got
20 in contact and my mother said, she wrote my grandfather,
21 who was her father-in-law, that we all want to come to
22 America. He sent us -- They were seven. We were two.
23 Nine ship cards to America. That was in 1921. Is this
24 important?

25 Q. Yes, please.

1 A. 1921. What was I? Seven years old. We
2 arrived. My mother, well, there was a lot of work to be
3 done. She went to Prague and got, you know, there was so
4 much work to do. My mother, she really -- I don't know
5 how she did it, but she did it. Got everything together
6 and nine of us came to America.

7 Q. Who?

8 A. My grandmother, with six children, and my
9 mother with me. That was quite something too. Did I
10 confuse you?

11 Q. No.

12 A. I bet.

13 Q. Tell us when the ship landed in New York.

14 A. In New York. We came through Ellis Island,
15 you know. When they show Ellis Island I was there.

16 I was just at a party at the old age home. I am
17 very involved with the Silver Avenue Home. I am a
18 volunteer there. They had this show for the Hanukkah.
19 It was Ellis Island. It was quite an experience.

20 Anyway, what I want to say I was there and when we
21 arrived a few days my grandfather, who I never knew,
22 arrived. He left my grandmother pregnant in Europe. But
23 the war broke out. Me, I was just born and he left. He
24 was lucky he left before the war broke out. This is how
25 we all came here. All of a sudden he appears. I

1 remember so well. He was a very nice looking man. He
2 met the nine of us in Ellis Island and brought us back to
3 Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. He had a place for us to live.

4 As a matter of fact, he had three houses. He
5 worked and he invested his money in real estate, which he
6 lost during the depression. Anyway, that was the
7 beginning of our life in America. My mother went to
8 work. She got a job at the old age home, the Jewish old
9 age home in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, which was very lucky
10 because she knew no English. She didn't speak English.

11 She couldn't take me along. I stayed with my
12 grandmother and the six children. I was the seventh.
13 For four years I stayed with them. My mother, I would go
14 to see my mother on weekends, on vacations. I was the
15 only child they would allow to stay at the old age home.
16 I happened to be very good friends there with the
17 superintendent's child. We loved each other. This is
18 how I could stay with my mother. No children were
19 allowed.

20 Anyway, this is how we stayed in America for four
21 years. But my mother was so homesick, she was so
22 terribly homesick for her sisters and her family.
23 Sisters and brothers. She had eleven at home. They were
24 12 children. She wanted to go back home. Which was
25 insane to go back to Europe in a small town from America,

1 you know. But she did it. Then when she came back she
2 got married.

3 In the meantime there was a widower, Lensie's
4 father, across the street from us. They knew each other
5 before. He became a widower. She was a widow. They got
6 married and we stayed there in that small town. That was
7 the end of my life. But it was the beginning for my
8 mother. It was not an easy life to adjust to six
9 sisters. She married a man with six girls. And a
10 stepfather.

11 I somehow never held it against my mother because
12 she was so young. I never was a child really. I was
13 always grown up and I understood that my mother had to
14 get married. She was too young to stay alone. Because
15 we were friends, my mother and me. We were so close, so
16 very close. She told me everything. I don't remember
17 being a child. I was her confidant. She got married and
18 I had to understand that it's her life.

19 She told me before we entered -- Before I entered
20 that house. She said "You see, you are not going to be
21 my little girl anymore because there is Lensie and
22 Bobbie. Lensie and Bobbie they were two smaller sisters.
23 They are going to be my babies and not you anymore." She
24 made me understand that it's a new life and I have to
25 support her in it. She said "You are not going to make

1 me any difficulties, are you?"

2 I said "No." But it was hard. That was a turning
3 point in my life.

4 In America I loved America. I loved the freedom
5 here. This is what I want to bring out. The freedom. I
6 went to school and the teachers, I had such a good
7 relationship with my teachers. My teacher told me, she
8 said. She knew I was an orphan. My mother never came to
9 anything and I was in every play and exercise. I was
10 right in front all the time from Europe. I was a very
11 lively child. I don't know how I kept like that but I
12 did. That's what kept me going, you see. I never lost
13 my love for life. I never did.

14 She said, you know, "I am going to help you
15 through college. I will stay beside you."

16 You know, it was such a good world for me. Not
17 that my grandparents home was anything to be happy about.
18 My grandmother just came from Europe and had to adjust to
19 American life. It was very hard on her and six children.
20 It was not an easy life. But I don't know. I just kept
21 going. I just did my thing and I enjoyed life in
22 America. I was such a happy child. After four years my
23 mother took me back. I wasn't a happy child then, but I
24 made the best of it. That's when I met Emoric, you see.
25 My mother was married that is where Emoric comes from and

1 my grandparents. So I met Emeric and he became my best
2 friend and his sister and I had a home away from home at
3 their house. His mother loved me. I could always go to
4 their house.

5 When my mother got married she would say "Any time
6 you want to come my home is open to you." It was very
7 good. Very good. Friends. That's how how Emeric became
8 my life long friend. So America never went out of my
9 mind. This is what I want to come back to. In the
10 concentration camp I always thought if I am going to get
11 out of this I am going to come to America. I don't want
12 any part of Europe. Just live in freedom. And that's
13 what I did. I never went back home. I never got
14 settled.

15 Emeric could have gotten a business, because he
16 was a soldier and they had all kinds of advantages. They
17 gave them businesses, you know.

18 I said "No, I don't want to settle in Europe from
19 where they threw us out; they didn't want us here. I
20 never want to settle in Europe." I had one aim, to come
21 to freedom, to live in freedom and I made it. I came
22 back as crippled as I was, I came back to America.

23 Q. What do you remember about your arrival
24 here, the day you came back the second time?

25 A. The second time? Emeric had some relatives

1 who waited for us in New York. We stayed a few days in
2 New York. Then we came back to Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.
3 By train. It was only trains. Sure. I put on my most
4 beautiful smile. I thought everybody is going to be at
5 the train waiting for us because I knew all these people.
6 Nobody waited for us. Not one soul. So we took a taxi.
7 We all could speak English, you see. My husband was in
8 the British army, Elsa learned English. We didn't have
9 difficulties with the language very much. We came back
10 to my grandparents' house.

11 My grandparents were in a very bad way. They lost
12 everything and they lived with a daughter in one house in
13 Pittsburgh Pennsylvania.

14 Q. Your aunt?

15 A. My grandmother. My aunt. It was a three
16 bedroom house. They put us in the laundry room in the
17 basement. They put us up in the basement. Laundry was
18 going day and night because she had three children.

19 Well, I was still happy to be in America, you
20 know. That's where I wanted to be.

21 Emoric -- My mother's old friend. My mother use
22 to have friends in Pittsburgh. He got my husband the
23 first job. He was working. Emoric said, you know, I
24 heard of an apartment. Apartments were so scarce,
25 terribly scarce after the war. He gave me the address.

1 He phoned me from his business. He was working in a
2 grocery store. He says "Try to get that apartment."

3 I went down and that apartment was rented. That
4 was on Parkview Avenue, near Schenley Park. I never
5 forget that. The lady, the owner of the house, she was a
6 Yugoslavian woman. Lovely, lovely person.

7 I said "Mrs. Greenberg, I need this apartment so
8 much. We just came from Europe." I told her our
9 situation. "And we are in a laundry room. And please,
10 please give me this apartment."

11 She said "I can't. I already accepted a deposit."

12 I said "Give it back to them and tell them your
13 relative arrived from Europe."

14 You know, she did it. God was good to me. That's
15 why I believe in miracles; I do. That was a miracle to
16 get an apartment after the war. It was. You know, they
17 were not to be had. Soldiers were coming back from the
18 war. So she put us up on the third floor in Pittsburgh
19 Pennsylvania. That was heaven, just sheer heaven. It
20 was hot in the summer, cold in the winter but it was
21 home. We were alone. Emoric came home every day. He
22 was the happiest person in the world. You never seen
23 anybody so happy. We had nothing. It was a furnished
24 apartment. We didn't want anything. Just each other.
25 And this is how we lived there for a year and-a-half.

1 Then Elsa got a scholarship at U.C.. U.C.
2 Berkeley. Elsa is very bright, very bright girl. She
3 came to California. She bombarded us with letters,
4 cards. She always sends beautiful cards. She said if we
5 are doomed to live we might as well live in California.
6 And we left without anything. We had no money. Emoric's
7 friend came too. He lived in Chicago. We came to
8 Berkeley. We arrived to Berkeley.

9 My sister Elsa was already sick then. She didn't
10 recover from the concentration camp. She still is a very
11 sick girl. But she was going to be a doctor. She
12 couldn't make it. She became a psychiatric social
13 worker. Has worked for years here and got married to a
14 psychiatrist. After seven years they got a divorce.
15 What else is there? That was such a set back in her life
16 that she never did recuperate. She worked for many years
17 and then she gave up on that too.

18 Q. Is she alive?

19 A. She connected with your organization here in
20 the way that she sees somebody in Palo Alto. It's a
21 social worker, a psychologist, that help people who are
22 sick like Elsa.

23 Q. What do you remember about the trip from
24 Pittsburgh to Berkeley?

25 A. We came by train, Southern Pacific. It took

1 a long time to get here. I don't remember now. Twenty-
2 four hours or so.

3 We arrived to Berkeley. Elsa was waiting for us.
4 And we got a room with kitchen privileges. Emeric
5 couldn't get a job in Berkeley. All the jobs were taken
6 by students. So we had to move to San Francisco. We
7 wanted to stay in Berkeley. We just loved Berkeley.

8 We arrived December 1st, 1947 and the roses were
9 in bloom and people were watering their lawns. We
10 couldn't believe it. We never saw anything like that.

11 Emeric says "No matter what, we are not going back
12 from here. We are going to stay." So we had a hard
13 time, okay? We didn't have it easy. But we never, never
14 asked for any help nowhere. Always on our own, we always
15 made it on our own.

16 Emeric walked the streets of San Francisco, the
17 hills, by foot from door-to-door he was knocking for a
18 job. And do you know how he got his first job? Should I
19 tell you?

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. I was lying on my back, because I was in
22 pain all the time. And then I was already wearing a
23 brace. The doctor in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, when I
24 told him "Doctor, this is no life for me to be on a
25 mattress all day." He said "What are you complaining,"

1 he said. "You live on borrowed time." He died a long
2 time ago and I am here.

3 So anyway, as I was still sick, oh, God, I wanted
4 to bring out something very important and I lost my -- .
5 Yeah. How he got his job.

6 I was listening to the radio all day. That helped
7 me a lot with my English, you know. Because I forgot a
8 lot. I came back as a child of eleven. Anyway, I
9 listened to the radio and I hear this program on. I
10 don't know if you remember. No, you can't remember. You
11 are too young. There was a sidewalk reporter in front of
12 the Owl drug store. There was an Owl drug store on
13 Venice Avenue.

14 Look, you are smiling. You remember. He said,
15 you know, any problem you have you could come to him.

16 I called up and I got an appointment on the
17 sidewalk, with the sidewalk reporter, and I told him that
18 we are from Europe. I told them shortly our story and we
19 are survivors and we want nothing, my husband only wants
20 a job. That's all I am asking for.

21 I came home to my apartment, which was a furnished
22 room with kitchen privileges again. Bad. Bad. I got
23 six calls from America people. That's how big the
24 American people's hearts are, you know. I believe in
25 America. They had six people called me to offer jobs for

1 my husband. He had a job the next day. They told me he
2 should come here and here and he will have a job. He
3 did.

4 This is how we started our life in San Francisco.
5 From there on it was always better. We always bettered
6 ourselves, but we were always so happy, no matter what.
7 It was just a good life. For me it was freedom. That's
8 all I wanted, freedom.

9 Naturally, my husband was with me. You know, the
10 love I got from him made up for everything. You know, he
11 just adored me. No matter what. I had no hair, I was
12 bent in two. He said to me you are always the same. You
13 never changed. Now he says it too and I am so old
14 already.

15 He says, anywhere we go, he says to me "Who do you
16 think was the prettiest?" I said "I am glad your eyes
17 don't change."

18 Anyway, this was our life. Slowly we always
19 improved our lives. He became manager. Pretty soon he
20 became manager of the store he got his job in. And then
21 we saved money. We saved our money. We saved up in
22 seven years \$7,000.00. We bought into a market.

23 Q. A food market.

24 A. Food market. That's where we made our first
25 money. Eight years he was in the market.

1 I said "Emoric, you have a good head on your
2 shoulders." He is very smart. He is a good businessman.
3 "You don't have to make your livelihood with your energy,
4 with your strength. You make your livelihood with your
5 head, with your brain."

6 I knew that he could do better. Well, first he
7 tried real estate. He didn't like it. He said too many
8 lies. Too many lies. I wish he would have stayed with
9 it. Anyway, in short we bought a business that is
10 California Concession Supply. It was on Golden Gate
11 Avenue. We supplied movie theaters with everything that
12 you see in the theater lobby, machinery.

13 Q. Food?

14 A. Yeah, everything. Popcorn and the drinks
15 and everything, supplies, all the supplies. He bought
16 this business. It was a wholesale business.

17 I said to him, you know, "Emoric, I would very
18 much like you to work only five days because I don't want
19 you to work on the Shabbatt. I wanted to observe the
20 Shabbatt. I come from a religious background. I have a
21 kosher house. I need it. I have a need for it. That's
22 my tradition. I hang on to it. I don't give it up. I
23 have Passover, everything, like at home. Emeric doesn't
24 have a religious background, but he goes along with me.
25 He is good about it. So we bought this.

1 I said "I really would like to observe the
2 Shabbatt." And we bought this wholesale business and
3 there is no Saturday, no Sunday. Emeric quadrupled it
4 and more. I knew he had the brains. He made it so big,
5 you know, and he is not as good at English as I am, and I
6 am not that good. He contacted people that you wouldn't
7 believe, theater people. It's a different breed, you
8 know, theatre people. He had the nerve. He could call
9 people on the telephone. He could sell them merchandise.
10 Right away a new theatreman came to town, he got in touch
11 and took him to lunch and did business. He was so
12 confident. It's true, I gave him a lot.

13 He said without me he couldn't have done it. I
14 always said "You can do it, I know you can do it."

15 They were big business in Europe too, his mother
16 and him. He did it. He said because you always believed
17 in me. And I did. Anyway, he did it. That was already
18 later in life. Until then we had to struggle. Like
19 everybody else in America. Somehow we always bettered
20 ourselves. Always. Here we are. He is retired now ten
21 years.

22 Q. What about the other members of your family
23 who survived?

24 A. My other members? My mother had three
25 brothers in Isreal. Two of them were almost my age.

1 Those were the only three who survived out of 12
2 children. One of them was in Isreal. He is still alive.
3 He is younger than me, my uncle. Two of them, one was
4 older, two years older and one was my age. They both
5 died. Three years ago. They died of cancer, both of
6 them. They went through a lot, an awful lot.
7 Everything. They settled in Isreal. I really didn't
8 have any other family here.

9 Q. What about Lensie?

10 A. Lensie? Lensie came here. I don't know who
11 interviewed. Maybe you. I don't know. She lives in
12 Hillsboro, has two children, a sick husband, very sick
13 husband. You know, we are all up in age.

14 Q. And Elsa lives where?

15 A. Elsa lives in San Francisco. Elsa is alone.
16 It's unbelievable, but we were so very close, Elsa and
17 myself. Hitler won out. We lost each other. It's
18 unbelievable. We have no relationship. She is so
19 alienated, she is so alienated from me and I was the one,
20 and she knows I saved her many times in the camp. Many
21 times. Because she gave up and I always pulled her out
22 of things that she would have been gone a long time ago.
23 After the camp she said "Do you think I am thankful to
24 you that you saved my life? I am not."

25 MR. KIRSCHMAN: What do you think she meant

1 by that?

2 A. She would have rather died. She would have.
3 Elsa had no luck. But you make your luck, you see. I
4 don't believe in that. I believe you do it yourself.
5 Elsa didn't do it. She always got into things that
6 weren't good for her.

7 Q. Is she a bitter person now?

8 A. Yes. She is a sick person.

9 Q. What about Lillie?

10 A. Lillie is also a very sick person. The two
11 of them, they never recovered. They never recovered.

12 Only Lillie got married to a man who is, who was
13 in Europe and she wasn't religious at all, Lillie. This
14 man adored her. Adored her. He was a widower. He lost
15 his wife and two children, I think. Very bright, nice
16 looking man.

17 He married her and he is very good to her. No
18 matter what she does it's fine, you see. She watches
19 television all day. She has no interest, nothing. She
20 has two children though. Two children that are married
21 and they have a lot of knockouts out of the children.

22 Q. Where does she live?

23 A. In Dallas Texas. Her husband is very well
24 to do. She was lucky. She found a man who cared for her
25 very much. Everybody said that's not for her, but she

1 wanted to marry him. She knew he is going to take care
2 of her, you see, and he does. This just like I knew
3 Emoric would take care of me. I knew I could trust him.

4 After I was getting better I had another suitor or
5 two and he was a doctor and he was from our area. He
6 says I should come with him to the D.P. camp and we will
7 come together to America. He had so much money. God, he
8 carried this, you know, this safe under his arm. Very,
9 very wealthy man. He says "Look, we will have a good
10 life."

11 I said "But I am sick. You know I am sick."

12 He said "I am a doctor. I will take care of you."

13 I didn't trust him. Emoric had nothing, only the
14 uniform on his back, and I knew he will take care of me
15 all his life. I knew that. So that's what I chose. You
16 see, I believe in making your own luck. I do.

17 Even now I don't know if this belongs here. In
18 April they discovered I had a lump and it was -- Well, at
19 first it wasn't malignant and then they discovered, they
20 sent it through pathology that there is some malignancy.
21 But it didn't spread. It was non-invasive, okay. I went
22 to an oncologist and she said I need radiation treatment.
23 I didn't accept it. I said I am going to Stanford. I
24 told my surgeon, who operated on me, I said "Doctor, I
25 want to go to the top, to the best. Please advise me

1 where to go. I said I want to go to Stanford."

2 He is a Stanford graduate and he knows all the
3 people at Stanford and he sent me to the oncology
4 department there. I found doctors that are outstanding.
5 They are human beings, not only doctors. They cared so
6 much. I spent half a day there. They said you don't
7 need any radiation. You are just going to be on the
8 pill. It's called Tomoxaphine. This is a new pill out
9 that prevents it from spreading. It prevents from
10 getting more cancer. I want to believe it. Okay, I want
11 to believe it.

12 I went to the radiologist because I already had an
13 appointment in Burlingame. That's where I live. The
14 radiologist, he was just the finest person. He also
15 teaches at Stanford. He said "You don't need radiology.
16 You will be all right."

17 You see, if I would have stayed with the first
18 oncologist I would have gone through hell and maybe she
19 would have sent me for chemo too, you know. Here I am, I
20 am okay, but the thoughts have to be healthy, you see.

21 They told me at Stanford if I am going to deal
22 with it and not let it get to me I am going to be all
23 right. I should not worry about it, that I am going to
24 survive this.

25 I said I know I will because I survived so much

1 and I am not giving up so easily. I am going to fight
2 this too and I did. I went to the top, you see. And I
3 took their advice of the Stanford people, okay?

4 I thought it over and I thought this is the best
5 for me. I just want to tell you that you make your own
6 life. I don't know what is going to happen. I don't
7 know. But I am 78 years old and I lived a pretty good
8 life on and off, you know. I had sickness and all. I
9 always had somebody with me. Emoric always supported me.

10 Q. What about your back injury from the war?

11 A. That is still there. I still wear a
12 support. I still wear a support. I wear braces for
13 years. For years. I still have them. But I don't put
14 them on anymore because I swim every day.

15 I wanted a pool. More than anything else in my
16 life, okay? I said if I am going to swim -- because the
17 swimming was very good for me. Once I was going to have
18 a big operation on my back. I was already set up for an
19 operation. I told the doctor, "Doctor, I want to go
20 home."

21 He said "But you are set up for an operation."

22 I said "I don't care. I want to go home and try
23 it on my own because my life I saved many times and I
24 want to try again."

25 Do you know that in a year I was wearing one of

1 those braces that you couldn't move in. I couldn't
2 drive. It's called a royalty brace. You make it to fit
3 your body. I wore that brace for a year. I started to
4 swim in the swimming pools in San Francisco. Larson's.
5 I went by bus. I could hardly get on the bus but I went.
6 Every day I swam. I believe in that.

7 I told Emoric the only thing I would really like
8 in my life is a swimming pool. And I swear by it. I
9 don't wear braces anymore. Rain or shine I am in that
10 pool in the morning. You have to do things for yourself.

11 Now Elsa can't do it. She can't do it. She is
12 not capable. Well, Elsa is my biggest tragedy in my
13 life. Should I tell you? Because Elsa I loved so much.
14 There wasn't a person in this whole world I loved more
15 than Elsa. She was my little sister, my first human
16 being that belonged to me from the same mother. I adored
17 her. We had such a wonderful relationship. Until the
18 war was over.

19 I always have a feeling, although she never
20 admitted it, that because I got married she felt I let
21 her down. I had this feeling. We never discussed it.
22 See, I didn't belong to her anymore. I think that's
23 where it all started. She didn't like my husband. She
24 never liked him. And he was so good to her. He was so
25 good to her. He bought her everything that he bought me.

1 I got a suit, she got a suit. I got shoes, she got
2 shoes. Everything I had she had. He knew her since she
3 was a little baby, you see. He remembers when she was
4 born. He knew how very close I am to Elsa. Elsa was
5 like my child.

6 Q. What is the age difference?

7 A. Thirteen years. My mother got married when
8 I was 12 and Elsa was born within a year.

9 It's a terrible tragedy because we really need
10 each other. There is no one left. But I can't get close
11 to Elsa. It's impossible to approach her. We helped her
12 in every which way. Every which way. With school. She
13 already got therapy then.

14 Q. Does she have physical consequences?

15 A. No. No. No. She doesn't. Not from the
16 camp, no.

17 Q. What about your father's siblings in this
18 country. Aunts, uncles?

19 A. My real father?

20 Q. Yes, your real father.

21 A. I don't have anybody here, but I have some
22 in Los Angeles, cousin's. They are doing very well and I
23 see them periodically. I have in Connecticut. They came
24 to see me not long ago. They spent three days with us.
25 But they are far away. I don't see them that often. So

1 you feel you are alone. God forbid if something happens
2 to Emeric; there is nothing left.

3 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Do you have family back in
4 Europe?

5 A. No. No. Emeric has a sister in Carlsbad,
6 but she never wanted to come to America. She was afraid
7 of America. The hard life.

8 Q. Did you ever return to Europe?

9 A. Oh, yes. We were there last year. We went
10 to see her. After they became democratic. We were back
11 once while they were communist, you know. We felt very
12 uncomfortable there so we never went back. We felt like
13 we were watched all the time. Being Americans you were
14 afraid. So we didn't go again. But now we were back
15 there just a year ago. It's going to be two years in
16 July.

17 Q. Would you ever go back to your home?

18 A. To live?

19 Q. No, to visit.

20 A. No. I never went back. I never had the
21 desire. Never. It was a new beginning and I needed all
22 my strength for my new life. I couldn't go back. And I
23 think I did the right thing. This was my decision. My
24 husband went back.

25 First of all physically I wasn't well enough to

1 travel after the war and then emotionally too I wasn't
2 ready to face that loss.

3 MR. KIRSCHMAN: When you went back two years
4 ago where did you visit?

5 A. The sister in Carlsbad. But we didn't live
6 there originally. We lived with Emoric in Prague for a
7 year. We came to Carlsbad. That's a beautiful resort.
8 It's a health spa. I took all the --

9 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Vapors?

10 A. The baths and the water. It was really very
11 good for me. He did too.

12 Q. What is the most vivid memory you have, the
13 most vivid memory you have of all that happened?

14 A. All that happened?

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. After or before?

17 Q. In the concentration camp.

18 A. In the concentration camp?

19 Q. And before you were liberated.

20 A. Well, my most vivid memory is when they
21 separated me from my mother. That was the most terrible
22 thing in my life because we got off that cattle train and
23 all of a sudden we found ourselves only the women. The
24 Germans separated the men and separated the women and the
25 children went with their mothers and grandmothers right

1 away to the crematorium.

2 My mother was sent to the right, I was sent to the
3 left. The right meant the crematorium.

4 When we got off the train my mother said to me "I
5 am scared" and my mother never would say anything like
6 that to me. She said "Please, don't leave me. Don't
7 leave me."

8 I had talked to her. I said "No, I am not going
9 to leave you." There was this man standing, who was
10 separating us with a stick. He was pointing right and
11 left. He sent my mother to the right and me to the left.
12 I went up to him. He stood there like a God. That was
13 Mengele. I said to him in German "Please, let me go with
14 my mother. I am a married woman too." I looked very
15 young at that time.

16 MR. KIRSCHMAN: You were thirty-one?

17 A. Thirty-one. I said "Please, let me go with
18 her. I am married." I thought they were separating the
19 married.

20 He looks at me and he said gunstulaffen. That
21 means can you run. Run. And he pointed to the left.
22 And that's when I saw my mother leaving all by herself.
23 That feeling I will never forget in all my life. That
24 was the most dreadful, the most painful that I ever
25 experienced.

1 And then well, many times in the camp when there
2 were selections with Mengele -- How I escaped that was
3 something, you know. When I heard he was coming I jumped
4 into a hole where there was rainwater. I jumped into a
5 hole like that and I was hiding until the selections were
6 over. When I came out I was wet, wet. It was in
7 November. There were no clothes to be gotten. I had to
8 stand up at appel the next morning. There was no place
9 to dry the clothes. They were on the floor.

10 In the morning before appel somebody threw a
11 package of clothing over the fence. It was an electric
12 fence. And there was dry clothing in it. That was
13 another sister. She can't even come here, you see, she
14 is so sick. Another step-sister, Bobbie. Her name is
15 Bobbie. She is also very sick. She has, you know when
16 you don't eat? Anorexia.

17 Q. Where is she living now?

18 A. In Burlingame all alone.

19 MR. KIRSCHMAN: You have six step-sisters?

20 A. Six step-sisters. Three of them survived
21 and three of them died. Lensie, Bobbie and Helen
22 survived. Three of them died. They didn't get a chance.

23 Q. Who are the three that died?

24 A. The three, one was Lillie's mother. Lillie.
25 When they took her mother she never spoke again. She

1 never spoke again, Lillie. That's how sick she got. But
2 her mother gave up in Auschwitz right away. She didn't
3 want to go on fighting.

4 You see, there were many people like that in
5 Auschwitz. They couldn't do it. She said this is the
6 hell of hells. I never forget that expression. This is
7 the hell of hells. I can't do it. They took her, they
8 selected her to the crematorium. They took a truck every
9 day, not once they came and picked up people who were
10 not, you know, who weren't going to survive, who gave up.
11 So she died. Lillie was left behind with us. She never
12 spoke, Lillie, for months she never spoke. Her mother
13 left her, you see. And then there was Rosie. She was
14 the oldest. She was in front of me she went with her
15 daughter. Her daughter was much younger than me. She
16 went to the right. Mengele pointed to the right. Mother
17 and daughter. Daughter was only 18. There is no answer
18 to these things. Why he told me to run for my life.

19 MR. KIRSCHMAN: You knew it was your life?

20 A. I didn't know at the time, no. But now I
21 know. What difference did it make to him? Well, I don't
22 know. They said blond people did have an advantage.
23 Well built. He liked well built women, okay. That's
24 what they said about him. I don't know if that was true
25 or not. But every time there was a selection I passed.

1 I passed.

2 When there was a selection you put one piece of
3 clothing on your left arm and you had to pass by him, you
4 know. If he okayed you fine, if you passed you were
5 lucky. If you didn't they took you in one of those
6 trucks, the covered trucks. I am still afraid of a
7 covered truck. I am always afraid what is underneath,
8 you know? When I see those trucks.

9 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Tell me about the clothing.

10 A. The clothing over the left arm. The other
11 arm you had to hold up to see if there is any, you know,
12 sores.

13 Q. What, if anything, else were you wearing?

14 A. Pardon me?

15 Q. Were you without clothing?

16 A. Without clothing, stark naked all the time.

17 Q. In the winter?

18 A. Nothing. There was just one dress to pull
19 up. We had no underwear.

20 Q. Over the left arm?

21 A. And right arm we had to hold up like this.
22 If he saw anything, you know, if you had pimples, that
23 was the end. That was the end. Many people had
24 diphtheria. Elsa had diphtheria. Shall I tell you a
25 story about Elsa?

1 Q. Please.

2 A. She got diphtheria. They announced in our
3 camp that everybody who has a fever, doesn't feel good
4 should report because there is diphtheria epidemic and
5 we will all be exterminated if we don't report the one
6 that's sick. Elsa was broken out here (indicating the
7 chest). She was broken out. I knew it was diphtheria.
8 Not diphtheria. What do you call that?

9 Q. Pox, chickenpox?

10 A. Diphtheria is in the throat.

11 Q. Chickenpox?

12 A. No.

13 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Smallpox?

14 A. No. Anyway, it's contagious. We were 12 of
15 us on this, what do you call it? There were three of
16 these.

17 Q. Bunks?

18 A. Bunks. We were on the top bunks. 12 of us.
19 I was with Eva. I don't know. I am sure you know Eva.
20 I was with Eva. We still are very good friends. Her two
21 sisters were with us. We were four of us, that's seven.
22 Then there were four more. Twelve of us. We had one
23 blanket. When one turned everybody had to turn at night.
24 The shoes were under here (indicating under her head).
25 The shoes were under our head. That was our pillow.

1 I said to Lensie, "You know Elsa has the sickness.
2 I am not going to report her and I am not going to let
3 her report. Because our life isn't worth much anyway.
4 We don't know which minute it's over. I am not going to
5 give up Elsa. I am not going to do it. I am not going
6 to let her."

7 Elsa wanted to report because Elsa is very
8 conscientious, you know. I said "No." Lensie agreed.
9 Nobody knew among the twelve of us that Elsa was sick.
10 And do you know she stayed alive. Then Elsa got this
11 terrible -- You know, people got and they had to run?

12 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Dysentery?

13 A. Terrible dysentery. She couldn't stand up.
14 She couldn't stand on her feet. I was holding her up
15 until we were counted. Then she had to stand on her own
16 feet. They would have clobbered her to death if somebody
17 couldn't stand on their feet. Elsa was so sick she was
18 dying. Elsa was dying. Everything was running from her.

19 I used to go out two o'clock at night, get washed
20 and I would meet these men. The Polish Jews who came to
21 clean our toilets.

22 I said to them, you know, "I have a sister who is
23 deathly sick and please help me." There were coal pills
24 around. You couldn't get them. I said "Would you please
25 get me some coal pills and save my sister's life?"

1 They said I should be here the next night at the
2 same time. We weren't suppose to walk between -- If they
3 saw us from where they watched us, the tower, they shot
4 us. I don't know how. I went. I went. They gave me
5 the coal pills and Elsa started to take them and she got
6 better. I didn't care. I didn't care. I just went.

7 The same way I got food. You see, you couldn't
8 survive on the food you got in Auschwitz. You couldn't.
9 It was impossible. It was a thin soup. It was a piece
10 of bread. The way we survived is we worked. Eva got us
11 into one of those places that the food came in. Not
12 food. Oh, dishes. We had to sort out things. We had to
13 sort out things. Also pillows with feather in it. Those
14 pillow cases were beautiful. They were made out of
15 satin, silk. You see, those people who came from France,
16 from Dania, from these, you know, advanced countries.
17 They brought beautiful things with them.

18 When you arrived to Birkenau they took
19 everything from you. You were just naked. Your hair
20 went. Everything went. We were sorting that merchandise
21 out. Among that merchandise we found sometimes even a
22 little food. But we also find these beautiful pillow
23 cases in which the feathers, you know -- We let out the
24 feathers and we cleaned the pillow cases and we sold it
25 to the people that had food. Those were the people that

1 were in charge of food. Those were the people that were
2 there already three and four years. They had a post, you
3 see. They had the best. The best. They had food to
4 eat. They were fat like this, you know?

5 I had people in this barracks working for me, my
6 cousins who never returned. I gave them half of the
7 profit. Whatever they got I gave them half and we got
8 half and we got bread, we got marmalade, we got whatever
9 our ration was. We got more because we had this
10 supplement, you see. This is how we survived.

11 Now somebody else would never have gone that time
12 of the night. That's when I did my business.

13 MR. KIRSCHMAN: How did you get the pillow
14 cases out?

15 A. On our bodies we took them out. From the
16 place that we worked in. Eva got us all into that job,
17 thank's to Eva. She was very beautiful, very tall and
18 very blond and Eva somehow she got in. She was standing
19 out, you know. This man selected her, this German that
20 she should head this. It was where you keep merchandise.

21 Q. Warehouse?

22 A. Yeah, a warehouse. We worked in the
23 warehouse. We let the feathers out. They didn't say
24 anything. We sold the beautiful, it was like silk
25 damask. These girls made clothes for themselves out of

1 that. There were seamstresses there. For food you could
2 get things done. You know, food was everything. I got
3 the extra food for us, for what we stole out of the
4 warehouse.

5 And I did the business at night. I brought the
6 pillow cases, I got the food that they got for the pillow
7 cases they sold the day before. And that is how we
8 lived. That's how we survived Auschwitz. This is the
9 truth.

10 MR. KIRSCHMAN: You brought the food back to
11 the barracks?

12 A. To the barracks and we had that extra food.

13 MR. KIRSCHMAN: You ate it quietly, I
14 assume.

15 A. Quietly. Quietly. Very quietly. We even
16 had once silk, what you cover yourself with.

17 Q. Bathrobe?

18 A. No.

19 MR. KIRSCHMAN: A shirt?

20 A. What you sleep in.

21 MR. KIRSCHMAN: A sheet?

22 Q. Blanket. Comforter?

23 A. Comforter. A blue. I took it out of there.
24 We covered ourselves, the twelve of us with that. We
25 were so nice and cozy. One day we had to go. We always

1 had to go to be sterilized, to get clean, you know. They
2 took us to one of those places where they gave us a
3 shower and they how do you call it?

4 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Decontaminated?

5 A. We lost everything. On a day like that we
6 lost everything. Everything we saved up.

7 MR. KIRSCHMAN: While you were gone somebody
8 came and stole?

9 A. We had to take out everything. We couldn't
10 leave anything on our beds, on our bunks, because they
11 would find it and we would get, you know. We had to
12 start all over. One day that comforter, I didn't want to
13 lose, you know. That was so precious to me. A blue
14 silk. I remember it. I went to the next barracks, where
15 I had my cousins. They were not going to go that day for
16 this program to be --

17 Q. Deloused?

18 A. Deloused. We got other clothing and they
19 were full of lice. I brought it over to them. This
20 blockhostess, she was Jewish. The Jews did the dirty
21 work, you know. She saw me coming in the door. She took
22 that comforter away from me and gave me a good slam in
23 the face. That's the only slam I got really. She took
24 it away from me. It wouldn't have hurt her.

25 (At this time the deposition was recessed)

1 MR. KIRSCHMAN: The food you were able to
2 produce at Auschwitz went to the twelve. Who did you
3 share it with?

4 A. Eva had her separate source. Eva and her
5 family. So it was Lensie, my sister, Elsa, Lillie and
6 myself. The four of us.

7 Eva had many camp source. She was very good in
8 getting things, you know. She was very much alive, Eva.
9 She was young, energetic. She was more energetic then
10 than now. I don't know.

11 MR. KIRSCHMAN: The food, you ate it right
12 away, you couldn't store it?

13 A. We couldn't store it.

14 MR. KIRSCHMAN: It would disappear when you
15 left the barracks?

16 A. We put it under whatever we wore, a dress.
17 We put it underneath. And we carried it with us. We
18 always saved a little bit. That was the thing to do, to
19 save a little food.

20 Q. What was the food?

21 A. Bread. Bread, marmalade, butter. It wasn't
22 butter. It was, you know, something. Sometimes we get a
23 little salami. Those are the things we had for extra.

24 MR. KIRSCHMAN: How do you suppose they came
25 into the camp, such things as salami?

1 A. Pardon me?

2 MR. KIRSCHMAN: How do you think salami came
3 in the camp?

4 A. That was in the ration. The woman who
5 bought the material from us they had extra food because
6 they were in charge of the food. They were the ones that
7 served us, you know, in our bowls. Ten of us ate from
8 one bowl. We didn't have a separate bowl. Well, don't
9 ask. Okay?

10 These girls gave us the food, you see. They gave
11 us the rations. These girls had a lot of extra food
12 because they took the best of everything for themselves.
13 I mean that was known.

14 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Where did you eat?

15 A. Where did we eat? In our --

16 MR. KIRSCHMAN: In your barracks?

17 A. In our barracks.

18 MR. KIRSCHMAN: The food was brought to the
19 barracks?

20 A. In big containers it was brought.

21 The girls went. They always picked out big,
22 healthy girls, you know, and they brought the containers,
23 big containers.

24 MR. KIRSCHMAN: There was one bowl for the
25 ten of you?

1 A. For ten people and then later we got our
2 bowl. You know, it was unbelievable how we lived. Like
3 animals.

4 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Where were the toilets?

5 A. They were not close to the barracks. They
6 were in different building. Just the toilets. There was
7 running water there too, in Auschwitz. Most days we had
8 no access to the toilets and we had to go.

9 Q. A ditch?

10 A. No. No. At the door we had this big, you
11 know, container and we each had to go there if we had to
12 go. You know, the stench was unbearable.

13 Then there were people who took that out ever so
14 often, you know. There were days when we couldn't leave
15 the barracks at all. We couldn't even go out because
16 there was a danger. You know, some days the airplanes
17 flew right above our head. The airplanes.

18 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Whose airplanes?

19 A. The American airplanes. We thought for sure
20 they were going to be free. They were so close that all
21 the barracks were shaking, you know. They came down so
22 close. They knew what was there. They couldn't have not
23 known, you know. We thought, oh now, now. We didn't
24 mind how many lives are going to be lost, you know, if
25 they threw bombs. We didn't care. Just as long as

1 somebody is liberated. They flew over our head and they
2 stopped, they went away. We could never get over how the
3 world stood still. We couldn't get over that. Doesn't
4 the world know what was happening to us? The world knew.
5 The world knew. Nobody cared.

6 So there were days like that. If there was any
7 danger of somebody coming close, something like that, we
8 couldn't leave to the toilet. We couldn't leave, you
9 see. So we had to do it there, right there in the
10 barracks.

11 What should I tell you? During the night we
12 couldn't leave. We weren't suppose to leave when I left.
13 That wasn't suppose to be when I went out. But I did it.
14 Life wasn't that precious. You just did things.

15 MR. KIRSCHMAN: The guards were in the
16 towers?

17 A. Yeah.

18 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Did the guards patrol the
19 camp?

20 A. They patrolled us, sure. That's why they
21 were in the towers day and night. Day and night. They
22 never saw me leave, I guess. I was such a little person.
23 Maybe they didn't even see something is moving. So on
24 days like that we couldn't leave.

25 And then when there were selections, you know,

1 they wouldn't let you leave. You shouldn't escape. But
2 I escaped. I did. I ran for my life because I knew I am
3 not going to make it. I was already rundown, terribly
4 run down. Lost a lot of weight. I didn't have that much
5 to lose. I was never heavy. They always worried about
6 me, my sisters. If I passed they were satisfied because
7 they were heavier than me. So there were many days we
8 couldn't leave.

9 Q. Were you ever sick?

10 A. I wasn't sick, no. Never got sick. I never
11 got sick. Just after the liberation I got typhoid fever.
12 Never got sick.

13 MR. KIRSCHMAN: How long were you in the
14 camp?

15 A. A year.

16 MR. KIRSCHMAN: A year?

17 A. A year. That's between Auschwitz and the
18 working camp where we were cutting, we were digging
19 ditches and cutting Christmas trees.

20 MR. KIRSCHMAN: You say cutting Christmas
21 trees, were these actually sent to Germany?

22 A. To Germany.

23 MR. KIRSCHMAN: To be used to celebrate
24 Christmas?

25 A. Sure. Sure. We were cutting these

1 Christmas trees, girls, women.

2 Q. What tools did you have?

3 A. What?

4 Q. What did you use to cut the trees?

5 A. We had -- I don't know why we didn't kill
6 somebody really. I guess we didn't have what it takes,
7 you know. We had a saw.

8 MR. KIRSCHMAN: I think you have what it
9 takes. I think it just would have been danger.

10 A. I think I could have killed. I really do.
11 But it was risking our own lives. So we didn't do it.

12 After the camp all of us -- I was depressed too
13 for a long time. I had therapy with Emoric and all there
14 were times I couldn't do it by myself.

15 Q. You said that you had lost 80 -- You have
16 lost 80?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Family?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Can you tell who they were?

21 A. They were my grandmother's 12 children. Her
22 children were all married and had children. And then
23 there were cousins, you know.

24 And then from my father's side, again a big
25 family. Also married and they had children. They are

1 all gone. They are all gone. Nobody came back. So few
2 of us came back.

3 My three uncles came back and they were Ukraine.
4 I will write it down one day. I never did write it down.
5 But I know. I figured it out once. Once or twice or
6 three times how many are gone.

7 My grandmother had relatives. You see we were in
8 contact with her sisters. You are a big family. It's
9 not like here that you don't know about each other. In
10 Europe you are in contact, families are close, there is a
11 warm relationship. Here people don't need each other as
12 much, you know. We always needed our relatives. They
13 always cared and we cared. Somebody was sick we were
14 there. It's a different world. But you get use to it.
15 You get use to being alone.

16 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Has the family received,
17 those of you who survived, any reparations?

18 A. You see I was very unfortunate. This is one
19 thing I didn't do for myself. I will tell you why. I
20 had a lawyer, he was Czechoslovakian. He wasn't good.
21 He didn't even do it for himself. He never got any
22 restoration either. He would tell me that. "It's not
23 only you."

24 I got \$300.00 for Auschwitz and I got \$300.00 for
25 my injury. Now I should have gotten that a month, you

1 know, for my injury because it's a life long. I was
2 incapable of working for many, many years.

3 Well, I got a doctor from the German consulate.
4 A doctor interviewed you. This doctor's name was Dr.
5 Heitfelt. Dr. Heitfelt I found out later was a Nazi.
6 The German consulate employed him as one of their
7 doctors.

8 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Where was this?

9 A. Here in San Francisco. In Westport over
10 here in an office. Maybe he still has it. He was
11 younger than me, I imagine.

12 A friend of mine, German friend of mine, found out
13 about his background and found out that he was educated
14 during the Hitler era and he was a Nazi. So when I was
15 interviewed by him he asked me questions. And I told him
16 what happened in Auschwitz and he said "I didn't know
17 about that."

18 He said that my back ailment he put in his report,
19 I was born like that. He gave a report. He just gave me
20 such a bad time, you know, like he didn't believe
21 anything that happened.

22 I said, you know, "In front of my eyes little
23 children were killed. They were thrown to the wall in
24 front of my eyes. They were used for targets, shooting.
25 In front of my eyes."

1 How can you forget those things? He didn't
2 believe it. He didn't believe it. And I was getting
3 sicker and sicker and I was getting more depressed.
4 That's when I had to go to a psychiatrist.

5 My husband said "I don't want any of this. I
6 don't want you to get sick. I don't want any money from
7 them. I don't want anything. I just want you out of
8 this."

9 But that was wrong, you see. I should have fought
10 for it. Why should I leave it to the Germans, you know?
11 This was coming to me. It was coming. But I didn't have
12 what it takes. I didn't have it. Sometimes I didn't
13 have it, that fighting energy, you know. I didn't always
14 have it. So I gave up on it.

15 Emoric said "Don't go anymore." I didn't go. But
16 I should have fought it to the end. I should have gone
17 through Germany. People went to Germany, you know. I
18 never put my foot on German soil, would you believe that?
19 I traveled, we traveled a lot. Never did I go through
20 Germany.

21 I said "No." I never went back to Budapest. I
22 said that soil is soaked with Jewish blood. I can't go
23 there. They were shooting people into the Danube
24 Budapest. The Danube was sick with Jewish blood. That
25 city is such a beautiful city. We use to go there in the

1 winter to the theatre, the opera. It was a beautiful
2 city to go to. I never went back. Never. I don't want
3 to go back. I would always see somebody in the street
4 that was that age and I would think maybe he was the one
5 that murdered my parents because they were murderers, the
6 Hungarians.

7 See, we were occupied by the Hungarians at the
8 time we were deported. We were Czechs. Then during the
9 anschluss Czechoslovakia was divided up and we became
10 Hungarians and that's when our tragedy started. They
11 took away our livelihood. They said we are not going to
12 kill the fish. We are going to take the water out and
13 they are going to suffocate on their own, which was true.
14 People didn't have a livelihood. But everybody helped
15 each other. It was a world like that in Europe.

16 And then the men, our men, they started to take
17 our men into forced labor. In 1940 they took our men
18 already. My husband was never home. He was always in
19 forced labor. And that was lucky yet because they didn't
20 send them out to the Ukraine. He was in the area and he
21 always came home. Then these Hungarians -- What I want
22 to point out, like my father, my stepfather, he was -- he
23 was ready to go to shul on Friday evening. On Friday
24 evening all dressed up. They came and they said "Your
25 sidewalk isn't clean. Come and clean up your sidewalk."

1 They dehumanized you. They did all kinds of things. My
2 step-father was really a leader in our town. He was a
3 civic leader, he was president of the shoal. They
4 humiliated him. They did it on purpose. Those were the
5 Hungarians, not the Germans. Hungarians didn't have to
6 learn from the Germans. They were Jew haters from a one.
7 So I never went back to those countries. I couldn't.

8 Lot of my friends did. Lensie went back, my
9 sister. She got so sick she could hardly wait to get out
10 of there because her husband wanted to go. She never
11 went back. She said "I was so afraid they would keep me
12 there." The fear came over her, terrible fear.

13 I said "That's why I never went. I would see in
14 everyone of them murderers and how they took our
15 businesses away, you know." We had, my husband had an
16 office. He had to close it. It was not to be believed
17 what they did.

18 But we always had some funds and some extra.
19 There were people that were very poor and didn't. So it
20 was four years living under the Hungarian regime, which
21 was very hard. And then the ghetto, when they took us to
22 the ghetto -- Did I tell you that? They took us out
23 like criminals. Like criminals. In wagons, all the
24 horses and wagons were hired to take the Jews out of our
25 town, all the towns, and they put us in the ghetto.

1 Thirty people in one room, our place where we
2 stayed. The men were in the temples because they were
3 interrogated every day, beaten. They were interrogating
4 them to get the money out or whatever they have hidden.
5 Some people did hide things.

6 I had, but nobody knew about me because I was at
7 my parents' house.

8 On Passover, my husband was in the Army. So they
9 didn't know. I had Napoleons. You see we had our money
10 in Napoleons. I don't know if you know what that is.
11 Gold ducats. Hundred. That was big money. That was big
12 money. We had it in the basement, in the ground.

13 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Of your home?

14 A. Never found it.

15 Q. Is that still buried there? You had buried
16 something?

17 A. That's what I buried. I didn't. My husband
18 did. He told me after I left where it is. If I come
19 home that I should know where to look for it. I never
20 went home. But my husband went and I told him exactly
21 where our basement was and where it was buried. My uncle
22 was home, one of my uncles. He was very close to me.
23 They never found it. They were digging the whole night.

24 Well, may be someone else found it because people
25 were digging, you know. They knew.

3
1 The temples, you see what they did to all these
2 wealthy Jews? They right away locked them up in the
3 temples. When we were taken to the ghettos, we never
4 were with our stepfather again. My husband was in forced
5 labor. He had a band. They were not in uniform, the
6 Jews. They did all the dirty work, you see, the Jews did
7 all the dirty work. He was a journalist. And he came
8 one day to the ghetto, but he couldn't come in. Just to
9 the fence. We were fenced around.

10 He said, "I found a place where I can hide you."
11 He said "I was in a nunnery." Did I say this? "I was in
12 a nunnery and I am going to pay them and they are going
13 to keep you here until the end of the war."

14 I said to him "I can't leave my mother. My mother
15 is all alone now. My stepfather is in jail in the
16 temple. Every day they are interrogating him. My mother
17 needs me." I was her support. I didn't leave. I could
18 have. That's how it was in Europe. Not everybody. Some
19 people did run away. I couldn't leave my mother. She
20 depended on me so much.

21 Things turn, you see. When the child grows up the
22 parents depend on the children. There were a lot of
23 things that could have been different. But I am not
24 sorry. I am not sorry. I always stood by her. When I
25 left -- When I came home for the holiday, Passover, I had

1 some money in my glove, you see, as I was traveling. I
2 had some dollars. Dollars were always good to have. My
3 husband always saw that we have dollars, hard currency.
4 I gave them to my stepfather to put away. Do you know
5 after we were liberated they found that money hidden? It
6 was dug in our basement. They found it.

7 Q. The found the dollars?

8 A. They found the dollars for me. My sisters
9 found it and they sent it to me to Prague.

10 Q. Do you remember how much it was?

11 A. Yeah. It was \$80.00. But that was a lot of
12 money in Europe, you know. That's the money we had when
13 we came to America. I had that money. I had other money
14 too. Oh, my God, you know, this doctor who wanted to
15 marry me? He was kind of family. He was leaving to the
16 D.P. camp to Austria. He had a lot of Czech money on
17 him. You couldn't use the Czech money if you left
18 Czechoslovakia. It was worthless. So he left it all to
19 me. Ten thousand Krona. That was a big sum of money.
20 And we lived on that for months, you know.

21 God, somehow miracles happened. Miracles
22 happened. Always something good happened in my life, I
23 must say that. And we survived. We survived. There was
24 always something good. Now too. Still.

25 I could have had all this with my breast. I have

1 it. I am confident, I think I am going to survive it. I
2 want to believe it. I want to believe it. I am not
3 giving up.

4 Q. What are your thoughts about the Germans?

5 A. I despise them. I don't trust a single one
6 of them. I am so afraid. I am full of fear. I am so
7 full of fear right now, what is happening there. I am
8 afraid they are coming back. Here too. I don't feel as
9 secure. I don't. I am afraid because once you live
10 through that you don't have confidence like you people,
11 Americans; you don't believe that can happen. But we do.
12 We are fearful.

13 We get together we talk about it. What are we
14 going to do now, we are so old, all of us, and we are so
15 comfortable in our homes. I don't trust them. I never
16 did.

17 When the Berlin wall came down I was crying. I
18 knew that's the end. I knew it. And so many Jews were
19 so happy, you know. I couldn't understand it. I said
20 "Don't they know? Don't they know?" I guess not.

21 I could never have children, you know, because of
22 my illness. I had an abortion in 1949. That's when I
23 started -- I had to have help. But now -- Well, I was
24 very unhappy. I was unhappy I couldn't have children.
25 But now I think maybe it was for the best. I have those

4
1 thoughts. I am not leaving anybody behind to suffer. We
2 did it all. Maybe I am wrong, but, yes, I never forgave
3 them. Never. Never. And I don't trust them. They did
4 things they didn't have to do, you know? They didn't
5 have to beat a woman to death in front of our feet
6 because she couldn't stand appel. She didn't have to be
7 beaten to death, you know. She didn't. We saw so many
8 things like that. Cruelties, such terrible cruelties.

9 Once Lensie stole some potatoes, my sister. This
10 beautiful woman, who was counting us, she caught her and
11 she gave her a slap. A slap in the face.

12 Lensie said to her, she was the most beautiful
13 woman. She was so beautiful. Lensie said to her "You
14 are so beautiful. I don't think you could hurt me."

15 Do you know she didn't hit her anymore. So what
16 if she took two potatoes, three potatoes? She wanted to
17 share it with us.

18 They did things that wasn't called for. They
19 kicked people with their boots to death right in front of
20 us. All that was happening in Auschwitz, what they did
21 to young people. They experimented on them. We knew
22 they were taken for that purpose. We never saw them
23 again. They selected the best of us, the most beautiful,
24 the most healthiest, for experimental purposes. So how
25 can you trust a nation like that?

1 Although, our German friends, the German Jews they
2 will say this is a different generation. Our German
3 friends who didn't go through the camp, who were here
4 before.

5 I said "You just don't know because you weren't
6 there. You don't know. You are talking about something
7 you never experienced." What is that to read or to see?
8 It's to experience it. Only who lived through it.

9 You people are very understanding. Because you
10 are selected like that, that I can talk like that. Do
11 you know I never talked to anybody about this? I never
12 do because nobody cares. Nobody cares. So why should I
13 talk to people who don't care? I don't. I never wanted
14 to come here. I was asked already years ago when you
15 started. I don't want to. I just don't want any part of
16 it. I am through. I just want to live my life in peace.
17 But finally I came.

18 When Lensie came and Eva came and they said you
19 should. You should. You are part of this. We were
20 together. So I came.

21 Q. This fear that you have now that something
22 might happen, can you describe the fear?

23 A. Oh, it's terrifying. I am afraid we will
24 lose our homes like we did, afraid we will lose our
25 security, like we did. I am afraid it shouldn't happen

1 again. I am. I know I shouldn't say that to you people,
2 but I am afraid. My husband isn't afraid like I am
3 because he didn't live it through. He is not, not like
4 me. Sometimes he is, when we read articles, you know, on
5 what is happening. He says "Well, only you can feel it
6 like that because you lived through it." He understands.

7 But you see people who didn't live through it
8 don't know. They really don't know. No matter how
9 understanding. I see those beautiful Jewish children and
10 I fear for them.

11 Q. Which children?

12 A. Well, Eva has grandchildren, my sister has
13 grandchildren. They are beautiful Jewish children, so
14 beautiful those children. And bright. And those are the
15 kind of children that were exterminated. They were just
16 as beautiful and just as bright and just as precious.

17 So you know that screams that came out of there
18 never in my life will I forget those screams. When I
19 hear screaming I get shook up all over. I still do.
20 Because I hear those screams when they locked them up.

21 Q. In the crematorium?

22 A. You could hear them. You could hear them.

23 When they came in from Lodz, from Poland whole
24 transports came. A train full. They didn't even give
25 them a chance. They never got into Auschwitz. They took

1 them straight to the crematorium. Straight. I remember
2 Yom Kippur day. We did not eat on Yom Kippur. Even
3 there. We saved our food for the evening. Do you
4 believe that? We still believed, you know.

5 I don't know why I still do. I guess that keeps
6 me going. A whole train load, they marched straight into
7 the crematoria. We were outside and outdoors. We were
8 very close to the crematorium at the time. They moved us
9 around, you know. Those screams on that Yom Kippur day I
10 can't forget. They were crying to the last minute. You
11 heard them. How can you forget that? You can't.

12 What should I tell you? It's within you and you
13 can't be free of it. You can't. It stays with you. You
14 try to make a life for yourself. You are grateful that
15 you are alive.

16 Sometimes they ask me "Do you feel guilty that you
17 are alive?" I said in the beginning I did, but then I
18 thought I fought for it. I fought for it. I deserve it.
19 I put on a great battle for it. I didn't give up. And I
20 didn't feel guilty anymore. I worked it out with myself.

21 So I try my best to make a life for myself. I
22 did.

23 I don't want to make my husband unhappy. He
24 doesn't deserve it. I always have to make him happy. I
25 always think of him. I can't do that to him I always

1 say. I can't do it to him, you know. And that's what
2 gives me strength. I can't because he did so much for
3 me. God, he did so much for me.

4 He took me to the best doctors in Prague, to the
5 best doctors. Never gave up on me. He was with me all
6 the time. How can I -- I can't repay him with making him
7 unhappy. I can't do that. He is very happy. But these
8 terrible experiences, you know, they don't go away. They
9 just don't go away.

10 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Did you have occasion to
11 talk with people in the camp who were themselves forced
12 to work in the crematoriums?

13 A. In the crematoriums, no. We never contacted
14 people like that. After, I don't know how, it was said
15 there in Auschwitz that these people never come out of
16 there. That at the end they throw them in the fire too,
17 in the ovens. Do you know in Prague we met -- We met
18 some people that worked there. They burned their own.
19 They put their own. I don't know how they got out. I
20 really don't know. But they did. But not in Auschwitz.
21 We never had contact with people like this. No. They
22 were there and we were somewhere else.

23 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Did you have contact with
24 any guards who exhibited any touch of humanity ever?

25 A. German?

1 Q. German or other people.

2 A. We were once in a camp, in Auschwitz. They
3 moved us around, as I said. They are the Wehrmacht. The
4 Wehrmacht weren't like the SS. They were a little bit
5 more humane. They talked to us sometimes. They even
6 talked to us.

7 One of them said you know, when I get out of here
8 I am going to write a book of everything that I saw here.
9 I remember that. One of them said.

10 Now they didn't give us food. They didn't give us
11 food, no. Eva got that job, but that was a German, I
12 think he was -- You see, they were political prisoners
13 there. German political prisoners. They had a badge.
14 They had the jobs that were responsible jobs. One of
15 those gave Eva that job to be head of this warehouse.
16 That's how we got in and that's how we got our extra
17 food. But other than that, I don't know.

18 Some Poles were there also. They were there for
19 years that had access to food and they would help out
20 some of the woman, but there was a price. Not everybody
21 wanted to pay that price. Because you could get
22 pregnant, you know. But there were women who paid the
23 price, they were so hungry.

24 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Did you know any women who
25 got pregnant?

1 A. Yes. Yes. She was liberated. She didn't
2 get pregnant, no. But she had an affair with one of the
3 guards. Not guards. He was in charge of something, you
4 know. Good to know him. He had access to food. What
5 was it all about? Food. Just food. Just to eat. She
6 came out. She came out of it. Very beautiful woman.
7 Very beautiful. We never really came in close contact
8 with the Germans, you know. They just counted us and
9 selected us and kicked us.

10 Q. The people who directed you, who told you
11 what to do were not Germans?

12 A. Jews. Jews.

13 Q. Tell me about those.

14 A. They had everything, all the positions they
15 had Jews. There was a blockhostess.

16 MR. KIRSCHMAN: The barracks?

17 A. Every thousand people, there was thousand
18 people to a barracks. There was a blockhostess. She was
19 one of those there already for four years. They told us
20 they built these barracks. They came to Auschwitz when
21 there were no barracks yet.

22 They had positions, you see. Position was where
23 you could get food, extra food. They did all the dirty
24 work. They worked for the Germans because they were
25 afraid for their own skin. They did what the Germans

1 wanted them to do and more.

2 Do you know that among the men, there were capos.
3 You probably heard about capos.

4 They were head of that barrack, you know. They
5 were so vicious. They were so vicious, those capos. I
6 know a man very personal, a friend I would say. He never
7 went back to Isreal because he was afraid they are going
8 to recognize him and they are going to kill him on the
9 street. They did that, Isrealies, you know. If they
10 recognized somebody who was one of those capos, who was
11 so very cruel to the Jews. They did such a job you
12 wouldn't believe it. To save their own skins they did
13 anything, the capos.

14 MR. KIRSCHMAN: How did you recognize a
15 capo?

16 A. Well, first of all we weren't with the men.
17 We were separated. The men just came to screen our
18 toilets. That's when we had access to men. Now a capo
19 was the head of -- Every barrack had a capo. They had
20 helpers, you see. The blockhostessa was the woman. They
21 were head of ours. They had helpers. They were the ones
22 that had access to food, but they were cruel. They
23 didn't care anymore. They had no human feelings. They
24 said "You were in your warm beds when we were already
25 here. What do you think this is? A sanitorium? This is

1 a concentration camp."

2 You know, these children 16, 17 years old, they
3 were crying. They were crying. They couldn't control
4 themselves.

5 I remember the first appel. They were cold, they
6 were hungry and they said "Well, what do you think you
7 came here for?" And they were starting to tell their
8 stories. So they were very hardened. They were so
9 hardened. They didn't care for us.

10 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Did they wear the same
11 clothing you did?

12 A. Pardon me?

13 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Did they wear the same
14 clothing you did?

15 A. No. They had better clothing because they
16 sold the food. They had seamstresses who made clothing
17 for them out of this material that we sold them.

18 MR. KIRSCHMAN: They ate well?

19 A. They ate well. They were all fat. That was
20 the main thing was to be fat, you see, because there you
21 had the strength. If you had enough on you could
22 survive. That was the thing. To put on weight. None of
23 us put on weight. We all lost. We didn't have that
24 much.

25 Well, it was tough, tough going. You had to fight

1 for your life every minute of the day. You couldn't give
2 up because there was always something happening. They
3 didn't let you just relax. They called you for work to
4 do something and you didn't know where they were going to
5 take you, if you ever come back, if they are not taking
6 you to the crematorium, you know, because they lied a
7 lot. They lied an awful lot.

8 Some people they took out we never saw them again.
9 We didn't know for what purpose they select people. You
10 had to be careful.

11 All of a sudden I see Elsa is selected. She is in
12 a group. I pull her out fast before they count them.
13 When they count them you couldn't get out anymore. But
14 some people just went. When they were called they went.
15 We never did. We never did. We always somehow escaped,
16 you know. We didn't believe them. We didn't trust them.
17 We didn't know where they were going to take us.

18 When they selected us to go, this was the last.
19 They were emptying Auschwitz out. You see, they were
20 emptying it out. They were leaving. That was in
21 November 1944. They were emptying it. We had to go.
22 But we weren't sure they weren't taking us to the
23 crematorium, because that crematorium was burning like
24 hell, you know. Four of them. Constantly. Fire, fire,
25 day and night. So we weren't sure.

1 Elsa didn't want to go. She was so afraid that's
2 where they are taking us. All of a sudden she got
3 fearful. She said that's where they are taking us and
4 they didn't. They took us to Birkenau. Birkenau was the
5 place where we dug the ditches. We dug the ditches for
6 the enemy tanks, can you imagine?

7 Q. How tall were you?

8 A. I was four eleven. When my husband, who
9 wasn't my husband yet, he invited me to the barracks and
10 he wanted to feed me because there was no food. So they
11 were out in the country. He rented a room for me. There
12 was fresh milk there, you know. A small town. There
13 were eggs, that I didn't see an egg. And bread. He
14 brought me food and tried to build me up. One of his
15 buddies -- And I ate with the soldiers in their dining
16 room. That was a treat, you know. That food was to me
17 Heaven.

18 One of them looks at my hands and he says no
19 wonder Hitler lost the war. With hands like that you
20 want to win a war? So we never forget that. He was so
21 cute. So this is how my life started.

22 Q. I wanted to touch on one other thing. You
23 mentioned in the camp babies being thrown against the
24 wall.

25 A. That's right.

1 Q. Can you elaborate?

2 A. Used for target shooting. Sunday afternoon.
3 Was it Sunday? I think so. They just shot them.

4 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Children that were coming
5 off the trains?

6 A. Yeah. Well, I don't know where they got
7 them. They caught them, I am sure.

8 MR. KIRSCHMAN: This was the SS?

9 A. The SS. The SS were murderers. You see
10 that's why I say they did things they didn't have to do.
11 Nobody would have known if they wouldn't have shot those
12 children. Well, anyway, it was hell on earth. Hell.
13 You had to watch out every minute for your life, every
14 minute.

15 If you weren't alert -- You know, I think that's
16 why we survived. We were alert. And we helped each
17 other.

18 Eva left before us. She was selected. Well,
19 actually it was very good. They slept in beds. Can you
20 imagine in beds?

21 I never forget that when they told me. They had a
22 bed, a bunk for themselves. I said Eva, "No."

23 She said "Yes, we did." They worked in a factory.

24 Q. When is the first time that you had a bed
25 for yourself after you got out?

1 A. Only in Prague. Oh, when we escaped. When
2 we were under the Russians we had a bed.

3 Q. For yourself?

4 A. Yes. A sleeping place. We didn't have
5 seven beds. Some of us slept together. I slept alone
6 because I had typhoid fever.

7 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Where was the bed Eva had?

8 A. Eva?

9 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Yes.

10 A. That was after Eva left Auschwitz.

11 MR. KIRSCHMAN: I see.

12 A. I don't know where she was. Was she in
13 Riga? I don't know. I don't know which town.
14 Somewhere. I don't remember what she told me.

15 She left with the transport that we very much
16 wanted to get into because we wanted to stay together.
17 We were cutoff. Just like this. Five hundred and that's
18 it. Well, that was a terrible experience to be cutoff
19 and to be separated because we were together. Things
20 were getting always harder and harder. We had no source
21 of getting food, no way. It was no people coming in, no
22 food. It was already towards the end. Not many people
23 came already towards the end. But they did. They did
24 come. What am I talking about?

25 Only they put them in alive right away. They

1 didn't come into the camp to work. They put them into
2 the crematorium right away. That's when Eva wasn't with
3 us anymore. They did that before too. But then full
4 transports they just went straight.

5 Q. At the time that you were leaving Auschwitz,
6 the transports were still coming in?

7 A. When we were leaving, I don't know. They
8 were still coming in before we were leaving. After we
9 left I don't know what happened in Auschwitz. But you
10 know people survived in Auschwitz. I know somebody who
11 survived Auschwitz. I am sure she was here. Julia is
12 her name. Rochfried. I don't remember. She lives here
13 on the avenues. She survived in Auschwitz. She even
14 lectured on her experiences. She was much younger than
15 me. She was able to do that. Gloria Linum I am sure you
16 know. She comes from the same country we do. She really
17 does wonderful work. So I think that's about all I have
18 to say. If you want to ask any questions?

19 Q. I wonder each year as you, the anniversaries
20 of different events come up -- which hits you the
21 hardest. The anniversary of the day you were taken?

22 A. The hardest is when we left our homes. That
23 was the most terrible experience.

24 Q. Passover is worse?

25 A. Passover. Passover is always a very

1 depressing holiday for me. When we left our home, we
2 left our parents' homes and we were taken to the ghetto.
3 That's where it all started. Separated from our mates.

4 And then the other worse was arriving to
5 Auschwitz. That's undecribeable. That's undecribe-
6 able. When we lost everything. Everything. Stark
7 naked, without hair, without anything. One piece of
8 clothing. Only our shoes were left. Our shoes were left
9 for awhile. And then I had to -- like the biggest
10 treasure. When we once -- They selected us for
11 transport. You see they fooled us many times. And we
12 went and we had to take our shoes off. You wouldn't
13 believe it. But that was my biggest loss. My shoes were
14 gone. That's when I got the first time a man's shoe. My
15 shoes were the shoes that I ice skated in, high shoes.
16 They were such comfortable shoes and I couldn't get over
17 I lost those shoes. The shoes meant so much. You think
18 it's a trifle, it's nothing. That was my last
19 possession, my last possession of my past.

20 So Auschwitz, arriving to Auschwitz and losing my
21 mother and I saw all piles of clothing. You know, we had
22 to throw everything off and throw it on one pile. I
23 thought my mother was taken to a place like this too
24 where they shower you and shave you, take your hair off.
25 I thought how is my mother ever going to find her clothes

1 among all these clothes? I was worried about her, that I
2 am not there.

3 The mind, the human mind can't -- How should I
4 say? You can't -- It's impossible to imagine what
5 happened there. You can't. They told us our parents
6 went up in smoke, but you can't believe it. You know the
7 Hungarian Jews are worse than we. We used our head right
8 away. We right away knew that we were in trouble and we
9 have to fight. The Hungarian Jews believed it. They
10 said that's impossible that they should burn our parents.
11 How can that be? They didn't believe it. They were so
12 gullible, so naive. And we told them.

13 One of my cousins was taken in front of my eyes
14 there. She didn't believe it that they are taking her to
15 the crematorium. Beautiful young girl. Just beautiful.
16 How can you forget these things? How can you forget?
17 You can't.

18 So many people you lost there in front of your
19 eyes.

20 One of my aunts, who was pregnant in the camp and
21 he let her in pregnant. They let her give birth to the
22 child right there. The child was born dead. And she
23 died too in childbirth. She hung on there for a while,
24 for two, three days. You saw the child dead, you saw her
25 dead, spread out there in the yard. How can you forget

1 these things? You can't. You just can't.

2 There is so much terror, so much terrible things.
3 Only you try to shut it out, you try not to think about
4 it. Because you would go crazy if you would always think
5 about it. You would lose your mind.

6 MS. PROZAN: Thank you, Isabelle.

7 A. Thank you for listening. I hope you get
8 something out of this.

9 MR. KIRSCHMAN: It's important.

10 A. It's important to have it.

11 MR. KIRSCHMAN: It's important to have it.

12 A. It's important. That's why I came.

13 MR. KIRSCHMAN: There are people who say it
14 never happened.

15 A. Yeah. And it's important for us to have
16 evidence.

17 MR. KIRSCHMAN: Real evidence, the human
18 face.

19 A. To people that it happened to and it
20 happened. Very much so. I wish I could do more, you
21 know. I wish I could do more really to make this
22 evidence live. The generations after us should keep it.

23 MS. PROZAN: You have.

24 MR. KIRSCHMAN: That's what you have done.

25 A. That's what I want to do. That's what I

1 wanted to do. If you need me in anything, you know, to
2 be of help, I am here; just a phone call.

3 (The conversation was adjourned sine die)

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