

Interview with REGINA HANOVER. TAP 2

Holocaust Oral History Project

Date: August 7, 1990 Place: San Francisco

Interviewers: Gene Ayres and ?

Transcriber: Pat Brody

Q. OKAY. THIS IS AUGUST 7, 1990. WE ARE CONTINUING WITH THE INTERVIEW OF REGINA HANOVER, WHO HAS BEEN INTERVIEWED BEFORE. WE ARE AT THE HOLOCAUST LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTER, 14 AVENUE IN SAN FRANCISCO.

NOW, MRS. HANOVER, YOU WANT TO CONTINUE WITH YOUR STORY AND YOU HAVE SOMETHING I BELIEVE YOU WANT TO PUT IN RIGHT NOW. WHY DON'T YOU GO AHEAD AND TELL US ABOUT THIS.

A. Okay. On -- before the war, in 19 -- in 1938, I got married. We did not know -- we knew there will be a war, but we did not know what will happen.

But I was the youngest daughter in the family and I come from a family of nine children and I was the baby. And my parents met this boy and they said that would be a good idea, I should be married.

The boy was -- my husband was living actually in Jurugens. (?) He came to to Lodz on business. And Jurugens was a city, a border city with Germany. So he was very -- he knew -- he had a lot of German friends and he knew how to deal with them and he wasn't worried about the war.

Then, after I got married, we moved to

And I became pregnant. Then a few days, a week maybe before the war started -- that was in September, that was before September -- he had one particular friend, a German friend, and he invited them for -- he invited him for dinner on a Friday night. And he was there and, you know, they were so nice. They kissed your hand, the lady's hand when they come in, and when they go out they thank you and kiss the lady's hand. And he went away. And a few days later, we were talking about the war, and I am walking on the street and I see him with a Swastika on his arm. And I opened my eyes. And he said, "Get away from me." Of course, I right away got away. And I said to my husband, "We just have to go from here," because I told him what is happening.

My brother, we were very close, came from Lodz -- he knew the war is coming and he does not want me to be there, and he knew that I was pregnant and I was staying there -- to take me back. And we went back on the train. I never forgot that.

On the train, the Polacks hated the Jews and they started seeking out who is a Jew. "You are a Jew, we don't want Jews." And then my brother -- I didn't look Jewish and my brother didn't. And he said, "Oh, gentlemen, we are going, there will be a war. Why start all that?" "You must be a Jew too." Then

saved.

And we came to Lodz. On September the 29th, my child -- the first of the war broke out and I described over there how it was happening. And my child was born the 29th of September.

Then after a short while we went to the ghetto. In the ghetto, my husband couldn't find himself a place, he was trying to do everything for the family, we should have everything. But he could not live like in a cage. And he decided that he'll go to -- he will enlist to go to work in Germany. He did enlist and then he went. He was trying his best from there to send some money to help myself, but then I didn't hear any more from him.

And I was working in the factory. And I had raised this child two, three years. And all of a sudden, I came one early in the morning to the factory and -- and everybody was looking at me. I said: "What's the matter? What's everybody looking?" She didn't feel good, so the doctor said I should take her to the hospital for a few days of observation. Otherwise, she wasn't sick. You know, they did not know what it was. So they said, "They are taking out the children from the hospitals." I didn't say a word and I just ran out. It was fall, September, and I was

wearing a navy blue coat. And the street was closed with the Germans, filled up. So I went through the back. I knew a way how to go through another side. And then I came to the building of the hospital and there was a, whatchamacallit, to jump through. A -- sometimes I can't bring out -- fence. And I jumped through the fence and I ran over to the second floor where my child was. And I said -- and there were no children and there were no -- in the beds with the children. So I went down to the first floor and there were all the children.

I still think -- I even woke up this morning thinking they gave the children evidently some kind of medicines that the children were quiet. They had opened their eyes and you wouldn't hear a cry from a child. And I recognized my child and I grabbed it out of her -- of the little bed. And I took off my coat and I wrapped it around in my coat and I went out the same way I came in. By then, a lot of people found out about this place and a lot of people were standing there by the wires. So I gave it to somebody, the baby, and then I went, jumped through. And I walk home and I'm so happy. I said, "Honey, never in my life will I give you up. You know, from now on, you'll be with me for the rest of my life. Only if I will be dead will they be able to take you away from me." She,



poor thing, was looking at me, didn't say a word. So I brought her to the house and I put her to bed and I made something to eat and I sat and talked to her and talked to her. She looked and smiled, nothing. But she just looked at me. But I knew she understood what I'm saying.

Then by 11:00 o'clock at night, a knock on the door. "Who is that?" "The police." So there were two Germans and two Jewish policemen. They came for the child. I couldn't say I don't want to go. I said, "I'll go with her," and I went with her. I just asked them to let me take a little bottle of water, maybe she wants some water on the way or something. And they said yes. And we came in to a big hall where there were people, all the people laying, sitting on the floor with children. The children were crying.

And all of a sudden, I saw a Jewish policeman that knew me, a friend. And he said, "What are you doing here?" And I told him. He said, "You want to go in?" and there was a room with all these doctors, whatever, Germans. And I said, "No, not yet." And I was holding this child. I'll never forget it. And I said, "God, please help me." Just that she should open -- pick up her head. And I pushed her, like this. And all of a sudden she picked up her head and she said "Water." And I gave her the water and I

turned) to this friend of mine, and I said, "Now we want to go in." And we went in and I said, "She is okay. The doctor wanted her just to have -- just to have for observation for a few days. And she is okay. You can see she is okay." I don't remember what I said more, but they told me I should go home.

And I went home with the baby. And I came home and this is -- and everybody was so excited, so happy. "Only you could do it." And it didn't take long; when they finished with those kids, they were going from building to building. All the people from the building had to come down and they looked them over again. "Well," I said, "I'm not going down." I hid myself in the attic with the baby. And I was laying there and I heard the big steps of the soldiers, of the Germans and the people, and I knew that I had to be quiet. But whoever they want to take out, they took out. I don't know what they did. I didn't look down, but I'm always very smart. So by the end, when I heard them all go out and the footsteps stopped, so I started looking out of the little window. And there was a German, that he saw my face. And he starts screaming and they came up and they found us. And they knocked me down and took my baby. The next thing you I knew, I woke up in my bed and my neighbors were standing around me and everybody was crying. They all lost their

children. And that was the end of my child.

And, you know, the war was horrible. No one expected the war. But no matter how much it hurts, everything, you lose your whole family. I'm a family from nine children. I was the baby and I was the only one left alive. I don't know why, can't understand, still cannot understand why.

Q. MAY I ASK YOU A QUESTION, PLEASE?

A. Yes.

Q. YOUR HUSBAND'S NAME?

A. It was Heim (?) Goldberg.

Q. AND HE HAD A BUSINESS?

A. Yes, in Jurugens. (?)

Q. WHAT WAS THAT, THE BUSINESS?

A. Oh, like a little clothes -- men's clothes and, you know, sewing things. All kinds of things.

Q. YOU HELPED HIM --

A. Yeah, um-hum.

Q. AND WHAT DID YOU NAME YOUR BABY?

A. Honusha. (?) .

Q. HONUSHA?

A. Hanka. (?)

Q. AND WHEN YOU WENT TO THE FACTORY, WHAT SORT OF A FACTORY WAS THAT?

A. Making furs.

Q. A CLOTHES FACTORY?

A. Yeah.

Q. YOU WERE LIVING IN --

A. That was in the ghetto.

Q. THAT WAS IN THE GHETTO?

A. Yeah. And then I was working in a -- me and a couple of other girls, where they took out from all the stores, from the -- from Lodz, the Jewish stores, all the lingerie. And we were making an inventory and hanging up and making a whole store.

Q. YOU MADE CLOTHING FOR WHO?

A. For the Germans.

Q. WENT TO THE GERMANS --

A. For the Germans, make a big store.

Q. DID THEY PROVIDE YOU WITH FABRIC?

A. Not fabric; they had all the clothes from stores that they took out.

Q. OKAY.

A. And it was laying in boxes and we fix it up and make it -- took an inventory and gave it to them.

Q. SO WHEN YOU ARRIVED AT WORK ONE DAY AND --

A. We didn't arrive. We were always in the ghetto.

Q. YES, BUT YOU WENT TO WORK ONE DAY --

A. Correct.

Q. -- AND EVERYONE WAS LOOKING AT YOU AND



THAT'S HOW YOU FOUND OUT THAT YOUR BABY HAD BEEN TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL?

A. Oh, in this factory, I work -- that was -- they took out the children. That was only one hospital. That I came to the work one morning and that was the only one hospital for children.

Q. DID YOU KNOW --

A. So I didn't know where to go.

Q. -- YOUR BABY WAS ILL?

A. Not too ill, but just stopped eating.

Q. DID YOU KNOW WHY IT WAS ILL?

A. No, we never found out.

Q. YOU NEVER FOUND OUT?

A. No, we never found out. Because the doctor said, "Let us take her for a few days to the hospital and we will check it out and see what's happening."

Q. AND SHE RECOVERED; YOU TOOK HER BACK HOME?

A. I took her back home. I grabbed her out by the hands.

Q. AND YOU WERE THERE FOR ABOUT THREE MONTHS, I BELIEVE YOU SAID, BEFORE THEY CAME FOR THE CHILDREN?

A. It's not three months.

Q. NO?

A. A few days.

Q. THE GERMANS CAME --

A. Sure.

Q. -- WITH THE JEWISH POLICE ALSO?

A. No. No. That time, the Jewish police was waiting out there, on the outside. But they came.

Q. DID THEY GIVE A REASON WHY THEY WANT TO TAKE THE BABY? DID THEY SAY ANYTHING?

A. They didn't have any reason to give.

Q. THEY JUST SAID --

A. Not only the children; all the people too. They took the -- everybody had to go out of the houses, the apartments, and stand up. And then whoever they picked, they picked.

Q. AND SO OTHER CHILDREN WERE TAKEN ALSO?

A. Sure.

Q. FROM OTHER PEOPLE?

A. Sure.

Q. AND THEN LATER, WHEN YOU WERE TAKEN TO CAMP, THE VARIOUS CAMPS, THIS WAS EARLY IN THE WAR, 1941?

A. That was early in the war. Um-hum.

Q. OKAY.

A. Maybe '42. And then later, that -- we were until I think '44 and -- no, maybe '48, the war was finished. So we were maybe a year or two years before they liquidated the ghettos.

So they told people to go, to go to work;

that they will send everybody to work. They should prepare themselves and take everything with them, whole families together, and they all would go to work and be together. And this would be good.

Q. YOU SAY WHEN YOU WERE GIVEN -- BEFORE YOU GOT MARRIED, YOUR HUSBAND WAS FROM A BORDER TOWN NEAR GERMANY?

A. Yeah.

Q. AND HAD GERMAN FRIENDS?

A. Yes.

Q. AND I THINK YOU SAID YOU KNEW WAR WAS COMING OR SOMETHING?

A. No, we were --

Q. DID YOU --

A. No, there was talk that war was coming.

Q. BUT YOU ALL WERE IN YOUR 20s AND YOU HEARD ALL THIS TALK, OF COURSE.

A. But we wouldn't expect a war like that.

Q. DID YOUR HUSBAND THINK THAT WAR WOULD BE COMING?

A. Well, everybody suspected that something is going on and that there will be a war. But who expected that there will be a Hitler that will kill the children and will kill the whole world? Who expected that?

Q. Were YOUR PARENTS AND YOU AND YOUR NEW

HUSBAND, WERE YOU STRICT, VERY STRICT, IN YOUR RELIGION?

A. Oh, not -- we were strict in our religion, yeah.

Q. ORTHODOX FAMILIES, PRETTY MUCH?

A. Yeah, uh-huh. I remember in September, when the holidays, the New Year comes along in September, and Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashunnah, so the Germans knew it will be the holidays, so they were watching every place for prayers to grab the Jews for work. That's the day that they want to take them for work.

I remember my father and my brothers and others, we had a two-room apartment and the other -- two-bedroom apartment, and we put a -- we had the cabinet that you opened for the clothes. Not a closet, a linen closet, but -- so we took out some boards from the, from this closet. And in the last room, we put in all the men, they were praying there. And we closed it up and we closed up with the clothes, too.

When they came in, "Where are the men?" "They left us. They ran away. They are not here." And this is the time that we still were together a little bit. That was before the ghetto.

Q. YOU HAD SOMEBODY CONCEALED IN THE BACK ROOM?

A. Yes. We had my father and brothers and, you know, brother-in-laws.

Q. YOUR HUSBAND HAD HIS GERMAN FRIENDS?

A. Yeah.

Q. AM I CORRECT? AND HAD YOU OR YOUR HUSBAND OR YOUR FAMILY HEARD OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN GERMANY TO JEWS?

A. Yeah. There was a doctor that went to Germany to find out. And he came back --

Q. HE WAS FROM YOUR TOWN?

A. Yeah. And he came back and for a week he did not want to see anybody, he did not want to talk to anybody, because he was so hurt what was going on. Germany was a country that took in the Jews and the Jews felt very, very comfortable. And they never knew that they are Jews. Whatever they wanted to do, they could do. Also, they were all under -- on the sidewalk. On the boarder, the sidewalk. And Germans didn't want them. Polacks didn't want to let them in. So they were all there on the sidewalks. I'll never forget this. This man was sick when he was telling the story.

Q. THIS JEWISH DOCTOR --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- WENT TO GERMANY AND SAW ALL THIS?

A. Yeah.

Q. AND CAME BACK AND PERHAPS TOLD --

A. All the people.

Q. SO YOU AND OTHER PEOPLE -- SO YOU HAD  
THOSE REPORTS?

A. An idea. But still you can't -- still you  
cannot imagine. What else would you (Unintelligible) ?

Q. YOU MENTIONED THE GERMAN FRIEND AND YOUR  
HUSBAND?

A. (Nodding)

Q. DID YOU SEE HIM --

A. Before the war.

Q. -- ON A FRIDAY EVENING?

A. Yeah.

Q. WAS IT SHABBAT?

A. Yeah.

Q. HE CAME TO YOUR HOUSE ON SHABBAT?

A. Yeah.

Q. AND HE DIDN'T HAVE THE SWASTIKA ON?

A. No, he was a friend. The Swastika? He  
would kiss my hand.

Q. DID YOU DO YOUR SHABBAT PRAYERS AT THE  
TABLE?

A. We always do.

Q. THE WHOLE THING?

A. We always do.

Q. DID HE TAKE PART IN THIS?



A. No, he couldn't take part in it. He stood and watched it.

Q. He just sat there. Any indication from him that he felt that you were the enemy or anything like that?

A. No. No. No. No. It was not even a thought. That was even before they started doing something with the Jews and the Germans. Just was a talk of war. But that was all before, way before that war.

Q. BUT YOU WERE MARRIED AT THIS TIME?

A. Yeah, sure.

Q. THAT WAS JUST BEFORE THE INVASION IN SEPTEMBER?

A. Well, not just before. In October -- or September, in September, my child was born. And that was, I don't remember exactly the month, but probably two years before.

Q. OKAY. NOW, ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT THAT TIME PERIOD AND YOUR HUSBAND, OF THOSE DAYS? DID YOU EVER SEE OR HEAR FROM YOUR HUSBAND AGAIN?

A. (Shakes head)

Q. WHAT DO YOU PRESUME HAPPENED?

A. I can't -- you cannot figure out.

Q. HE VOLUNTEERED TO BE PART OF A WORK --

A. To work.

Q. AND GO TO GERMANY TO WORK?

A. That's right.

Q. AND DID YOU COMMUNICATE WITH HIM AT ALL?

A. I couldn't -- I did. I did. But he was sending letters and he was helping out people that they were there. And the people wrote to their parents, that they are there, that they should be good to me.

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE WORKED IN GERMANY?

A. No, I don't remember.

Q. OR WHAT HE WAS DOING?

A. No, I don't.

Q. WAS HE EARNING MONEY OR WAS HE BASICALLY A PRISONER?

A. I still don't know.

Q. YOU DON'T KNOW THAT?

A. I do know that he was carrying on with other people, and they wrote to the family and the family used to come in and wanted to be nice to me and give me some money. And I said no, your husband is very good to them and they want me to help you. So I did not --

Q. YOU WORKED ALSO IN THE FACTORY INSIDE THE GHETTO?

A. Yes.

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHY HE DECIDED TO VOLUNTEER TO GO WORK? DID HE THINK --

A. No.

Q. -- THAT WOULD BE A WAY OF SURVIVAL?

A. No, that was -- no. That was, when he went, I didn't work yet because the baby was very young. I didn't work yet. I was with the baby, home. But I don't know what he thought. He just thought that he cannot be in a jail. It's just like a jail. And he can't be. He has to be a free person. Well, yeah. I can't make --

Q. HE FELT THAT WOULD BE A BETTER LIFE THAN BEING LOCKED UP IN JAIL?

A. (Nodding)

Q. AND YOU NEVER HEARD OF ANY TRACE OF HIM SINCE THEN?

A. No.

Q. I THINK IN YOUR EARLIER INTERVIEWS YOU HAD TAKEN THE STORY ALL THE WAY THROUGH AUSCHWITZ AND THEN --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- AND EVENTUALLY A WORK CAMP IN GERMANY?

A. Yeah.

Q. AND THEN ULTIMATELY IN BERGEN-BELSEN?

A. Yeah.

Q. AND I BELIEVE YOU SAID EVEN THROUGH THE LIBERATION OF THAT CAMP?

A. That's right. We were liberated from

England.

Q. BY THE ENGLISH --

A. By the English, yeah.

Q. IN BERGEN-BELSEN, VERY BRIEFLY, DID YOU WORK THERE OR WHAT DID YOU DO THERE?

A. Yeah, I was a nurse in the hospital, working in the hospital. When the sick people were laying in the floor, divided the rooms with blankets, and everybody had assigned a room.

Q. AND YOU DESCRIBED WHAT HAPPENED WHEN THE ENGLISH CAME AND LIBERATED THE CAMP?

A. When the English came -- before they came, that night the Germans from the kitchen, everybody, ran away. So when we got up in the morning, there was no kitchen, no cooking, no nothing. So we knew it's an end of the war, so we started looking.

I'll never forget. I went, ran -- there was a division between the women's camp and the men's camp. And I ran there to see, to find out if there was anybody, maybe my husband, if there was anybody that I know. I found a cousin, this is George, in the --

Q. GEORGE -- WHAT'S THE LAST NAME?

A. Levin. I found a cousin and that cousin -- they were laying on the floor, just like we did. They was laying on the floor and you know what they were eating? They were -- a dead body was next to

them and they were taking out things from the body and they ate it.

Q. YOU WERE NOT GETTING -- YOU WERE STARVING?

A. They --

Q. THEY WERE --

A. -- couldn't control themselves. They are worse than women. Women wouldn't do that.

I took him out of there, brought him over here and he put up stones and made a fire and I went and brought from the kitchen some potatoes and I used to make some kind of soup.

And then they put in the people from Bergen-Belsen to the city (Unintelligible). And that they took out the Germans from the hospital and they put in our people. And the German doctor -- the English doctors gave us cigarettes to smoke, to quiet the nerves.

Q. IN THOSE DAYS, BERGEN-BELSEN WAS PERHAPS THE FIRST CAMP THAT THE REST OF THE WORLD COULD SEE --

A. But there was others too.

Q. MANY OTHERS. BUT BERGEN-BELSEN WAS THE FIRST ONE THAT WAS LIBERATED. I THINK THAT THE RUSSIANS LIBERATED SOME, OF COURSE.

A. Yeah.

Q. BUT WE, ON THIS SIDE, NEVER KNEW WHAT THEY HAD FOUND --

A. They did not know. They came into the hospital. They found out that the -- they found out that the whole camp was dynamited and that for three days, they came in three days before and the meantime they shut off the water and everything.

Q. THE BRITISH?

A. The British. And til they shut off and found the places where the dynamite was.

Q. THERE WAS A LOT OF DISEASE AT THAT TIME?

A. Well, what was happening, the English came and the sick people were laying on the floor. You couldn't do nothing for them. You just helped them bring a little water, wash the face and give them the food what they are getting: a cup of coffee, black coffee with a piece of bread in the morning; for noon time, a little soup; in the evening, another cup of coffee with a piece of bread. And that would be -- this is what we did for the sick people.

But when the English came and they came into that hospital and saw the people were crying, "waser, waser," so they came, the officers, and they were crying. The tears were coming down their ears. And -- the ears! You know what I am talking about? The eyes. And they decided they'll cook a good soup, like we didn't have for years. And they cooked a beautiful soup, but it was too rich for our bodies.



And typhus was going. People were dying. After they live through the war, they were dying.

Q. IT WAS A RUSSIAN CAMP?

A. No, that was in the English.

Q. NO. I MEAN, THERE WERE RUSSIAN PRISONERS NEAR BERGEN-BELSEN. DID YOU SEE THEM OR --

A. No.

Q. -- KNOW THEY EXISTED AT ALL?

A. No. No. It's another part.

Q. SOME SEPARATE PART. YEAH, I KNOW.  
THE DEATHS WERE COMING RAPIDLY?

A. Yeah.

Q. DID YOU SEE -- THEY COULD NOT BE BURIED?

A. You see, they usually used to take them to the leisenhaus.(?) That is like the morgue. And they cremated them. But by then the lisenhaus was too full.

Q. TOO MANY DEAD --

A. Too many were dying. And there was no place where you could put them. And they told us to put them in front of the building. You probably saw pictures that -- the dead bodies.

I remember one woman died in my room and I asked the nurse what to do. And she says -- went into her office, brought scissors, and said "Cut off the clothes and take her." At that time they were still in the liesenhaus. And I said, "Me?" I hadn't seen a dead

body until then. I said, "Me, to cut off the clothes and bring her to the liesenhaus?" I wouldn't do that.

But how I got to be a nurse, so when we came to Bergen-Belsen, I found a friend of mine that she was there for two years and she was in another hospital, that they had bunk beds for the sick people. And she came to see they had a transport came in, so she came to see, to find out if there is anybody around that she knows. And she ran over to me before I even saw her was -- where I was kept, and she ran over and start kissing me. "Regina, Regina, you won't be here." So that's when we were living in this one big room when we came.

And she ran home and brought a loaf of bread and a salami and some margarine. And we were looking at her; we didn't see that for so many years. So I said to the girls that was sitting next to me, "We will have a party." And they said -- my cousin was there, too, and she says, "Don't do that. Tomorrow you won't have it." So I said, "Okay. Today we have it. So we will have a party today. Tomorrow won't have it, so won't have a party. Let's pretend that we have finished it and let's have it now. And that will be it."

Then she told me to go to -- told the nurse that she wants me to her hospital, to another

hospital. In this hospital, they didn't have -- the people were on the floor. So I -- I think I talked about it. So the people were on the floor. So this is the little thing that I could do for them. And because the reason that I went to this hospital, when she told me -- told the nurse, I was out of this big room and all the people were laying in the hospital -- that was a hospital.

So when I -- when every day the Germans came to count and they didn't find me in the place where I was supposed to be, so they told the head nurse, "You are responsible for her. She must be here or you will go." So she ran to the hospital of my friend --

Q. THE HEAD NURSE WAS A JEWISH LADY ALSO?

A. I don't know. Probably. Probably. So she ran to -- probably. So she ran to my friend and she told her, "Listen, I won't go for you. You took her, you better bring her. If she has hairs that grow on her head, so bring her by these few hairs." So she came running and I came back.

Q. YOU SAID AT ONE POINT THE NURSE TOLD YOU TO CUT THE CLOTHES OFF THE BODY.

A. Yes, at the time --

Q. YOU HAD NEVER SEEN A DEAD BODY BEFORE?

A. No.

Q. NOT IN ANY OF THE OTHER CAMPS --

A. No. Because in Bergen-Belsen -- in Auschwitz, I didn't see any dead bodies. In -- whatever they did, we didn't see it. In Hamburg, we didn't see any dead bodies. The only one time when the people were falling. Dying. And we look --

Q. IN BERGEN-BELSEN --

A. This Bergen-Belsen.

Q. THAT'S THE FIRST TIME?

A. That's the first one.

Q. AND THAT HAPPENED --

A. And that was before the English came and that was before the English gave them food. People were still dying. But at that time you could take them to the liesenhaus.

Q. BEFORE IT WAS ALL OVER?

A. Was all over. Was too full.

Q. MANY BODIES?

A. Yeah.

Q. YOU PROBABLY DESCRIBED THIS IN YOUR EARLIER INTERVIEW.

A. Yeah.

Q. AFTER BERGEN-BELSEN AND AFTER THE WAR WAS OVER, WHAT DID YOU DO THEN?

A. Well, we were working. We were working -- I was working a little bit in the hospital. And then

they -- Sweden took out a lot of people, sick people, to help them and I went with them.

Q. WHERE DID YOU GO?

A. To Sweden. And in Sweden, we had, when we came, first of all, we never had a bath and we were crawling with -- with, I don't want to say, lice. And they put us into a room and sprayed us over, from the top to the bottom; put us to a hospital, and gave us the first clothes that we had. And --

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE YOU WERE IN SWEDEN?

A. Oh, at first, we came to Sweden to Gettysburg, I think. And we were in a big hospital and for three weeks they were keeping us in the hospital. And then they tested us. So there was some people that had TB, so they put them in a TB hospital. There was some people that they were carriers, so they put them in different camps. And there were camps where they put in -- that they asked the people if they want to -- if they want to have -- be together with men, women with men, or separate. So I went with the ones that were separate. So we went, they send us to Escalstuna. (?) I never knew that I remembered it. And that was a camp that they gave us rooms.

And I always worked. There was a woman dentist and she needed some help, so I became her nurse. So she taught me how to make molds of the

teeth.

And we were there. We started to know what a day is, what a holiday means. We got together -- there were Jews and non-Jewish there. And the non-Jewish people made themselves a little church in the camp. And it came before the holidays, so they make on the outside and brought up some men from the outside, because Jews need ten men for the prayer. So they were there and we went to pray and come in. We had permission to invite somebody, if we knew somebody. And my cousin came to the hospital there. And then, when he was better, he used to come to visit from time to time, he could come in for a few hours.

Q. YOUR HUSBAND WAS ALSO IN SWEDEN?

A. No. No. My cousin.

Q. YES, YOUR COUSIN.

A. Yes, that's -- but this wasn't --

Q. THIS WAS GEORGE?

A. George, sure.

Q. HE WAS TAKEN TO SWEDEN?

A. To a hospital, he was very sick. And then they cured him and then he was able to come to visit.

Q. HOW LONG DID YOU STAY IN SWEDEN?

A. That wasn't too long. I was nine months in Sweden. They asked, "Who wants to go for work anyplace?" And I -- a lot of reporters used to come,



ask us, "Who are you looking for?" and how old we are and where we live before. And they made notes of everything, and they announced in all the countries, you know. And then --

Q. DID YOU KNOW WHERE THE REST OF YOUR FAMILY IS WHILE YOU WERE IN SWEDEN?

A. No.

Q. WERE YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS --

A. All I knew, everybody was gone. We knew already.

Q. YOU ALREADY --

A. We were still looking. Still hope. Still -- that's what they told everybody. Reporters came and asked if we had anybody.

I had two brothers that went to the United States, way, way before. So these brothers -- so I sent letters to them and they found out and they made papers for me. And me and another girl were the first ones to leave Sweden after nine months.

And whoever had somebody that found a family that remembered. You know, I had a cousin that came into the hospital when I was in the hospital in Bergen-Belsen, and she was four years in Auschwitz. She and her family were the first ones from the ghetto to be sent out. And they were young kids. And she was, I think, nine years old when the war broke out and

when they went to Auschwitz. And, oh, she had blue eyes and blond hair and she didn't look like Jewish and the head matrons fell in love with her. And they hid her for four years in Auschwitz. When the Germans came, they hid her. And then finally that the war was over and she came to my -- so one day when I was working in the hospital in Bergen-Belsen, a girl comes in, a little girl, she was probably 13 or 14 years old. And she came in and I look at her and she looked at me and we recognized one another. And since then she was my baby.

Q. WHO WAS SHE?

A. I took care of her -- she was a cousin. And then when we went together to Sweden, in the hospital they found out that she had TB, so she was in the hospital. But she was young and it was just the start of it, so she recovered. And when she recovered, she could come to the camp where I was. I used to go to visit her.

Q. YOU MENTIONED THE BLOND GIRL, SOMEBODY HID HER FOR FOUR YEARS IN AUSCHWITZ?

A. (Nods)

Q. WHO HID HER?

A. The head matrons.

Q. WHO WERE THEY, WERE THEY JEWISH?

A. I don't think so. They were not Jewish, I

don't think.

Q. BUT THEY LIKED HER?

A. Yes.

Q. AND THEY HID HER?

A. They hid her because she looked like Germans. Maybe they were Germans. Who knows?

Q. OKAY. SORRY FOR THE INTERRUPTION.

A. It's okay.

Q. SO BACK THEN TO, YOUR COUSIN CAME, AND YOU BECAME HER MOTHER, MORE OR LESS?

A. So she had an uncle in Argentina that she knew. She did not remember my family. So she -- I wrote to the uncle, Jewish letters. And she did not know Polish. And that's what I know, a little Jewish. So I wrote to him if he wants her, it's okay because she would prefer to go to him. If not, I will not go away from my family, I have two brothers in America and I want to take her with me. But he didn't have any children and he wanted her, so he got her. And me and another girl were the first ones to get the papers and we went the first ones to the United States.

Q. AND THIS WAS BECAUSE YOUR TWO BROTHERS --

A. YEAH. THAT'S RIGHT.

Q. -- IN THE UNITED STATES --

A. They sent papers. You had to have papers.

Q. -- SPONSORED YOU?

A. Yeah. And then when I came to America, New York, on the boat. And -- but there was one of my brothers, one lived in Chicago, one lived in New York. So they were -- so he and his wife came to pick me up. And they did not let anybody out til they know that somebody is waiting for them. So there was a line like this and like this. My brother was standing in this line; my sister-in-law was standing on the other line with the picture that I sent her from Sweden.

So he -- in front of him stood a man and he was almost fainting. And he said, "Don't worry. Go out and have a cup of coffee and I'll keep your place. And whenever you come, you'll have this place back."

Finally, I was notified that I can go out and I went out and I went through this line and she didn't see me. And then I go out to look where is my brother. He left when I was 11 years old. And I walk over to him. And I ask him if he knows a Mr. Lasky. My maiden name was Lasky. So he said, "Lady, I haven't got time to talk to you. I'm waiting for my sister." So I turn around and I said -- and I start looking, who else I should go and ask. And then it dawned on him what he said. And he said, "Lady, what did you tell me? Whose name did you want to ask?" And I said, "Mr. Lasky." "I'm Mr. Lasky." I said, "If you are Mr. Lasky, I'm your sister." So he took me to his wife

and he said, "Here she is." And then we went out --

Q. HOW MUCH OLDER WAS HE --

A. He was much older. Maybe 20 years old.  
18 years old.

Q. SO YOU DIDN'T RECOGNIZE HIM BY HIS FACE?

A. No, but I just walked over to him. And then her brother with the car -- at that time not everybody had cars. So his brother with the car was waiting for me. And so when they came out, so he asked how they met me and so they told him, he said, "Look, be careful. She may be an imposter."

Q. YOU CONVINCED THEM THAT YOU WERE NOT AN IMPOSTER?

A. I didn't have to convince too much. Yeah.

Q. SO THERE YOU ARE IN NEW YORK.

A. (Nodding)

Q. AND WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU AND HOW DID YOU START LIFE IN THIS COUNTRY?

A. Well, in this country? Well, first I was there. And in Sweden, they came with -- if we didn't have a disease, we were skin and bones. So they were building -- trying to build us up and it was the first time in my life that I weighed 166 pounds. And --

Q. IN SWEDEN?

A. In Sweden. They were trying to build us up. And then when I came to the States and every

morning my sister-in-law put up this beautiful table with all the things that she thought I would like for breakfast. And I said, "I'll eat everything." But when I took the first little piece of roll and I ate it, I had enough. And that was going on for a couple of days. Any meal that I had, I just tasted and that was it. So they called the doctor and the doctor came in and he said, "Don't worry. She has a lot to lose from. But she may completely stop eating from the shock from all that."

Then I had a brother in Chicago and the brother and sister-in-law wanted me there. So then I went there. And I started working. I started learning, going to school to learn the language.

Q. YOU SPOKE, AT THIS TIME, POLISH --

A. Polish, sure. And Yiddish.

Q. -- AND A LITTLE -- YIDDISH?

A. That they could understand.

Q. AND DID YOU SPEAK SWEDISH?

A. A little bit. I still remember a few words.

Q. NO ENGLISH?

A. No English. Unh-unh. I learned some English. I learned a few words of English. My brother send me from New York on the train, and there were young boys from the Army, whatever. And they started

talking to me. And I said, "I don't understand."  
Whatever they said I don't understand. And then I  
learned something, "Can you swim?" and "Swim up."  
That's what I learned. So then they decided not to  
behave right and I said, "Can you swim?" And he said,  
"Yes." "Swim up. Swim up." So he understood what I  
meant. That's the English I knew.

Q. AND YOU --

A. And I started working and I --

Q. IN CHICAGO?

A. In Chicago. And I met my husband here.

He was also from Poland, but he came to the United  
States on the last -- from the last -- with the last  
boat that came from Poland to America in 1939. And he  
was in the American Army.

Q. WAS HE JEWISH?

A. Yeah, sure. Sure.

Q. AND YOU MET HIM IN CHICAGO?

A. I met him in Chicago and we got married.

Q. AND HE WAS IN THE AMERICAN ARMY?

A. Yeah.

Q. DID HE GO OVERSEAS?

A. No, he was -- he was working in England.

Yeah, he was in the Medical Corps in England.

Q. THERE WERE a LOT OF POLES IN CHICAGO, I  
THINK --

A. Yeah. Yeah, we were living in like a ghetto. We were living, all the Polacks.

Q. DID YOU BEGIN YOUR LIFE THERE IN CHICAGO?

A. Yeah.

Q. DID YOU MEET YOUR HUSBAND RIGHT AWAY?

A. I met my husband in -- there was a meeting in the society, and my brother was invited so he took me there. And then my brother told the president that I came just from the war, so they all wanted to hear something. And whatever they ask me, I told them.

Q. SPEAKING POLISH?

A. Okay. And then we -- they were all Polacks. Jewish Polack.

Q. AND DID YOUR HUSBAND SPEAK POLISH?

A. Oh, sure. He was born and raised in Poland.

Q. AND WHAT WAS HIS NAME?

A. Hanover.

Q. HIS FIRST NAME?

A. Israk. Irving.

Q. HANOVER, WAS THAT THE POLISH NAME OR DID HE MAKE THE NAME MORE ENGLISH SOUNDING?

A. Well, it was -- he had two brothers, orphans, in Poland. And one brother from part of the family took one and another brother from the family took him. So he was still in the Poland and he wanted



to get to America. And they -- actually, the name was Yanover. Yanover. But the brother changed his name to Hanover. So he came, so he took over the name of Hanover. So that was Hanover. So that was it.

Q. YOUR HUSBAND'S FAMILY, MANY OF THEM WERE STILL IN POLAND DURING THE WAR?

A. No.

Q. THEY ALL CAME TO --

A. No.

Q. HE DIDN'T LOSE ANY OF HIS FAMILY?

A. No.

Q. AND HOW LONG WERE YOU MARRIED?

A. Oh, 31 years.

Q. LIVING IN CHICAGO?

A. Chicago.

Q. ALL THAT TIME?

A. All that time, yeah.

Q. HOW DID YOU COME TO SAN FRANCISCO?

A. Well, my husband --

Q. (UNINTELLIGIBLE)

A. That's -- my husband passed away. That's my only one son that I had.

Q. JUST YOUR HUSBAND AND --

A. Yeah, that's all that I have.

So in 1976, my husband passed away. And in 1978, I went to Israel. I had my brother was living

there and some children and they were asking, "What will you sit by yourself in Chicago?" My son was at the University and he was living in Berkeley, but he came often to visit and he came when my husband was sick. And so I was living there for nine years. After nine years, we decided that we should be together and I came here, four years or it will be four years. And I live in --

Q. FOUR YEARS AGO?

A. Yes.

Q. 1987?

A. '87.

Q. AND YOU HAVE BEEN HERE --

A. But the end of 1987. In June, I think, of 1987.

Q. YOUR TRIP TO ISRAEL WAS A VISIT, JUST A VISIT?

A. No. It was first a visit until I make a decision. And they were talking me into going there and my son said, "Mama" -- I was talking to him and I want to hear what he say -- "Mama, your decision will be good for me. Any decision. But I cannot tell you what to do." So I decided maybe it's right, I should go there and be with the family. And I was there for a while, then I came back. I'm glad to be together with my son.

Q. SO NOW THAT IT'S OVER, AT LEAST THOSE EVENTS ARE PASSED, DO YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY HEALTH PROBLEMS, FROM THAT PERIOD OF TIME?

A. Health problems?

Q. IS YOUR HEALTH GOOD?

A. Strangely enough, my health is not bad. I have emphysema and I have, and I have problems with my bones, the back.

Q. DOES ANY OF THAT STEM FROM THAT, FROM THOSE YEARS IN THE CAMPS?

A. Well, I don't know. They -- it could be sometimes the over 60, that the women supposed to get soft the bones. Maybe that and maybe not. Maybe from those times. Who knows?

Q. DID YOU EVER ASK THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT, WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT, FOR REPARATIONS?

A. Yeah.

Q. AND DID YOU GET THEM?

A. Yeah.

Q. AND DO YOU STILL GET THEM TO THIS DAY?

A. That's right. Until I die.

Q. YOU GET THEM UNTIL YOU DIE?

A. (Nodding)

Q. DO YOU MIND SAYING HOW MUCH YOU GET?

A. Not too much.

Q. NOT ENOUGH TO LIVE ON.

A. 300 -- \$300, something like that.

Q. \$300?

A. YES. OR IT'S \$500 -- (Unintelligible)

Q. DID YOU HAVE TO PROVE THAT YOU WERE --

A. Oh, I could prove to them. Let them find out and they found out, sure. It was nothing.

Q. THERE WERE DOCUMENTS --

A. Sure.

Q. LOTS OF DOCUMENTATION THAT YOU MAINTAINED?

A. Sure. They got from Sweden the documents.

Q. SURE. SO THAT WAS NOT DIFFICULT?

A. No. Um-um.

Q. HOW ABOUT PHYSICALLY, YOU'RE NOT TOO BAD, YOU SAY?

A. No.

Q. BUT YOU HAVE SOME HEALTH PROBLEMS. EMOTIONALLY, ANY EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS?

A. Well --

Q. LOTS OF MEMORIES, OBVIOUSLY.

A. Well, I don't know. I'll tell you something, I'm surprised that I'm normal. I'm surprised. A lot of people -- I come evidently from a strong, very strong family. It would be a long-lived family and my whole family was gone. My father had seven brothers and one sister. And from every family, the youngest is still left alive. From my mother --

from my father's sister is the youngest daughter.

There were -- there were five, let's see, five -- four daughters and three sons; seven people. And my father's --

Q. THIS IS YOUR FATHER'S --

A. Sister. Only one sister.

Q. -- SISTER?

A. My father has seven brothers, so there is -- the sisters, one the youngest daughter, exactly my age, and she is alive. From one of the uncles, two brothers are alive. One was during the war in a coal mine, working for three years.

Q. WHERE WAS THAT --

A. And up until now he is -- not only not healthy but not normal.

Q. WHERE WAS THE COAL MINE?

A. In Germany.

Q. IN GERMANY?

A. Yeah.

Q. HE WAS WORKING --

A. He was there.

Q. -- FORCED TO LABOR IN THE MINE?

A. Yeah. The other brother was in the ghetto and he was, after the ghetto, he survived and they both live in Australia.

Q. WHAT ARE THEIR NAMES?

A. Lasky. My father's name was Lasky.

Q. COULD YOU SPELL THAT?

A. L-a-s-k-y.

Q. L-A-S-K-Y?

A. Yes.

Q. DO YOU TALK ABOUT THESE EXPERIENCES VERY MUCH? YOU AND YOUR SON ARE LAUGHING AT A CERTAIN THING AND I KNOW YOU MUST HAVE TALKED ABOUT IT.

A. My son knows everything.

Q. YOU TOLD HIM ALL --

A. Everything, Yeah. I did not hide from him. When he was -- whenever I knew that he was ready for it. First of all, it's sometimes -- one time he found out something about the baby that he did not know and he found out.

Q. HOW OLD WAS HE?

A. (Speaking to son) How old were you then?

MR. HANOVER: Nine.

Q. NINE YEARS OLD?

A. So my niece was sitting and telling a friend of hers about me and about the baby. So that girl found out and she told him and he got all excited. And then she didn't want to talk any more. So he got all excited and he came running, "Mama, tell me it's not true. Tell me it's not true." And I told him, "That is true, but I was waiting, you know, I don't

hide from you anything. I was waiting til you will be a little older, because I felt that that's a very bad thing to talk about. And I wanted you to" -- but I -- I had to tell him at that time.

Q. LET ME ASK YOU ABOUT THE BABIES ONCE AGAIN. WHEN THE BABIES WERE TAKEN, DID YOU AND THE OTHER MOTHERS EVER LEARN WHERE THEY WERE TAKEN TO?

A. (Shakes head)

Q. NEVER DID?

A. Who can we ask? What could we know? I can only know that if a child was well, maybe it was old enough to survive, maybe they kept them. They said -- the papers say, the books says that there were older children they kept them alive to be Germans. Who knows? Who knows?

Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING IN GERMANY NOW, THE TWO GERMANIES COMING TOGETHER?

A. Yeah.

Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?

A. Well, I'm scared for the second generation, what will happen. I'm really scared because the two Germanies --

Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE GERMANS AS A GROUP OF PEOPLE?

A. Look, the young Germans, the young kids, I

can't blame. The old Germans -- I can't -- I can't blame what their parents and grandparents did. But the old Germans, you know, I still wouldn't look at them. I read about them. I read about them a lot. I know everything. I watched all the movies. When I was in Israel, they were showing all the movies from the war. And I was sitting and watching every movie and crying and getting up sick. And my niece calls me up and says, "What is the matter?" And I said, "Did you watch the movie?" "Why did you do that?" And I said, "Why I'm doing it, I don't know why. But I just have to see it. Maybe I'm punishing myself to be alive."

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY FEELINGS OF GUILT THAT YOU ARE ALIVE AND THAT SO MANY OTHERS ARE NOT?

A. Oh, sure.

Q. DO YOU?

A. Sure. I always say if I died tomorrow, I have nothing to complain about because I had more life than any one of my family. We always said that.

Q. DID YOU --

A. I'm always ready to die. My son doesn't like to hear that, but I can't help it.

Q. IN THOSE TIMES, DID YOU EVER HAVE TO DO ANYTHING THAT YOU MIGHT NOW BE SAYING TO YOURSELF, "I WISH I HADN'T DONE THAT. I WISH I HADN'T HAD TO DO A THING LIKE THAT TO SURVIVE"?



A. (Shakes head) No.

Q. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE AT ALL DURING THOSE PERIODS --

A. No. I just was almost dead anyhow, what I did. But I wouldn't care. I would never care. I would do anything to help the next person. And I still do.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY FEELINGS ABOUT PERHAPS WHAT THE JEWISH POLICEMEN DID OR WHAT -- WERE THERE JEWISH COMMANDOES IN THE CAMPS WHERE YOU WERE?

A. Well, with the camps there were no Jewish commandoes.

Q. THERE WERE NONE?

A. No. In the ghetto there were Jewish policemen, they needed them.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY FEELINGS ABOUT WHAT THEY DID IN HELPING TO TAKE PEOPLE AWAY?

A. Well, they wouldn't -- whoever could, is our president, Rumkophski(?). He had the power. They came to him and they told him, "We need 10,000. I tell you, just these 2,000. These 5,000. And these 10,000, and then no more." Until it was no more left.

Q. HE WAS PRESIDENT OF WHAT?

A. President of the ghetto.

Q. OF THE JEWISH COUNCIL IN THE GHETTO?

A. In the ghetto, yeah. Rumkophski(?). I

saw him in the movie and I saw him --

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER --

A. Sure, Rumkophski(?) was his name.

Q. WHAT WAS HIS FIRST NAME?

A. Heim Rumkophski(?)

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?

A. When we came to Auschwitz and there were the Germans, there were Jewish policemen too, with them. And as we went down from the train, "Is Rumkophski with you? Is Rumkophski with you? We are just waiting for him." They probably killed him as soon as he came.

Q. WAS HE THERE WITH YOU?

A. No.

Q. NO?

A. No. He was from the last ones. They thought that he will be, he and his girls around him, they thought they would survive. An old man.

Q. DID THEY SURVIVE?

A. He was thinking that he and his family -- I mean, it wasn't a family, it was --

Q. WAS HE --

A. If he was brought out, it was after us, when they closed the Auschwitz. The Bergen --

Q. WHEN YOU WERE TAKEN FROM THE GHETTO, WERE THERE MANY JEWS LEFT IN THE GHETTO OR WERE YOU AMONG

THE LAST?

A. I wasn't among the extreme last, but I was by the between.

Q. YOU DISCUSSED THAT --

A. My girlfriends, my very close girlfriends, that we were just together, her husband was a policeman too, so we all decided to go together. We went together.

Q. AND ON THE TRAINS WERE JEWISH POLICEMAN --

A. We were together. And then, in Auschwitz, so they divided them. The women separate. So I was with her. But after we went in, to be looked over, like after the bath that everything was taken away and that's all that we had, when we were out, out of the shower, with only the wooden sandals. So when we came out naked, they looked us over. They looked her over and put her in another place and I did not know if I go here or there. It didn't matter. And then I never saw her again.

Q. ON THE TRAIN THROUGH AUSCHWITZ -- I KNOW YOU DISCUSSED THIS BEFORE, ONE LITTLE POINT: ON THE TRAIN TO AUSCHWITZ, DID YOU SAY THERE WERE GERMAN GUARDS AND ALSO JEWISH POLICE?

A. Not on the train.

Q. NOT ON THE TRAIN?

A. Nobody on the train, not even German

guards.

Q. OKAY.

A. No. We were planning our life, that we were coming to work.

Q. IN LOOKING IT ALL OVER, IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE THAT YOU CAN THINK OF?

A. No, I think that's everything.

Q. I WANT TO DO WHAT I SAID I WOULD PROBABLY DO. I WOULD LIKE YOU TO NAME THE MEMBERS OF YOUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY, FROM GRANDPARENTS DOWN TO --

A. Well, grandparents didn't live --

Q. FATHERS AND MOTHERS AND SISTERS, NAME THEM CLEARLY, INDIVIDUALLY.

A. Okay. My father --

Q. AND SAY WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM.

A. My father was Leib Lasky and my mother, Esther Malkin. Her maiden name, Levin. I had -- I was for three sisters.

Q. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR PARENTS?

A. They were taken -- they were in Warsaw, the whole family. And from Warsaw, they were taken to gas chamber -- no, wait a minute. They did not -- no, excuse me, gas chamber. They brought in gas to the trains and gassed them there, before they had a gas chambers. They were the first ones to go. And they were talking before then that Warsaw and around Warsaw

will belong to Poland, so everybody thought that they will be safe, so everybody was running there. So that was my parents.

My oldest sister was Helen. She had a husband and two children, a girl of 12 and a girl of 9.

Q. THE NAMES?

A. Helen and Schmul Feibel, (?) the husband. And Hanrushka. (?) Hanka. (?) And the girl, Lola, the younger girl.

Q. THEY WERE ALL --

A. They were all in Warsaw. Then a sister --

Q. WERE THEY TAKEN AWAY?

A. Together with the parents, with the family that -- my brothers thought that he saved them.

Q. THEY WERE ON THAT SAME TRAIN AS YOUR PARENTS?

A. Well, no. My brother saved -- smuggled with the Germans, my family; the oldest sister with two children, her husband was in the Army, and my parents. So they were there -- so they went to Warsaw.

And then my other family, my father's brothers and sister, some of them did the same thing that my brother did, to them. But my brother came back to make the furs for the Germans that he promised and then he went up with them together anyhow.

So who else do you want to know? That's

Hannah is the other sister. And Yosef is the husband. And she had two children, a boy and a girl. The girl was raised by my parents. And she was ten years old. And the boy was seven years old, was with the parents. They were in the ghetto together with me. They went before me.

Q. To Auschwitz also?

A. To Auschwitz also. I didn't meet them.

Then there was a Paula. And she had a husband, but they were in Pieterkopf (?) when they took them out, out of the city, when we came to the ghetto. And they were on the list of my brothers that the Germans will need them to work. So they took them out, all of them. In Pieterkopf, they met -- he was going to work and she would, with the two children, were home. And one day, 500 people, the women and children, were taken. Came to the house and took out, when the husbands weren't at work, and took the women out to one grave and killed them.

Then my brother went -- when we came to the ghetto and he got out. So he went back, tried to go back to be with his parents. And that was me.

Q. YOUR BROTHER WENT, TRIED TO GO BACK TO WARSAW?

A. To Warsaw, yeah. Before he --

Q. DID YOU KNOW IF HE MADE IT?

A. Oh, he made it to Warsaw and he was there in Warsaw.

Q. AND ALL THE PEOPLE, ALL THE FAMILY IN WARSAW?

A. Were all killed.

Q. AND THEN WE KNOW ABOUT YOU.

A. Yeah.

Q. YOU TOLD US ALL ABOUT THAT.

A. Yeah, I'm the only one alive. I still don't know why and how.

Q. DO YOU VIEW YOUR RELIGION ANY DIFFERENTLY NOW AFTER ALL THIS? DO YOU WONDER WHY IT WAS ALLOWED TO HAPPEN?

A. Yeah, I don't agree with a lot of things and I -- yeah, there's a lot of questions. There is a lot of questions unanswered. You think and -- when I came to the United States, I did not want anybody -- I didn't want to hear when somebody named God. My sister-in-law told me to light the candles. I said, "Me? Candles? No."

But when I was married and my son was born, I had to change a little bit my life. First of all, I was afraid to have him. I went to the doctor, "Do anything. I don't want to have a child. Only the stupid Americans can have children. They don't know what happens to their children. I know what happened

to the children. How can I bring a child to this world?" And I was so scared to death. I picked him up in bed and I called his name and I cried. I'll never forget. How old he was, but a few weeks, maybe a couple of months. I picked him up and I called him, I gave him my father's name, and I called his name and I started crying loud. And he opened his big eyes and I saw the eyes of my father. And inside somebody says to me, "What do you want from this child? Why do you cry?" And I said, "Larry, never again will I cry for you, when I will have you. If I want to cry, I'll go to the washroom, I'll go to another room, but not in front of you." And I had to express this my whole life and it still is.

Q. ARE YOU FINISHED?

A. What else can I tell?

Q. THANK YOU.

A. You're welcome.

INTERVIEWER 2: GENE, MAY I ASK ONE QUESTION?

Q. Yeah. Sure.

INTERVIEWER 2: YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU WERE IN A SITUATION AT ONE POINT IN WHICH THERE WAS SOME VERY STARVED PEOPLE WHO WERE FORCED TO GET THEIR NUTRITION FROM A DEAD HUMAN.

A. (Nodding)



INTERVIEWER 2: YOU MENTIONED THAT. AND YOU SAID THAT -- YOU MADE SORT OF AN INTERESTING OBSERVATION: THAT YOU THOUGHT THAT THAT WAS A KIND OF BEHAVIOR THAT MEN WOULD DO THAT WOMEN WOULD NOT DO. And I WAS JUST CURIOUS TO KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS ON THAT --

A. No. No.

INTERVIEWER 2: -- WHY YOU SAID THAT.

A. I did not say -- I did not mean that I was in a situation -- that I would believe that men would do it. I just said that how they could do it? They were so hungry.

INTERVIEWER 2: SURE.

A. That how you could do it. But they did it and I don't know if women would do this.

INTERVIEWER 2: I SEE.

A. I took, brought him back to the place where I was. And he brought some stones around and made a fire, and he brought some potatoes and I made a soup for us.

Q. WHY DO YOU THINK WOMEN MIGHT NOT DO THAT?

A. I don't know.

Q. WERE YOU ALL GIVEN THE SAME KIND OF FOOD?

A. Everybody, the same thing. Now, no one had anything better on --

Q. YOU FEEL MEN ARE LESS CONTROLLED?

A. Of themselves, that's right.

Q. OF THEMSELVES?

A. Yeah. There was women that didn't eat in the ghetto -- you got this loaf of bread, you got a loaf of bread with a little bit margarine or sometimes a little bit jelly. And the kids were staying around and there were dressed, when I brought them from the office, and watched me, I should cut exactly for everybody. Everybody was hungry. So I -- so they were running to the garbage cans. They kept telling me they are running to the garbage cans to find something, maybe they have something to eat. I mean, you know, but there was in the ghetto a woman that was a young woman that was living in the same building that I was living. When they gave us the rations on Friday, Friday and Saturday and Sunday, she was living it up. We used to, the rest of us made a little scale and every day we can eat that much. So, and from the little bit coffee, after, we saved this coffee to make a cake. And we were eating just so much. And we drank more water when we wanted to eat, you know, when we were hungry. But she said, "Oh, it's already Wednesday and tomorrow is Thursday, and after tomorrow, Friday. So I will go" -- but she couldn't go for the ration and she died from hunger.

Q. SHE DID?

A. Yes.

Q. THIS INCIDENT THAT YOU MENTIONED ABOUT THE MEN EATING PARTS OF THE BODY --

A. Yeah.

Q. WERE THERE OTHER SITUATIONS WHERE OTHER MEN WERE DOING THAT, DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THAT?

A. I don't know.

Q. THIS ONE YOU SAW --

A. I saw it. I wouldn't look for that.

Q. DID YOU EVER HEAR OF WOMEN DOING THAT?

A. I never heard that. We never had -- I was working in a hospital.

Q. You were all --

A. That the women --

Q. YOU WERE SKIN AND BONES --

A. Sure.

Q. -- AT THIS TIME?

A. Oh, sure. When I came to Sweden, I was just skin and bones. But I was lucky, I didn't get any diseases. You know?

Q. YOU WERE VERY WEAK?

A. Just build it up. They just build us up.

Q. THANK YOU. AND THAT'S ALL?

A. That's all. And I thank you.

Q. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

(End of tape 2)