

1 Interview with JERRY K. MOLTON
2 Holocaust Oral History Project
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6

7 Q THIS IS JUNE 19, 1990 AND WE'RE TALKING
8 WITH JERRY MOLTON AND MY NAME IS PEGGY COSTER AND WE'RE
9 AT TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL-JUDEA TODAY.
10 WHY DON'T YOU START BY TELLING US WHEN YOU
11 WERE BORN.

12 A Well, I was born in 1926 in Konigsberg,
13 Germany.

14 Q DID YOU HAVE ANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

15 A I had an older brother. His name was
16 Steven.

17 Q HOW MUCH OLDER WAS HE THAN YOU?

18 A He was six years older than I am.

19 Q WHY DON'T YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY
20 BACKGROUND. YOU WERE GOING TO TELL US ABOUT YOUR
21 GRANDMOTHER?

22 A Yes. I can talk about my family background.
23 Let's start with my father. His name was
24 Leo Molton, although in Europe we were known as Motulsky.

25 Q HOW DO YOU SPELL THAT?

1 A M O T U L S K Y.

2 We changed our name to Molton when we came
3 to America, because we had relatives who felt that it was
4 too Polish sounding or too foreign sounding, and they had
5 become quite Americanized and they preferred that we had
6 a more Americanized name.

7 My father went along with the idea not
8 because he wanted to become super American, but because
9 no one pronounced our name properly.

10 Q HOW WAS IT PRONOUNCED PROPERLY?

11 A Oh, there were half a dozen different
12 pronunciations for the name.

13 Q WHAT WAS THE RIGHT ONE?

14 A The correct pronunciation is Motulsky, and
15 no one pronounced it that way, and my father was very
16 proud of his name and he just did not want to go along
17 with that. He did not like the idea that people distorted
18 his name.

19 Q YOU SAID THAT YOUR FAMILY THOUGHT IT WAS
20 TOO POLISH?

21 A Yes. It was Polish sounding, it was
22 foreign sounding, and they -- and, as I said, my father
23 reluctantly went along with the idea, because everyone
24 would mispronounce our name.

25 Q DOES THIS MEAN YOU WERE POLISH?

1 A No. My grandfather originally came from
2 Poland. And I will talk about him later on in the
3 interview.

4 Q IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO TELL US
5 ABOUT YOUR FATHER?

6 A Yes. My father, I feel he was a victim of
7 the Holocaust -- well, let's go back first. During World
8 War I, he was an officer in the German Army and, like so
9 many of our people, he was proud of it. He was a German
10 and he was a German Jew and he was proud that he had
11 served his country.

12 When Hitler came along and some people
13 recognized what direction Hitler was going towards, the
14 anti-communism, the anti-Judaism, the anti-Semitism, my
15 father and so many of his compatriots, who also had been
16 officers in the Army during World War I felt, oh, we're
17 ex Army officers. They wouldn't dare touch us or do
18 anything. Unfortunately, many of them perished because
19 of that philosophy. They later on were caught in Germany
20 before they were able to have an opportunity to get out.

21 My father, however, decided he would leave
22 Germany. He was a very prominent attorney in Germany and
23 a very successful one. What gave him concern was how
24 would he support his family once he comes to America.
25 And unfortunately his concerns really came true, and I

1 think this is what in the end cost him his life.

2 We came to America and lived in Chicago
3 from 1936 on. Some of his experiences of getting a job
4 was that of a clerk, an eight or \$10 a week clerk. And
5 that must have been a terrible blow to him. I was a boy,
6 10 or 11 years old at the time, so he didn't really
7 confide in me too much. But in thinking back now and
8 with my own life experiences, it must have been a
9 terrible, terrible blow to him and a comedown from a very
10 successful, prominent attorney to the level of a clerk.

11 I remember one time he told me a story -
12 where he was sitting at his desk and there were some
13 people sitting next to him and my father, being an
14 intelligent individual and interested in things, of how
15 things work and how things are run, he asked the lady
16 next to him what she was doing. Instead of getting an
17 explanation of what she was doing, she said, "What's the
18 matter? Do you want my job?"

19 And I guess I can understand that too,
20 because this was the depth of the Depression and everyone
21 who had a job was grateful he had a job and would do
22 anything necessary to protect his job or her job.

23 The best my father ever could do as far as
24 getting better paying positions was he tried to sell life
25 insurance with one of the major life insurance companies,

1 but he was not overly successful with that.

2 My father died of bleeding ulcers in 1943,
3 and I think that his ulcers were probably caused by the
4 stress he was living under and the depressions that he
5 felt that, one, he was not a success; two, he could not
6 really support his family.

7 Q WAS HE AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO THE
8 JEWS IN EUROPE BEFORE HE DIED?

9 A I think so, yes. Because up until 1939
10 we were able to keep contact with our families in Europe.
11 After 1939, of course, after the war, we lost contact -
12 with them. How we found out about what happened to most
13 of our family, I personally do not know. But I suspect
14 that both my father and my mother were able to get some
15 information through some of the Jewish agencies after the
16 war.

17 Q BUT YOU SAY HE DIED IN '43.

18 A Yes, but my mother lived until the ripe old
19 age of 93 and died here in San Francisco about three years
20 ago.

21 Q WHAT I MEAN IS, IN '43 IT WASN'T THAT COMMON
22 OF KNOWLEDGE, WAS IT?

23 A Well, no one knew exactly to what extent,
24 no. No one really realized in America just what the
25 Holocaust -- to what extent the Holocaust was. But we

1 did get inklings of people being arrested, disappearing
2 and so forth. We heard that already as far back as 1939.

3 In fact, from what I have learned from my
4 parents and later on from my mother -- well, my
5 mother-in-law and some other people, is that people
6 started disappearing already in 1933, 1934, 1935, in that
7 time frame. So that there was some inkling there already
8 of what was going on.

9 Q WAS HE EVER SORRY THAT HE HAD LEFT GERMANY?

10 A No.

11 Q IN SPITE OF ALL HIS DIFFICULTIES?

12 A In spite of all his difficulties. He
13 realized he had no choice. And he accepted that.

14 If you want me to go over some of the other
15 people, I can do that.

16 Q HOW ABOUT YOUR MOTHER?

17 A She would be the next one then. I will need
18 to read through my notes, so forth.

19 Okay. My mother was the daughter of Samuel
20 and Augusta Kottow.

21 Q HOW DO YOU SPELL THAT?

22 A K O T T O W. She was born on
23 November 4, 1893 in a small town called Lessing, L E S S
24 I N G, Poland. I kind of suspect that this may have been
25 Germanized or -- she married my father, Leo Motulsky, on

1 September 21, 1919.

2 She came with us, of course, to America in
3 1936 and she died here in San Francisco in 1987 at the
4 age of 93, which was a ripe old age.

5 Q HOW DID SHE SUPPORT YOUR FAMILY AFTER YOUR
6 FATHER DIED?

7 A Well, she really literally pulled herself
8 up by her boot straps and went to work. This was already
9 during the war and my brother was in the services. I was
10 16 at the time and still at home. So she started from
11 scratch, started out first as an office worker in
12 accounting and then afterwards became a saleslady, and
13 she saw to it that I was able to finish high school, and
14 after high school it was time for me to be on my own two
15 feet.

16 Q DID SHE REMARRY?

17 A No, my mother never remarried. I don't
18 think she was the type of woman that would. For her, of
19 course, the loss of her husband was devastating, but as I
20 said before, she realized what she had to do and that she
21 had to pull herself together. She had a son to support
22 and to raise. And I think she did a very good job,
23 although I don't like that phrase. But I think she did
24 very well in that.

25 If you want me to go over some of the other

1 family members, I have an older brother, as I said,
2 Steven W. Molton, also of course formerly Motulsky. He
3 was six years older than I am. And he came to America
4 the same time we did. He did finish high school here in
5 1938, and in 1941 when America got into the war he
6 volunteered to go into the Army and he did.

7 He served overseas in the western Pacific.
8 They had asked him if he wanted -- because he spoke German
9 fluently, they had asked him if he wanted to work for the
10 OSS, and he said, "No way. "I'll fight for America, but I
11 insist on wearing a uniform."

12 And I think I can understand that fully,
13 because if he had been caught behind German lines out of
14 U.S. uniform, he realized what would happen to him.

15 Q WHAT DID "OSS" STAND FOR?

16 A Office of Secret Service.

17 Q SO HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ESSENTIALLY A SPY.

18 A Yes. The OSS was the forerunner to the
19 CIA.

20 I'm going to get a drink. Okay?

21 Q SURE.

22 A All right. Some other members of my
23 mother's family who died in the Holocaust, one is
24 Simon Kottow, who is the son of Samuel and Augusta Kottow.
25 His last known address as far as we know is in

1 Theresienstadt, where he perished. His previous address,
2 to the best of our knowledge, was in Berlin, Germany. He
3 was born sometime in the 1880s. Just when, I don't know.
4 But he never married and he supported his mother,
5 Augusta Kottow, after her husband died.

6 My grandmother, Augusta Kottow, her maiden
7 name was Peizer. She was also born in Poland. Here
8 again, she was born on January 1, I would say either in
9 the late 1850s or early 1860s. She married Samuel Kottow
10 I believe sometime in the early 1880s. With her, too, we
11 do know that she perished in Theresienstadt and that her
12 prior address to that was in Berlin, Germany.

13 She had two other sons, both of whom
14 perished in the Holocaust. The second son's name was
15 George Kottow. He was born sometime in the early or mid
16 1880s. He married late in life, sometime around 1938 or
17 '39 to the best of my knowledge, and he too perished in
18 Theresienstadt. Prior to that he lived in Berlin,
19 Germany.

20 The third son, who was a victim also of the
21 Holocaust, his name was Leo Kottow. All I remember of
22 him is that he was the youngest of the three sons. He
23 was born towards the latter part of the 1880s. He lived
24 in France, and that is the last we know of him. We heard
25 from him from Marseille sometime late in 1939. After

1 that we lost track and do not know what happened. And
2 assume, of course, that he was lost in the Holocaust.

3 Samuel Kottow had a brother named Herman,
4 and he was married to a woman named Johanna, but I do not
5 remember her maiden name. We used to call her Tante
6 Hanchen. They too were married sometime in the late
7 1880s or maybe early 1890s.

8 They had two sons, one named Georg and the
9 other one Norbert. Georg had died in Germany. Just what
10 the circumstances were there, I do not know. The same
11 holds true of another son named Norbert. He too died in
12 Germany, but we do not know the circumstances.

13 Let me look at my notes and refresh my
14 memory a little bit.

15 The next one I would like to speak about,
16 of course, is my wife. Unfortunately, she is not here
17 to do it for herself.

18 Q WHY DON'T WE GO BACK INTO YOUR EARLY LIFE.

19 A All right. We can do that.

20 Q AND THEN TALK ABOUT HER WHEN WE GET TO THAT
21 PART OF THE STORY. DOES THAT SOUND GOOD? DOES THAT
22 SOUND OKAY TO YOU?

23 A Yes. That sounds fine. Do you want to ask
24 specific questions?

25 Q WELL, I CAN ASK QUESTIONS THAT YOU CAN

1 ANSWER OR ELSE YOU CAN SAY WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO SAY ALSO.

2 WHY DON'T YOU JUST KIND OF TALK ABOUT WHEN
3 YOU WERE REALLY YOUNG FIRST.

4 A All right. Let's go back to the time before
5 we came to America. I can still pretty well remember the
6 last three or four years we lived in Germany when Hitler
7 came to power. I mean, to me it really didn't mean that
8 much. I didn't fully understand all of the implications.

9 But as I got to be about eight or nine
10 years old and was in school, I began to realize that I
11 was somehow different than all of the other children of
12 all the other boys and girls in school. Whenever
13 anything went wrong in a classroom, it was always one of
14 us, one of the Jewish children, that was blamed.

15 Q CAN YOU REMEMBER ANY SPECIFIC EXAMPLES?

16 A Oh, the throwing of spitballs, talking in
17 class or being somewhat rowdy. It would always be one of
18 the Jewish boys that would get their knuckles rapped with
19 a ruler or with a pointer from the instructor, from the
20 teacher. That became so common we really didn't keep
21 track of it anymore.

22 Q ARE THERE ANY EXAMPLES OF JEWISH PEOPLE
23 BEING BLAMED THAT REALLY STAND OUT IN YOUR MIND?

24 A Well, not specifically. As I said, there
25 were so many instances like that, that we just learned

1 to accept it. We had no choice.

2 The same held true if there was a fight on
3 the school grounds or on the way home. A fair fight was
4 three or four of the Hitler Youth boys against one Jewish
5 boy. That was frequently considered a fair fight. And,
6 of course, it always went one way. We always got the
7 worst of it.

8 Then in the early part of 1936 we moved to
9 Berlin in preparation -- as I found out later on, this
10 was in preparation for the immigration to America. I was
11 still, of course, a young boy and probably somewhat in-
12 the way as far as my parents having to make all the
13 preparations, so I remember they sent me to a boys camp
14 for a few weeks or a few -- actually, it was several
15 months. I was not too happy there. Probably because it
16 was the first time I was away from my parents. I don't
17 have too much recollection, specific recollections, of
18 that time period, but then I remember our trip to America.

19 Q LET'S TALK A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT GERMANY.
20 DO YOU REMEMBER LIKE HEARING ABOUT LEBENSRAUM?

21 A Lebensraum?

22 Q YES.

23 A Oh, yes. Yes. That was, of course,
24 Hitler's pep talks always, that Germany needed Lebensraum,
25 meaning living space; that Germany was deprived of a lot

1 of its territory unfairly in World War I and that somehow
2 it had to be reclaimed.

3 Q DID YOU AGREE WITH HIM?

4 A Well, remember, I was a boy, eight, nine
5 years old. I didn't know what was going to -- and some
6 of these things, you see, are somewhat intertwined,
7 because how much of this do I remember as the eight- or
8 nine-year-old boy or how much of this do I realize or
9 remember now from being an adult in America? So it's
10 somewhat hard to separate some of those.

11 Q DO YOU REMEMBER HEARING YOUR FATHER TALK-
12 ABOUT LEBENSRAUM AND HIS OPINION?

13 A No. No, I don't remember that.

14 Q DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN THE NAZIS FIRST CAME
15 TO POWER, THE FIRST DAY? DO YOU REMEMBER THAT DAY?

16 A No, not specifically. I mean, eventually I
17 began to see -- I remember seeing more and more men in
18 uniform, in the brown shirts, and the strutting and the
19 parades, the mass of flags. I remember one particular
20 street, it was called the Klar Strasse, which was on my
21 way to school. And whenever there was any kind of
22 national day or holiday they would have hundreds of flags
23 hanging out, the swastika. It was known as one of the
24 streets where many of the party members lived. And, as I
25 say, the Jewish boys, we made sure we avoided that

1 street, because we all knew it meant trouble for us.

2 Q ONE OF THE THINGS I READ IS THAT FOR SOME
3 JEWISH CHILDREN IT WAS REAL DIFFICULT BECAUSE THE NAZIS
4 WERE SO ANTI-JEWISH AND SO THEY COULDN'T -- IT ESSENTIALLY
5 CUT THEM OFF FROM MOST OF THE THINGS THAT WENT ON IN THE
6 THIRD REICH. AND SO THERE BECAME ALSO A KIND OF JUST
7 WISH THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN JEWISH, BECAUSE THEN THEY
8 COULD PARTICIPATE IN ALL THESE THINGS.

9 A Well, I realized that I was different. I
10 was never just called a Jew, but always a damn Jew.
11 Sometimes it took -- it took me a long time to realize
12 that "damn Jews" were two words, just like in America
13 when -- in the South after the Civil War they tell a joke
14 about the 12-year-old boy who didn't realize that "damn
15 Yankees" were two words.

16 It was the same kind of a situation for
17 most of us. And, as I say, I think I was a little too
18 young really to get the real brunt of it, but I was
19 beaten up enough times for it and ostracized on the
20 school grounds. Nobody would play with me, or it was
21 just the Jewish children who would play with one another.

22 Q DID YOU EVER WISH YOU WEREN'T JEWISH SO
23 THAT WOULDN'T HAPPEN OR SO THAT YOU COULD JOIN THE HITLER
24 YOUTH GROUP?

25 A No, I don't think so.

1 Q BECAUSE, I MEAN, THEY DID A LOT OF FUN
2 THINGS TOO. IT WASN'T JUST --

3 A You see, the Jewish children, we really
4 didn't know and realize what was the Hitler Youth.
5 To us they were our enemies. They meant getting beat up
6 or getting into trouble.

7 Q DID YOU HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS?

8 A Not too many, no. There were some Jewish
9 people in our town, but we lived in an area where there
10 weren't too many of them.

11 Q DID YOUR PARENTS GET SO THEY WERE AFRAID-TO
12 LET YOU GO OUT ON THE STREET UNLESS YOU HAD TO BE?

13 A No. I don't think it had reached that
14 point yet. Not in 1936.

15 Q ANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO BEAT YOU UP, DID
16 THEIR PARENTS SAY ANYTHING OR -- I MEAN TO THE CHILDREN
17 OR --

18 A Well, not to my knowledge. And I doubt if
19 they would. They may have even gone on and encouraged it.

20 So, as I say, those are the childhood
21 memories that I have of Germany before 19 -- up to 1936.
22 So it was really that of a young boy, not as a grown-up
23 person.

24 Q DID YOU SENSE THE TENSION IN YOUR PARENTS?

25 A I think I did. I think I did. I can't

1 specifically give you particular instances or so on, but,
2 yes, I think I did sense that something was wrong.

3 I recall one thing. In 1935 my parents
4 came to America for a visit, to visit our relatives whom
5 we had here --

6 Q WHO IS "THEY"?

7 A They were relatives who lived in Chicago.
8 They were Americans.

9 Q OKAY.

10 A And they were gone for a long, long time.
11 And I remember another aunt of mine visiting our
12 apartment where I lived and had another aunt taking care
13 of me, and I overheard the conversation, and I still hear
14 this one aunt saying, "Oh, they're in America. They'll
15 never come back anymore."

16 Q SO THAT'S YOUR PARENTS THAT HAD GONE TO
17 VISIT AMERICA WITHOUT YOU.

18 A My parents had come to America for a visit,
19 and as I say, they had been gone for a long time and I
20 really didn't think that much of it. My mother's aunt,
21 Johanna, was taking care of me and all seemed well. But
22 this other aunt came by one day and, as I say, I
23 overheard the conversation, saying, "Oh, they're in
24 America. They'll never come back." And, of course, that
25 was devastating to me.

1 Q DID YOU BELIEVE IT?

2 A Well, I probably did, because I was
3 devastated. I felt abandoned. And I cried. And I do
4 recall that my other aunt, the one who was taking care of
5 me, had a very difficult time convincing me that my
6 parents will come back.

7 Q WHAT WAS A DAY LIKE? WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR
8 YOU, A DAY IN YOUR HOMETOWN?

9 A Well, as I said, it was pretty typical of
10 any school boy. You got up early in the morning, you
11 went to school. You faced the daily problems of hoping
12 you won't get beat up again and hoping you won't be
13 blamed for everything that goes wrong in a classroom.
14 And then afterwards coming home and you tell your parents
15 what happened and your parents sympathized with you, but
16 you realized that your parents couldn't do anything for
17 you or do anything to help you. And then the evening or
18 the afternoon and evening was spent doing homework.

19 Q SO DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD
20 LIKE TO TALK --

21 A As far as Germany, no. Because, as I say,
22 there isn't that much in my memory.

23 Q SO THEN IN 1936 YOU MOVED TO BERLIN.

24 A Yes. We moved -- as I said, we lived there
25 for three months or perhaps a little bit longer, and I

1 spent several months in a Jewish boys camp.

2 Q WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

3 A Well, it was not all fun, although we did
4 have classrooms also. We had lessons. But I remember it
5 was a huge -- a very big villa and we each had our own
6 room and -- some of the boys didn't, but I think I had my
7 own room. And part of the day was classroom work, part
8 of it was sports, part of it was play. But specific
9 instances, I don't remember.

10 Q WHEN DID YOU GO BACK TO YOUR PARENTS THEN?

11 A Well, just very shortly before we were ready
12 to leave Germany, which was the latter part of October.
13 We left Germany early in November.

14 Q SO YOU LIVED FOR A FEW MONTHS WITH YOUR
15 PARENTS IN BERLIN, THEN YOU WENT TO THE CAMP, THEN YOU
16 CAME BACK.

17 A Yes.

18 Q WHERE DID YOU LIVE WITH YOUR PARENTS IN
19 BERLIN?

20 A I don't remember the address.

21 Q DO YOU REMEMBER THE PART OF TOWN?

22 A Yes. The area was called Grunewalt.

23 Q DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT HOW YOUR
24 PARENTS MANAGED THAT?

25 A No. Well, how they managed it, remember my

1 father had been a prominent and successful attorney, so
2 although his income had stopped, I am sure that he had a
3 lot of resources, a lot of assets, from previous savings.
4 So I am sure that is how he initially supported us in
5 Germany in that time period during preparation for the
6 emigration and how he supported us here. I am sure that
7 what -- he was not able to bring out all of his assets
8 from Germany, but what little assets he did, I'm sure he
9 used to supplement his meager income here.

10 Q YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH HE WAS ALLOWED TO
11 TAKE OUT.

12 A No, I don't. But I know it -- again, from
13 what I have learned later, after the war and so on, it
14 was a small percentage of his assets. But I don't know
15 specifically how much.

16 One other thing is that I remember quite
17 clearly is on our way to Rotterdam or Hoogevan, Holland,
18 from where we left for England, and then from England we
19 went to America, some other relatives had left Germany in
20 1933. They owned a department store in Konigsberg. And
21 once the Nazis came, that was one of the first prime
22 targets. It was a Jewish store. It was devastated a
23 couple of times to the point almost where they couldn't
24 hope to rebuild and then finally just gave up and went to
25 Holland in, I think, 1934 or 1935.

1 They had built up a successful business
2 already at the time and felt very comfortable in Holland.
3 My father had reservations about going to America, and I
4 still remember in our train ride through Holland this
5 cousin of ours joined us in Rotterdam on the ride to go
6 to Hoogevan, Holland, and I can remember the conversation
7 that my father had with this cousin and the cousin said,
8 "Well, why don't you stay? Stay in Holland?
9 We've been very successful here and you could be very
10 successful here too."

11 And I can still hear my mother saying, of
12 course, in German, "You can stay here if you want to, but
13 I'm taking the children to America."

14 And that is how we ended up here.

15 Q SO SHE KNEW -- SHE WAS INTUITIVE THAT
16 HITLER WASN'T GOING TO STOP WITH --

17 A Somehow she must have. But she said no,
18 she was not -- she wanted out of Europe altogether.

19 Q AND YOUR FATHER WAS MORE FOR STAYING IN
20 HOLLAND?

21 A I think so. I think he felt more -- would
22 have felt more at home in Holland. He would have felt,
23 well, it was still Europe. It was still close to Germany.
24 It was still close to what he was used to. That America
25 was the unknown land. He didn't know what was ahead for

1 him in America. Fortunately, my mother prevailed and we
2 left for America. I'm sure that if my father had
3 prevailed, we too would have perished in the Holocaust.

4 Q SO YOU REMEMBER A DISAGREEMENT THERE.

5 A Well, I don't know if it was a real
6 disagreement. I don't recall any raised voices or
7 anything. I just recall my mother's statement saying,
8 "Yes, if you want to stay here, you can stay here. But
9 I'm taking the children to America."

10 Q WHEN YOU SAY THAT YOUR COUSIN'S STORE WAS
11 DEVASTATED, WHAT HAPPENED TO IT? -

12 A It was demolished. They smashed the windows,
13 they set fire to it.

14 Q DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN THIS WAS?

15 A This was in 1933 already.

16 Q WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT LIFE IN BERLIN?

17 A Nothing really.

18 Q NOTHING?

19 A No.

20 Q WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR TRIP TO
21 AMERICA?

22 A Being very, very seasick. For some reason
23 or other there was a mistake into the cabin assignments.
24 My brother and I got an assignment -- got a cabin below
25 waterline. I think it must have been below the waterline.

1 We were miserable. On the first night out we were both
2 miserable. But that was straightened out and then we had
3 a cabin on one of the upper decks. But this was in
4 November and it was a rough crossing.

5 Q WHAT SHIP DID YOU COME OVER ON?

6 A The ship was a Cunard White Star line, a
7 vessel called the Aquitania, which I learned later on was
8 a former German passenger liner which was given to the
9 British as part of the reparation payments for World War I.

10 What I also remember about it, which was
11 unique, although has no bearing on the Holocaust or
12 anything else in that regard, is that it was a four-
13 stacker, that it had four smokestacks. And that that was
14 rather unique.

15 Q WHERE DID YOU LAND IN AMERICA?

16 A In New York.

17 Q HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE?

18 A A few days. I remember it being
19 overpowering, because I, of course, had never seen a
20 skyscraper before and somehow got lost -- somehow I got
21 separated from my parents in front of the hotel, and it
22 was a terrifying experience, not being able to speak the
23 language, not knowing where you are, and as I say, it was
24 overpowering, these huge, tall skyscrapers. But
25 fortunately my parents found me rather quickly.

1 And from there we came to Chicago, because
2 this is where our relatives lived, the ones who gave us
3 our affidavit.

4 Q DID YOU STAY WITH THEM FOR A WHILE?

5 A No. We took our own apartment. First we
6 lived in an apartment hotel, in a furnished apartment.
7 Then eventually our furniture did come. My parents were
8 still able to take the furniture out of Germany once they
9 had arrived and we took our own apartment.

10 And I remember going to school. But -- I
11 mean, they are the same memories of any school boy growing
12 up. Initially they put me in first grade, although I was
13 already ten years old. The reason for it was my lack of
14 knowledge of English. As my knowledge of English
15 increased, I started to skip grades, and within about a
16 year I caught up to my normal grade.

17 Then growing up in America it was, I think,
18 pretty much like any American boy or American girl,
19 except as I got to be older, 13, 14 and 15, I began to
20 realize some of the problems my father had in trying to
21 make a living to support his family.

22 Q HOW DID YOU BEGIN TO BECOME AWARE OF THE
23 PROBLEMS?

24 A Well, some of the discussions I overheard
25 that he had with my mother and the things of, "Hey, can I

1 have this?" Every child asks for certain things; they
2 want certain things or they want to do certain things.
3 And the answer would sometimes come back, "No, we can't
4 afford it."

5 But I realized that my friends were in the
6 same boat, in the same situation; that they couldn't have
7 everything they wanted. Now in retrospect I think it was
8 good. It helped -- I think it was character building.
9 It didn't give us the idea that all you have to do is ask
10 for something and it's handed to you. And I think it
11 kind of prepared us for the world where you have to work
12 for what you want to earn. If you want to earn
13 something, you have to work for it.

14 Q DID YOU HAVE TO GO TO WORK WHEN YOUR FATHER
15 DIED?

16 A Not immediately. I did -- what I did when
17 my father died, as I say, I finished high school. I had
18 another year and a half to go to finish high school. It
19 was almost two years.

20 I finished high school and then after high
21 school I started junior college, but would work evenings,
22 take a part-time job at night. Because -- and after two
23 years, at the end of the junior college, I really didn't
24 know what I wanted to do, and felt that -- and my mother
25 also indicated it. "Well, if you don't know what you

1 really want to do, then there's no sense for you to go on
2 to college. You better go start working full time and
3 stand on your own two feet."

4 That is what happened. By that time it was
5 1945. Although it was getting towards the end of the
6 war, all of my friends were going into the services.
7 They were being drafted. And I was declared
8 4 F because, one, of my size, I was still quite small;
9 and I had a curvature of the spine. So that made me 4 F,
10 which I resented very much, because I saw all my friends
11 going into the services and if they went in, I felt I -
12 want to go in too.

13 Later on, I looked back too, after the war
14 and things like the GI Bill came along to pay for college
15 education and many of the other veteran benefits that
16 came along, I became somewhat embittered, because I
17 wasn't able to be in the service. Whenever you applied
18 for a job, veterans were given preference. I didn't
19 resent the fact that they got the job, but I resented
20 more the fact that I didn't. And I felt it was unfair
21 that I was being rejected or discriminated against
22 because of no fault of my own. I felt hey, I tried to
23 get into the service, I wanted to, but they didn't want
24 any part of me. So I felt rejected first by the Army or
25 by the services and then later on, quote, by society,

1 because I had not been in the service. I wasn't a slacker,
2 I didn't try to stay out of the service. It wasn't my
3 choice.

4 Then the next few years I think are pretty
5 normal of anybody else. I worked in a machine shop for a
6 number of years and I found that was not really my cup of
7 tea. I didn't like the idea of -- and I saw no future in
8 it.

9 And by accident I heard about a program
10 that the State of Illinois provided at that time, and it
11 was Governor Stevenson at the time, Adlai Stevenson. He
12 had developed a program or proposed a program, and
13 introduced it, which was to help people like myself,
14 partly handicapped, to learn a trade or to learn some
15 kind of a vocation in which they could support themselves.
16 And this was my introduction to, quote, freight traffic
17 management, which I spent my career in.

18 Q WHEN DID YOU MEET YOUR WIFE?

19 A I met my wife here in San Francisco in 1957.
20 We were out here visiting mutual relatives and I met her
21 here and literally it was love at first sight I think on
22 both our parts. They often kid about love at first sight,
23 but it seemed to be that -- it certainly was that way
24 with us.

25 And here is, I think, a very small world

1 situation. Remember I came from Konigsberg, Germany and
2 my father was a prominent attorney there. Well, Inge's
3 mother was also born in Konigsberg. In fact, my father
4 was her first crush. They knew each other in Germany.
5 Of course, I didn't know this, and my wife didn't know
6 it either; not until after the two of us met. Then this
7 story came out. That they had known each other in
8 Germany and that Inge's mother was infatuated with my
9 father. And such a small world situation.

10 Then a year later -- I lived in Chicago at
11 the time. We started to correspond and eventually we
12 decided to get married, and we got married here in San
13 Francisco in August of 1958. We first moved back to
14 Chicago, because I had a job in Chicago and this is where
15 I was able to support her. And she was willing to do
16 that. Her mother was rather unhappy about it. And after
17 a while -- and at this point in life I began to realize
18 too that although I had a fairly good job in
19 transportation, but to really get ahead I felt the college
20 education was necessary. Not necessarily the education
21 itself, but the piece of paper that said you've graduated
22 from a university. That that opens a lot of doors which
23 are otherwise closed to an individual.

24 And we had also decided to move back to San
25 Francisco. I had made an application to a number of

1 universities in the Bay Area: UC Berkeley; I think San
2 Francisco, the University of San Francisco; and I think
3 the University of -- the San Jose State College. I don't
4 remember, but there were about three or four of them.
5 All of them accepted the transcripts completely and said
6 anytime I want to start, I can.

7 My wife was all in favor of my going to
8 school days and get the degree as soon as possible. I
9 didn't quite feel that way. I didn't quite go along with
10 that. I felt that my job is to support my wife and a
11 family. And that I should work during the day and go to
12 school at night.

13 So we had made an agreement. The agreement
14 was that I will look for a job here in the Bay Area and
15 if by the time where I have to register at one of the
16 schools for day classes, if by that time I had not found
17 a job that I thought was suitable, that I would go to
18 school days and she would go back to work and I would
19 finish school and then get my graduate degree and then I
20 would go back to work full time. However, if I did find
21 a job by that time, I would work days and go to school
22 nights.

23 As it turned out, I did not find a good
24 job. In fact, I didn't find any job. And I went to
25 school, to UC Berkeley, for a year and a half and got my

1 degree in June of 1960, and the first job that was
2 offered to me was one with the federal government, and at
3 that point in time I said, "I'm going to take it." I
4 didn't care what -- I wanted to go back to work. I
5 wanted to support my wife and my family eventually.

6 She wanted me to go on for one more year to
7 get my Master's Degree, but I said, "No way, I would not
8 do that. You've supported me long enough. It's my turn
9 now. It's my job. It's my duty to support my family and
10 I'm going to do that."

11 And I have no right to complain. I did -
12 quite well in the federal government. I didn't get rich,
13 but I was able to support my family quite well.

14 Q YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO TELL US YOUR
15 WIFE'S STORY.

16 A All right. My wife was born in Bremerhaven,
17 Germany. Her name was Ingeborg Rosenthal. Her mother's
18 maiden name was Martha Neumann.

19 Q HOW DO YOU SPELL THAT?

20 A The "Neumann"? N E U M A N N.

21 My wife was born in 1925. They lived in
22 Bremerhaven for a while, then they went to Berlin. From
23 Berlin they went to Holland. These were also mutual
24 relatives. The ones where my father had the conversation
25 on our train ride to the port, they were also relatives

1 of my wife. And that is an odd story -- long story.
2 Distant relatives.

3 And they did go to Holland and they stayed
4 in Holland, and of course they were caught -- they were
5 caught in Holland. For me it's a miracle that my wife
6 survived the war. She developed diabetes, juvenile
7 diabetes, at age 9 in 1934, and she really grew up in
8 Holland.

9 First they lived in a town called Venlo,
10 which was right on the border of -- right on the German
11 border and, of course, one of the first ones that was -
12 overrun in 1940. They went underground very early. And
13 how she survived, as I say, how she survived living four
14 years underground, an insulin-dependent girl, to me still
15 is a miracle. She had told me that she had found -- and
16 by this time I think they were in Amsterdam -- she had
17 found a pharmacist who was willing to give her insulin,
18 but she of course had to sneak out from their hiding
19 place at night, go to his house and get the insulin and
20 get the injection. And in thinking back, you have to
21 realize this man risked his own life.

22 Q SHE HAD TO DO THIS EVERY NIGHT?

23 A Yes. Because she needed insulin on a daily
24 basis.

25 They were caught November 1st, 1944, their

1 whole family, which included my mother-in-law, Inge's
2 mother; her stepfather; and her brother. And the only
3 reason they survived, that is, my mother-in-law and Inge,
4 is that they were caught by the SS troops. But the SS
5 officers, being the cowards many of them were, fled the
6 oncoming Allied armies and had given orders to the
7 non-commissioned officers and to the troops to shoot all
8 of the men that they capture, but nothing was said as far
9 as the women were concerned.

10 So when the family was caught, Inge's
11 brother and her stepfather tried to flee, and the two -
12 women saw both of them get shot in their attempt to flee.
13 And they -- by that time both of them had been very ill
14 and they were put into a hospital and within -- about 24
15 hours later the Allied armies liberated them. So that is
16 a burden my wife had to carry with her for the rest of
17 her life, to see her brother shot and to realize if they
18 had managed to stay hidden for another 24 hours or 36
19 hours, they too would have been saved.

20 Q HOW DID THEY GET DISCOVERED? DID SHE EVER
21 FIND OUT?

22 A No, they don't. They didn't. I'm sure
23 somebody informed on them. Because by that time all of
24 their money and all of their jewelry, everything they
25 ever had to pay for being hidden, had given out. And

1 unfortunately in Holland there were both types of people,
2 those who would risk their lives to save the Jewish
3 people or anybody hunted by the Nazis, and those who were
4 anti-Semitic and/or those who were pro-Nazi and would
5 inform whenever they found anything, whenever they
6 learned anything.

7 So my wife and her mother came to America
8 in early 1947. It took that long with the paperwork, the
9 affidavits and arranging for transport and so forth. She
10 got to America and lived with an uncle in Philadelphia,
11 who had arrived here earlier, who was able to get out of
12 Germany before the war. And he had opened a small
13 clothing store, a women's dress shop, in Philadelphia,
14 and -- she was very unhappy there. And I can understand
15 why.

16 Q YOUR WIFE OR YOUR WIFE'S MOTHER?

17 A Well, both really. But especially my wife.
18 As I say, they lived with her uncle, which was Inge's
19 mother's sister also, and my -- Inge worked in the dress
20 shop and unfortunately was in a part of town that was a
21 German district, which was still very pro-Nazi, and she
22 said more than once did she overhear a customer saying in
23 German, of course, now, "I'm glad now we're in a German
24 store." Unfortunately, her uncle was one of those German
25 Jews who cared very little about Judaism and only cared

1 about himself and his own survival and never let them
2 know that he was a Jew.

3 My wife also had a girlfriend working there
4 who too had come from Europe who escaped the Holocaust,
5 and the two of them were terribly unhappy working there.

6 My wife decided she's not going to go on
7 with that, how she heard about a school in Philadelphia
8 which would train young women, like herself, to become
9 child nurses, or a nanny. And she loved children, so she
10 took that course and she became a nurse's aid in
11 pediatrics or in -- actually, in infant care. And she-
12 had heard so much about San Francisco, I think through
13 the movie SAN FRANCISCO, the one with Clark Gable,
14 Spencer Tracy and Jeanette MacDonald, that she decided
15 that's where she wants to go.

16 When she had a little bit of money saved
17 up, she took a bus ride cross country to come to San
18 Francisco and make a go of it for herself here.

19 Initially, she wasn't able to find a job in
20 a hospital's nursery or as a child's nanny and she became
21 a short order cook and she did anything she could to
22 survive. But eventually she did get into the nursery of
23 one of the hospitals and she worked there until we met
24 and until we married.

25 Later on, or shortly after Inge was able to

1 find a job for herself here and was able to support
2 herself, her mother moved out too. Her mother came out
3 here and the two women lived here. Of course, what
4 helped a lot too is that by that time the refugees and
5 Holocaust survivors were starting to get funds from
6 Germany as their restitution and with this, the two
7 ladies, they were able to live fairly comfortably. Not
8 in luxury, but certainly were able to live very
9 comfortably.

10 And then in 1957 I came along, and Inge and
11 I, we had 32 years of very happy marriage.

12 During my course of working for the
13 government I ended up with a tour, an almost three-year
14 tour, of duty over in Israel working on what has gotten
15 to be known as the Negev Air Base Project.

16 The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with the
17 help, of course, with government funds, built two new air
18 bases for the Israelis in the Negev Desert to replace the
19 two which the Israelis had built in the Sinai.

20 If you remember the 1977 accord with -- or
21 1979 Camp David Accord, Israel would have to give up the
22 Sinai, and Israel agreed to give up the Sinai, but
23 insisted that they would need enough time to build the
24 two air bases to replace the ones which were forward
25 bases in the Sinai.

1 The difference of opinion was the length of
2 time which was required to complete the construction of
3 the air bases. The Israelis said they would require
4 seven years to do it. And Sadat, the President of Egypt
5 at the time, and President Carter felt that was much too
6 long.

7 And President Carter said, "Well, we'll
8 build it for you." And as I say, that's how I ended up
9 with a job in Israel. And for both Inge and myself I
10 think it was two -- well, she didn't come over immediately,
11 but for us it was about a year and a half to two years--of
12 the best years of our lives, because while we were in
13 Israel, we had the best of both worlds. One, I was
14 stationed in Tel Aviv and billeted in one of the fine
15 hotels along the beach. And we both had family and
16 relatives in Israel, so whenever I had free time we could
17 be with the family. So for us it was ideal.

18 As I say, I had a job which I liked very
19 much. I felt I was doing something constructive, both
20 from accomplishing something and as a Jew. "Hey, as an
21 American Jew, I'm over here and I'm helping Israel to
22 defend itself." And I felt I've accomplished something.

23 And I recall that the first time I went
24 into the areas of the construction sites of the two air
25 bases, I saw nothing but wilderness, rocks, stone and

1 sand. Two and a half years later, when it was time for
2 me to leave and the job was completed, I saw two completed
3 and operational fighter bases. So as I said before, I
4 felt I've done something worthwhile and I felt I've
5 accomplished something.

6 Then we came back to America. I was
7 offered a job -- we came back to America and I was to go
8 back to my old job over at the Oakland Army Base, but by
9 this time my wife's health, mainly of course because of
10 almost 45 years of -- well, 40 years, 45 years, of
11 diabetes, her health was going down the drain. It had-
12 deteriorated completely. Her vision, she was legally
13 blind by that time. She could hardly walk and had many
14 other troubles. And it reached a point where I could no
15 longer leave her alone while I went to work. This was
16 1982.

17 Fortunately, I was in a situation where I
18 could take early retirement, and I decided to do that,
19 because I could see no sense in hiring somebody for
20 \$1,200 a month or \$1,500 a month to take care of my wife
21 while I went to work. I felt that although certainly my
22 pension would be a lot less than my earnings, full-time
23 earnings, if I went back to work, but as I say, if I have
24 to take off \$1,200 to \$1,500 from the top, then I was
25 reaching to a point where it wasn't worthwhile for me to

1 continue to work. But I did take advantage of the early
2 retirement possibility and became her prime caretaker.

3 And eventually her health had reached a
4 point where I no longer could take care of her anymore at
5 home. This was in 1986. And I was fortunate, I was able
6 to get her into the Jewish home over here on Silver
7 Avenue. Fortunately, they had an opening within a very
8 reasonable time, which took a great burden off of my
9 back, and she received excellent care there until she
10 died recently at the home.

11 We have two daughters, both of them are -
12 married and both of them have children. Fortunately, my
13 wife was lucid and clear enough towards the end still to
14 realize that she had grandchildren and that she could
15 enjoy them.

16 Q DID YOUR WIFE HAVE ANY STORIES ABOUT HER
17 EXPERIENCES IN THE OCCUPATION?

18 A Sometimes she did. Sometimes she would
19 have nightmares and I would wake her up and sometimes she
20 would tell me a little bit about them. And at others, I
21 felt it was better not to dig and delve.

22 Q YOU MEAN INTO THE DREAMS OR INTO THE
23 STORIES?

24 A Both. Both the dreams and the stories.
25 She did tell me, of course, of the stories of how she

1 would sneak out at night to get her insulin or sometimes
2 they would sneak out to get food, because they had false
3 papers, although they weren't the best in the world, but
4 they did have false papers and that they had also false
5 ration cards.

6 Q WHAT STORIES DID SHE TELL YOU? DO YOU
7 REMEMBER?

8 A Well, none really specifically, no.
9 Because towards -- in the beginning she told me a few of
10 them, but afterwards, after about two or three years, it
11 was better to leave the past buried, and she really -
12 didn't want to talk anymore.

13 Q BUT SHE DID A LITTLE BIT IN THE BEGINNING.

14 A Yes.

15 Q DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING?

16 A Well, as I said, the stories of how she
17 would sneak out at night to get her insulin, and then at
18 times with the false papers she would sneak out from her
19 hiding place to get food, and that she had some close
20 calls where she had been stopped by German soldiers and
21 they inspected the papers and most fortunately she was
22 always able to get away again.

23 Q WHAT KIND OF A PLACE DID THEY HIDE IN?

24 A There were various places. Some of them
25 were cellars which had false fronts and other times false

1 attics, very similar to the Anne Frank story.

2 Q SO THEY HAD TO MOVE AROUND?

3 A Yes.

4 Q DO YOU REMEMBER THE NAME OF ANYBODY WHO
5 HELPED HER?

6 A No. No. It would be nice, but she didn't
7 know and -- or she didn't remember. Either that or
8 didn't tell me.

9 Q DID SHE EVER TELL YOU ANY SPECIFIC TIMES
10 WHEN SHE GOT CAUGHT ALMOST AND MANAGED TO GET AWAY?

11 A Well, not dates or time or so on, but just,
12 well, one time she remembered that the German soldiers
13 stopped her and wanted her papers and, of course, they
14 were false papers with Aryan names and Dutch names, and
15 fortunately she was always able to convince them that
16 that's who she was.

17 Q DID SHE EVER TALK TO YOUR DAUGHTERS ABOUT
18 HER EXPERIENCES?

19 A No, not her personal experiences. But we
20 did tell our children that -- what the Holocaust -- what
21 it was all about and what it meant. And that the world
22 should never forget those events, if for no other reason
23 that they'll never happen again.

24 Q HOW DO YOU THINK THAT THE WORLD SHOULD HEAR
25 ABOUT THE EVENTS?

1 A Well, one way, of course, is that the
2 survivors tell their children, and through -- also
3 through organizations such as the Holocaust Center, the
4 Holocaust museum and Yad Vashem. I remember going through
5 Yad Vashem, and it tears you apart when you do go through
6 it, the photographs that they show and the names of all
7 of the different concentration camps and some of the
8 documents you see, and a lot of it has been computerized
9 and you see some of the films and some of these and it --
10 this is one way to keep it open.

11 And I think another one is also what Israel
12 is doing, is the Avenue of the Righteous Gentiles. I
13 don't know how -- if they're still continuing it or if
14 they're still finding new ones, but that's another way.

15 And then also periodically I think the news
16 media and the video media on certain anniversaries of some
17 horrible occasions should bring it back to the public as
18 part of history.

19 I think it should be taught in the schools.
20 I was horrified when I found out that neither of my
21 children heard anything about the Holocaust or that time
22 period in their classes in school. "Yeah, there was
23 a world war. We had World War II and the Americans, we
24 fought in Europe and we fought in Japan and in the South
25 Pacific and there were Jews that were killed in Europe,"

1 but that was about it. It was glossed over. And I feel
2 it shouldn't be. I feel --

3 Q WHY DO YOU THINK IT WAS GLOSSED OVER?

4 A I can't answer that. I don't know why.

5 Q HAVE YOU TALKED WITH VERY MANY PEOPLE ABOUT
6 IT?

7 A It's usually with very like-minded people
8 who feel equally horrified that it is being swept under
9 the rug, perhaps -- I can only surmise. Perhaps there is
10 guilt complex that -- on the part of some of our
11 administrations and our leaders that America didn't do-
12 anything or didn't do enough; that they want it swept
13 under the rug that it will be forgotten.

14 I think Western Europe to a certain extent
15 is the same way. They would rather forget that time
16 period than to keep it in the public eye.

17 Q HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO TALK WITH ANY PEOPLE
18 THAT DIDN'T AGREE WITH YOU ALREADY?

19 A Yes. Sometimes the discussion of the war
20 period comes up and, yes, I'm not bashful there. I'll
21 tell people what I think and what I feel.

22 Q WHAT IS THEIR RESPONSE WHEN THEY DON'T
23 REALLY AGREE WITH YOU?

24 A Well, they become defensive.

25 Q WHAT DO THEY DO WHEN THEY GET DEFENSIVE?

1 A Well, they come up with excuses that they
2 were in America, how could they know anything and so
3 forth. And that our American government during the war,
4 its prime objective was to win the war. And that prior
5 to Pearl Harbor it was our prime objective to not get
6 involved in Europe. In other words, basically the Monroe
7 Doctrine. "You stay out of our backyard and we don't
8 want to -- we don't care what happens in your
9 backyard." And that was very much the attitude in the
10 1930s and the 1940s.

11 Q DO YOU USE CURRENT EVENTS TO POINT OUT THAT
12 THE LESSONS OF THE HOLOCAUST NEED TO BE PUT INTO PRACTICE?
13 I MEAN, LIKE WHEN -- REMEMBER WHEN THE VIETNAMESE WERE IN
14 HONG KONG A FEW MONTHS AGO AND THEY WERE SHIPPING THEM
15 BACK?

16 A Well, to me that's typical British -- the
17 British didn't do much for the Jews in 1939, 1940. They
18 allowed some of them to come in, that's true. But they
19 had what they called the kinder transport or the child
20 transport where they allowed German Jewish children to
21 come to England from -- before the war, but it didn't go
22 on much beyond that. And then later on when some of the
23 others who managed to escape the Holocaust did get to
24 England, most of them were interned as, quote, friendly
25 enemy aliens.

1 Q BUT, I MEAN, WHEN THEY TOLD US TO SHUT UP
2 OR PUT UP OR ACCEPT THE REFUGEES HERE IF WE DIDN'T WANT
3 THEM SENT BACK TO VIETNAM, WE BECAME QUIET. DO YOU USE
4 THAT KIND OF THING AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW WE REALLY HAVEN'T
5 LEARNED?

6 A I think so. I think it's a -- of course,
7 here again the selfish self-interest. Just the same
8 thing that the refugees in the 1930s and 1940s faced.
9 They were competition for the jobs, they were competition
10 -- they -- the population that was here already, the
11 people felt these were our competition. They'll take our
12 jobs. And why should we take them here? In other words,
13 the concept of "I am my brother's keeper" is the furthest
14 thing from their mind.

15 And since I've gone through this, I feel,
16 hey, if we can accept them, if we can absorb them, my
17 God, I think it's our duty to do so.

18 And America really grew up as a melting
19 pot. This is, I think, what made this nation a great
20 nation, the great nation that it was at one time.
21 Because it opened its doors to the poor, the homeless,
22 and allowed -- and gave them the opportunity to build a
23 new life here in America. I think that's what made this
24 country great. And to turn our backs on that situation I
25 don't think is right.

1 Q WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD MAKE PEOPLE --
2 WOULD MOTIVATE THEM TO CHANGE -- TO START DEALING WITH
3 THE REALITIES THAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT?

4 A I really don't know. I wish I had the
5 answer. I think anyone who does have the answer and can
6 push it through would be a great person.

7 Q WELL, THE REASON I ASK THIS IS BECAUSE
8 OVER THE LAST YEAR I'VE BEEN THINKING A LOT ABOUT WHAT
9 CAUSED THE HOLOCAUST AND WHAT COULD HAVE STOPPED IT FROM
10 HAPPENING. AND --

11 A Well, sure, we can -- hindsight is so far
12 better than foresight. All of this -- from my own
13 knowledge of history and also from having -- well, and
14 reading of what went on in the 1930s, all of this could
15 have been stopped in 1935 when Hitler marched into the
16 Rhineland. France, as ill-equipped as it was for war,
17 was ready to go to war and stop Hitler, and Hitler at
18 that time -- and it came out after the war, later on --
19 his army at that time was a very ill-equipped army, was
20 under orders that if there is any kind of resistance
21 whatsoever, to pull back. But the French could do
22 nothing without the British and the British said, "We're
23 not going to get involved."

24 At that time you had Ramsay MacDonald I
25 think as their prime minister, who had the concept of

1 peace in our time, which Chamberlain afterwards followed
2 up on too. Britain did not want to get involved in
3 Europe. It had its own problems at home and felt that
4 you can still deal with Mr. Hitler. Unfortunately, they
5 later learned the hard way that you could not deal with a
6 dictator, with a despot, like Hitler.

7 That was the first opportunity that they
8 had. And Czechoslovakia was the second opportunity.

9 At that time, although Hitler had become
10 stronger, -- or Austria, the anschluss, I think the
11 anschluss came first. Although Austria accepted the -
12 German troops with open arms --

13 Q A LOT OF AUSTRIANS --

14 A Yes, but at that point in time Hitler --
15 although he had become stronger, if the Allies, at that
16 time France and England, had really put both economic
17 pressure and military pressure on Germany, I think it
18 would have still been time to stop. Whether Munich, in
19 other words, the selling of Czechoslovakia to Hitler in
20 '39, I think it was too late already at that time. It
21 may not have been.

22 Q I GUESS WHAT I'M THINKING IS THAT THE
23 NATIONAL EVENTS, YOU KNOW, THE ECONOMY, THE RHINELAND,
24 STUFF LIKE THAT, THEY ARE LATER CAUSES. AND THEY BECOME
25 WHAT LOOKS TO THE NAKED EYE LIKE THE CAUSES. BUT I GUESS

1 I'M THINKING THAT --

2 A Well, the Rhineland is a territory, of
3 course, which is very important economically to whoever
4 controls it. It was an industrial basin, it had a coal
5 basin. The Saar Lan, the Saar Gebiet, the Saar Lan, as
6 the Germans call it, these were industrially very
7 important to the Germans, and without it Hitler would
8 have never been able to build his war machine.

9 When he found no resistance in taking over
10 the Rhineland, when he marched into the Rhineland, it
11 emboldened him and it gave him the economic base from
12 which to build his military might. So it was a very
13 important turn in history. Very important turn in
14 history.

15 Q BUT I GUESS WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS
16 THAT I'VE PRETTY MUCH COME TO THE CONCLUSION IT'S NOT
17 THE EVENTS THAT CAUSED IT; IT'S HOW PEOPLE RESPONDED TO
18 THE EVENTS.

19 A Well, both. It takes people to create an
20 event and it takes people to respond to it.

21 Q SO, I MEAN, HOW WOULD YOU IN THOSE TERMS
22 THINK OF WHAT LESSONS WOULD BE OF THE HOLOCAUST?

23 A As I say, I blame the British. I hold them
24 responsible to a great extent for their failure to act in
25 1935 when they had the opportunity. Whether it was out

1 of ignorance or self-interest or what, but they failed to
2 act.

3 Q SO IF YOU WERE ARTICULATING THE LESSONS OF
4 THE HOLOCAUST, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR VIEW?

5 A Well, the lessons of the Holocaust is that --
6 never forget. They happened. We can't turn the clock
7 back to change them. But we must be aware of what
8 happened and how it happened and be alert to similar
9 situations as they confront us.

10 Q WELL, WHAT COULD WE DO? LIKE, FOR INSTANCE,
11 IT WAS OUR GOVERNMENT THAT MADE THE DECISION TO STOP
12 TALKING WHEN BRITAIN SAID PUT UP OR SHUT UP. SO WE SHUT
13 UP. WHAT COULD THE CITIZEN DO?

14 A The citizen fortunately is still able to
15 voice his opinions, letters to their congressional
16 representatives, letters to the State Department, letters
17 to the President. But unfortunately until it -- until
18 you personally are involved or until the American is
19 personally involved and it affects him personally or her
20 personally, it looks the other way.

21 Q SO YOU THINK THAT WHAT HAPPENED WOULD
22 HAPPEN THIS TIME TOO?

23 A I think so, yes. And I think it's human
24 nature. It's human nature to do that.

25 Q I AGREE WITH YOU. THAT'S WHAT I THINK

1 HAPPENED.

2 WELL, IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE
3 TO SAY?

4 A No, I don't think so. I think I've covered
5 -- let me take a look at my list and see if I've covered
6 all the relatives.

7 No, but I can give you a name of someone
8 else. I can do that off camera.

9 Q YES.

10 A If you have any other questions, I'll be
11 willing to answer them. -

12 Q DO YOU THINK THAT THE HOLOCAUST IS STILL
13 AFFECTING YOU?

14 A I don't -- I can't see how it isn't. How
15 can it possibly not affect me?

16 Q WHAT EFFECTS DO YOU FEEL?

17 A Well, my whole train of thoughts, my -- all
18 of my experience are part of -- part of my outlook on
19 life. I can't sweep those away. I can't maybe
20 specifically say because of the Holocaust or I lived
21 through the Holocaust or know of the Holocaust, this is
22 how I act. I think it's just a natural reaction. The
23 Holocaust and the experiences of the Holocaust shaped my
24 outlook on life, and it's subconscious reactions. It's
25 part of me.

1 Q DO YOU THINK YOUR CHILDREN HAVE SENSED
2 THIS, EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVEN'T TALKED TO THEM TOO MUCH
3 ABOUT IT?

4 A I would say yes and no.

5 Q WHAT MAKES YOU THINK SO?

6 A Well, some of them, sometimes when we do
7 somehow -- when somehow the discussion comes up, "Yes,
8 dad, I know about that and I understand and so forth,
9 but ..." And obviously I can't go into all of the
10 details with them of what happened and how I feel and why
11 I feel the way I do. I tried, but they live their own
12 lives just -- every generation lives its own lives and
13 has to learn from its own experiences.

14 Q WELL, WHEN YOU SAID THAT THEY SAY, "YES,
15 DAD, WE KNOW ABOUT THAT, BUT ..." "BUT" WHAT?

16 A Well, "How does it affect us?" That's
17 basically what it means -- what the "but" is. But "that's
18 history." That's usually the comment.

19 Q DO YOU EVER WATCH THE MOVIES AND MEDIA
20 PRODUCTIONS?

21 A Some of them, yes. Oh, yes, I sometimes
22 do. I'm fairly selective in what I watch, but if it's
23 something that's of interest, both historically and
24 politically, I may watch it.

25 Q DO YOU THINK THAT THEY'RE UNDER DONE OR

1 OVER DONE?

2 A Gosh, that's hard to say. Some of the
3 historic ones I think are very good. About the World War
4 -- both World War I and World War II. And I think Israel
5 does sometimes a good job on what's going on in Israel.
6 Though sometimes they are not, from a propaganda point of
7 view, taking advantage of some of the news events.

8 I feel that the American news media
9 underplays Arabs' violence against Jews or against the
10 Israelis and overplays and plays up much higher, quote,
11 the violence of the Israeli Army or even the Israeli -
12 civilians against the Arabs and against the Palestinians.
13 I think the news media is very one-sided in that regard.

14 Q YOU THINK SO?

15 A Very much so. Very much so.

16 Q WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE REALITY?

17 A Well, I'm sure it's somewhere in between
18 the middle, in between of what you read in the papers.

19 I'm sure both sides are at fault, both that
20 Israel -- that all Israelis aren't angels and are always
21 right. I'm sure that at times Israelis' actions are not
22 the right or proper actions.

23 On the other hand, there are times also
24 where the Arab actions are being underplayed some and
25 innocent Arabs are being hurt and killed and injured.

1 But what's not played up -- what's not brought out at all
2 is that hundreds of Arabs or Palestinians who have been
3 killed in the last two and a half to three years by the
4 Intifada, is that a large percentage of them were killed
5 by Palestinians and Arabs, and that the victims of that
6 violence are those Arabs who want to come to terms with
7 Israel, who want to be at peace with Israel.

8 It was that way during the War of
9 Independence, that the moderate Arabs who were friendly
10 towards Israel or towards the Jews were murdered by the
11 violent Arabs, by the anti-Israeli Arabs. And that
12 situation hasn't changed.

13 And here too I feel our government is wrong
14 in continuing its discussions with the PLO. We hear lip
15 service from this administration about how they abhor
16 violence and the pressure that they put on Israel to be
17 more moderate in -- and go forward with the peace effort.
18 But you've got to be over there sometimes and understand
19 the situation. We here in America, half a world away,
20 cannot comprehend the situation over there.

21 I remember one time in -- when a group of
22 the people who were working on the Israel air base
23 project with me, we went on a tour up north and we ended
24 up in the bunkers, what used to be the Syrian bunkers, in
25 the Golan Heights. We were looking down on the valley

1 below of Lake Kinneret or the Sea of Galilee and that
2 whole area, and I turned to some Christian friends there
3 or co-workers and I said, "All right, now you place
4 yourself in the Israelis down there fishing in the sea or
5 those who are planting, tilling their soil in their
6 fields, and they get continuously shot at from these
7 bunkers right here. How would you feel when once with
8 your blood, guts and tears you finally drive out the
9 soldiers that are constantly firing on you day and
10 night. Finally you drive them out from those bunkers.
11 How would you react when the world says, 'Oh, give it -
12 back to them. Let the Syrians have the bunkers back.
13 It's wrong that you keep this territory. Give the
14 territory back to the Syrians.' How would you feel?"

15 And that's when they finally understood.
16 And I think that is the failure of the Israeli news media
17 or their public relations people, to bring that type of
18 information forward to the rest of the world. Hey, this
19 is the way -- this is the situation here. Put yourselves
20 in this situation and then ask yourself how would you
21 react.

22 Q YES.

23 A And it's the same way with the rock
24 throwing and with the throwing of the Molotov cocktails
25 and you have the brave -- these real brave Arab hoodlums,

1 they have children in front of them while they throw
2 stones. They are masked and they throw stones and they
3 have women and children in front of them as, quote,
4 protective guard against the horrible Israeli soldiers.

5 Q YOU KNOW, I KEEP REMEMBERING WHEN YOU SAID
6 THAT YOU LIVED HERE AND YOUR FATHER OR YOUR AUNT OR
7 SOMEBODY WANTED YOUR FATHER TO CHANGE YOUR NAME BECAUSE
8 IT SOUNDED TOO POLISH. DOES THAT MEAN THAT THERE WAS
9 ALWAYS A LOT OF ANTI-POLISHNESS HERE?

10 A Well, I think there was a lot of Anti-
11 Semitism, there was a lot of -- sure. I mean, there was
12 a lot of -- there's a lot of prejudice against the Poles,
13 against the Italians, against the Irish, against the
14 Germans. Remember, in 1933, 1934, '35, even though we
15 had a Polish sounding name, we came from Germany and
16 these relatives of ours also at one time, a few
17 generations back, came from Germany or Europe. And they
18 wanted to blend into the American society. They didn't
19 want it known, hey, we have German relatives or we have
20 Polish relatives.

21 At that point in time, the anti-Germanism
22 or the anti -- the hatred of the Germans from World War I
23 has not subsided yet. Although in the early '30s you had
24 the German/Italian start up, which, of course, was very
25 pro-Nazi. But it was also the period of time where the

1 average assimilated American wanted to be 100 percent
2 American and no connection with Germany.

3 Q DID YOU HAVE A HARD TIME DURING THE WAR
4 BECAUSE OF YOUR GERMAN LANGUAGE AND --

5 A No. Because out here I was one of the
6 fortunate ones who lost his German accent. All through
7 my adult life people would never believe that I came from
8 Germany or -- of course, once they knew of my background,
9 yes, but at superficial meetings or discussions, no one
10 ever suspects that I have a European background.

11 Q DID YOUR FATHER HAVE TROUBLE BECAUSE OF HIS
12 ACCENT?

13 A Yes. Well, he had trouble learning English.
14 He was very -- which surprised me very much. As I say,
15 my father was a very intelligent man. He had learned a
16 number of languages. The Latin, Greek, he spoke -- he
17 knew those very well.

18 Which reminds me of an incident while I was
19 in high school and my father was still alive. And I was
20 learning Latin and I was in my room and he wanted to hear
21 what I was doing and he was sitting in the living room
22 and I was in my room and I was reading out loud Caesar in
23 Latin and then translating it, and he would catch every
24 single mistake I had made -- that I would make, and all I
25 did was read. He didn't even see the printed words. But

1 all I did was read and then translate and he would catch
2 every mistake I made. And he would tell me, "That's
3 wrong. That's not right. That's wrong." And he was as
4 fluent in Greek as that. He knew Greek as well. But he
5 was unable to really become proficient in English.

6 Q WHEN YOU LIVED IN GERMANY DID YOU HAVE A LOT
7 OF IMMIGRANT JEWS FROM THE EAST COME THROUGH THE TOWNS?

8 A Not at that time. And here too I probably
9 would have been too young to realize it. See, the worst
10 of the -- up until 1936, unless you were in the forefront
11 of anti-Naziism, it wasn't so -- you really weren't that
12 affected yet by Hitlerism. It really started becoming
13 totally unbearable '37, '38, '39. '36, as I say. Up
14 until '36 when we left, I as a boy really wasn't that
15 much affected except for the beatings that I've gotten
16 from being a Jew. But certainly economically or -- I
17 wasn't affected in any way.

18 Q AND YOU JUST WEREN'T ABLE TO GET ANY
19 INFORMATION --

20 A Well, not as a nine-year-old or ten-year-old
21 boy.

22 Q OKAY. WELL, I DON'T HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS.
23 DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO ADD?

24 A No, I don't think so. I don't think I have
25 anything I'd like to add.

1 Q OKAY. THANK YOU.
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