

HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, 639 14th Avenue, San
Francisco, Cal. 94118

INTERVIEW WITH: ESTELLE KIEFER
Interviewer: Judith West
TRANSCRIBER: JOHN W. SCHRIMPER, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
February 1986

THIS TRANSCRIPT PRECEDES THE TRANSCRIPT OF A TAPE WHICH HAD
BEEN FURNISHED TO MR. SCHRIMPER, THE TRANSCRIPTION OF WHICH
HE COMPLETED AUGUST 19, 1986

ESTELLE KIEFER:

My name is Estelle Kiefer, and today is February
28, 1986.

There are two kinds of people: one kind of people
who never, never stopped talking what had happened to them;
the other ones who never talked.

In the beginning, I wanted to talk about it, but
people did not want to hear about it. So I didn't talk.

When I came out to California and I married my
husband and I wanted to talk to him because it was pretty
new still, he didn't want to listen. He'd get very upset.
So I stopped it.

And when we were out with company and so on,
something came on and I was saying something, somehow he
didn't approve, and he would kick me with his foot under the
table. And I kicked him right back.

I said, "I'll tell what I want to say."

But he was very upset.

And the years went by, and I never, never talked about it.

I have two sisters. We never, ever talked about it.

And about seven, eight years ago -- we do travel a great deal -- we always did since the day I had gotten married -- we were in Europe -- and everything was gone, it never happened to me, because it was such an unusual story. Even when you start listening to it, you won't believe it, because I can hardly believe it's true.

And we went in the resort, and all of a sudden a young woman said, "Wookstahl." She came from Wookstahl. And all of a sudden, everything inside of me went wild, round and round.

And I said, "Do you know anybody by the name of Mosshaber? S. S. Hauptstung Fuehrer Mosshaber?"

She said, "No."

And she worked in a bank. She knew everyone.

I said, "Do you know anybody by the name of Ruchslah?"

She said, "Oh, I know him very, very well. Very distinguished, sainted man," and so on.

I said, "You know, when you go back there, you tell him you met a woman called Stephanie Piahoska from Warsaw."

He somehow had saved my life. He did not know

about it.

"Just tell him you met her."

And from this day on, she kept on bothering me. She said, "Why don't you call him? Why don't you go? Why don't--"

I said, "I do not want to meet anybody I've ever known before I got married; nobody."

Well, anyhow, we left. And we had swer-ry gold next. We said -- my husband said it -- we'd never been to Freudenstadt in the Black Forest -- "I like to go there."

Three days later we left. We went to Freudenstadt.

And we have different interests. My husband went here, I went there.

I come back to the small hotel, and the owner of the hotel said to me, "There's a telephone call for you."

I said, "That's impossible because nobody knows where I am," because I didn't know where I was going.

She said, "Here it is. And it comes from Ruchslah."

Well, I took the message.

I said, "You're not going to call this man. You are not going to do nothing."

And I sat down on the stairs, and I started to shake, because it had all returned to me.

So I telephoned the number.

And the woman answered, a rather young woman, and

I couldn't figure it out, because this man had been married at that time, and he must be in his seventies, and if she is young, she must be also 65. Her voice was that young. And she said, "My God, my husband is so excited. He must come, and he wants to visit, to see you."

So he comes on the phone, and I was all shook up, and I said, "I don't know if you remember me."

He said, "Stephanie, I remember you very well. I remember that Easter Sunday I spent in your house, and then we all went to the park."

I said, "Maybe you don't know really who I am."

He said, "Oh, yes, I knew that you were Jewish. We did not give you away. I must see you. I want to see you again. I want to see what has happened to you and to beautiful Effie. You come right away over."

I said, "No, I'm not going nowhere. I'm not coming."

He said, "Tomorrow morning at 11:00 o'clock, I come with my wife."

Now why I well you this, this is very important what happens later on.

He came over with a very young wife, and he was a very distinguished gentleman, and he got a medal from the German government now, after the war.

And what happened was, his wife, who was blind, I knew well, had died in the last attack where the bombs were falling; and he married his friend's daughter.

And we went out for dinner, and he started to talk. And I said, "You know something, what has happened to very beautiful Eva Wishouski?" - Wishouska at that time.

And the woman said, "She was here two years ago."

I said, "How could she?"

"Yes, she was here. She came this row-bad-row. It was a hauptstung fuehrer, a S. S. hauptstung fuehrer. He was not with the Gestapo. He was with Spier, building the road to Russia."

And one day -- that story comes later -- but anyhow, I had come out of the camp, and I met her, and she was very beautiful. She was a movie actress. And she worked in a certain department -- I worked there too.

And a German officer came in and tried to catch her. And I was three days out at the camp, and I said, "Du Deutscher Schwein, let go." You know what it means? "You pig, let go."

And she, she got so upset, she fell unconscious. And she had double eyelashes. It was very beautiful.

I went out on the street. It was in the palais. It belonged to what I would call the Duke of Poland where I worked.

And I went outside, and I grabbed the first man who was coming. He was a civilian. And he came in, and he looked at her, and he turned absolutely white. He had fallen madly in love with her. And he was a S. S. hauptstung fuehrer who later on played a very important role in

my life.

He divorced his wife later on. He got her papers, forged papers, and he became her lover. He was to give up everything for her.

She carried a-- At that time they had shaving knives. She had a miniature shaving knife. So she said, "One day I'm going to cut his throat. I'm going to take him forever if I can."

Well, anyhow, so I asked, "What happened to her?"

And the woman said, "She was here--" this Robert was her (Inaudible) -- "two years ago."

And I said, "She still has her beautiful hair."

And she said, "Must be dyed."

I said, "No, her hair is so beautiful now." I swore she's very beautiful.

But, you know, after two hours, they left. And I couldn't figure it out.

I said, "What happened to Mosshaber?"

He meantime died. He was not permitted to come back to his hometown Wooksahl because he was a Nazi and all of that. And thus Ruchslah, this friend of his, tried to get him in. It didn't work.

But he came to visit him with her.

And the woman said to me, "You know, she married, and she lives in Czechoslovakia. She lives in Czechoslovakia, how did she come here? Yes, she is married and lives in Czechoslovakia."

I said, "Do you know her name?"

She said, "No."

And I started to think and to think. And I remember she was madly in love with one man. This man was going to marry me. He was crazy about me, but I wasn't going to marry nobody, you know. Nobody knew who I was.

Well, I remember at that time, she was crazy about him, and he was from Czechoslovakia.

I said, "Is her name Hoffman?"

"Yes, it's Hoffman."

I said, "Wait. I get ahold of her."

And there lived-- We went to New York, and I went to the Czechoslovakia consulate.

I went straight up, and I said, "I'm looking for somebody. The name is Hoffman, Hugo Hoffman. Do you have a telephone book?"

And it's written in German and in Czechoslovakian.

And I open up the book. I swear, I opened up the page, and there was "Hugo Hoffman." That was incredible. His name is Adolph.

Yes, she had told me such. He became a very high official in the Czechoslovakia consulate.

Well, I went to San Francisco with a letter, and I wrote a beautiful letter.

Now Effie was not just beautiful; she was brilliant. She was trained as a spy by the Poles before the Germans came in, as a spy. And she was impressive.

(I've got six minutes?)

She got out of prison on her wit and on her beauty. And I don't know who -- maybe she did something too; I don't know. This much I know.

Well, she was very, very clever.

And I wrote that letter. I have a copy of that letter. That letter is very interesting.

And I started to think, she went to Germany with this man, because she must have told her husband, said she was going to visit her parents in Poland.

I always figured that-- I've been told that you must always think the other person is ten percent smarter than you are, and that's the way I have felt on all the days in my life.

So I figured--

I never got a reply from that letter, ever; and that letter is very special. I have a copy here. And I figured that she told her parents she was going -- she told her husband she was going to visit her parents in Poland, but went to Germany to visit her old lover. And she got ahold of that letter, and she never answered that letter. Because in that letter I wrote, "Even you don't know me, and if you are not the right party, I do beg of you to answer me."

I mean anybody, I don't care who it is, would make an effort and answer that letter.

So little things started. Then my husband was

involved in all those things, and he sits, he listened, and his eyes opened.

We didn't know what to make of it.

All the years, never a word.

We never answered that letter. That's fine.

O. K.

What happened then?

Then we still didn't talk about it.

Even the man wrote us letters from Germany, how much he enjoyed meeting me. And the other girl wrote letters. But it faded away.

Then I got an invitation to Boston to a bar mitzvah, which was about three years ago, and I found out that the Holocaust meeting in Washington, D. C.

I wasn't going to no Holocaust meeting; he wasn't going. But it was close by, and my friend come, so we went to Washington, D. C.

And I registered and got in, and my husband wouldn't go.

Well, it was one of the highlights of my life in America, that Holocaust meeting. The next night I didn't come home till 2:00 a.m. And I went all over, to all the meetings. President Reagan was at -- everybody was there.

And we figured, "What's going on? She looks so happy. I going to miss you the next day."

I took this to him the next day, and he was sitting in a corner and listened to all the stories how, how

people found each other; the excitement and what went on.

And he was sitting in the corner as some tears were coming down, you know. It's not that he wasn't interested. He just couldn't take it.

So we came home. And I kept on talking about it, and I told everybody about it, that it wasn't depressing, that it was a marvelous experience, people finding each other. It was uplifting. And--

(I'll get you another piece of coffee--)

(MAN: I don't want it.)

And they should come-- You know, I talked to everybody, organizations and all.

Well, last year Igfried and I went again to Philadelphia. And the Holocaust meeting in Philadelphia. He didn't come with me. I went this place. And I wasn't going to tell my story, no; essentially closed. I was not ready yet.

But something happened. There was a-- During the speeches there was one man, an old man, who told his story, the way he got out of the ghetto in Warsaw and went to England and to the States and who was completely ignored by all the world, by the Congress, by everybody. And he got so excited that he collapsed right there and then, and went ambulance. You know?

I was sitting in the back, and I walked out, and I said, "I'm going tape this thing."

And I went down and started to tell my story.

NOTE: THIS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWS ON THE SAME TAPE BUT IS EVIDENTLY THE INTERVIEW OF A DIFFERENT WOMAN, WHO IS NOT THEREIN IDENTIFIED

(WOMAN: You know, he's 85.)

WOMAN INTERVIEWER:

Q Where were you born?

A I was born in Brintz, Germany.

Q And when?

A That's nobody's business.

Q And how many were in your family?

A Olga, my parents and my two sisters.

Q What did your father do?

A My father was a wine maker.

Q And what was your life like in Brintz before the deportation?

A I was born on a train when my mother went back home to her parents in Poland. And then when I was five years old, the first time I seen my father. And then-- I had one sister at that time. Then the youngest one was born in Frankfurt. Remained in Frankfurt till, I think it was (Inaudible), I think beginning of September or October it was, '38. I was standing on the border, 10,000 people.

And one S. S. man came up to me. He said, "What are you doing here? You are too pretty to stay here. Come with me."

And I started to cry. And he took me over to the Polish border, fixed me over and I cried.

And he said, "Why do you cry?"

And I said, "I want my mother, my father, my two sisters."

He said, "Don't worry. I get them."

And he brought them over.

The minute we came over, they stopped the deportation, and people went back home again.

And my mother closed me from that day on. That wasn't her days. Because they went home to their house and to their business and to their friends and to their French friends, depending on the French people.

Q Without you?

A Without me? Ten months, we had with us.

Looking back, that was my saving. Because through that one year, I learned to speak a little bit Polish.

I never seen my mother again; my father, never again.

Q What happened to your father?

A Well, later on-- I tell you, we had a big business. I suppose it was big; I don't know. And my father was permitted to go back to Germany to liquidate.

Q His wine business?

A His wine business.

And he went back, and he ended up in Dachau. That I know this much. He died April 12, 1941. I mean, that's when I got the papers.

By then we were in the ghetto in Komashoff. I

make a living by working, by leaving (Inaudible). I left at night, the ghetto; exchange, the visa came back. That was rough time, but--

Q Currency.

A Currency, whatever you want to call it.

Q Yes.

A WOMAN: Look, I make a copy of that.

A But I was determined to live. I was not going to die, under no circumstances.

When I went into city, whatever it was, somehow I always got away. Nobody ever hurt me, ever; nobody ever touched me.

Q (Inaudible.)

A My mother, my two sisters.

Q You always stayed together?

A We stayed to-- This is end of '41, we stayed together.

And one morning-- Meantime, I got myself a piece of forged paper. And one morning I got up, and I told my mother, "I'm leaving. I'm leaving the ghetto."

I got away, and I went to Warsaw. I stayed for one week in a hotel. I did not know what to do, where to turn, or what to do.

I went back home to the ghetto.

And then a few months later, I said, "I'm going again."

And I went out, and I got to Warsaw, and I stayed

two nights, and some-- Later a woman picked me up, and then she said, "You've got to eat."

"I know."

Later I was standing in front of a magnificent bakery, Mon Dicalla's, in Warsaw, what you call Duke of Poland, Dicalla's. And out comes a beautiful, beautiful girl.

And she looked at me, and she -- and she could see in my eyes, the pain.

And we talked, and she said, "Come inside. I give you a job in here, and I take you home."

And the job was (Inaudible).

And they told me, if I can type. I never typed in my life.

I said, "I type perfect."

I sat down. And that man had to leave the room immediately. I typed whatever he gave me.

Q I understand then, this was in the offices occupied.

A It was occupied.

But the old duchess lived still. Ja, the family had all left for Switzerland -- that is, for England -- but the old duchess with two of her butlers was still there.

Q But the restaurant, the building, was occupied by the Germans?

A Was occupied by the Germans, ja. Ja.

Q Organization?

A Ja. Actually, it-- They had what's a head man.

Q Yes.

A The girl took me home. She was a famous movie actress. And by that I mean that she was very beautiful. She came from a very poor home.

And I stayed there after three nights, and there was a tremendous fight there, because she had taken home another girl from the streets, and the girl had robbed her, and the mother was very upset if I would stay.

But anyhow, I stayed. And I called her mother, "Mother," and her father, "Father."

And she was absolutely brilliant, this girl.

And one day at work a German officer cupped her, and she said, "Get away from me."

And I said, "Leave her alone, Du Deutscher Schwein."

When I'd first come out of the ghetto, everybody froze, and she fainted. She fainted.

And I went out on the street, and I seen what happened. I picked up a man -- he was in civilian clothes. I took him in.

He gave a look at her, and he fell madly in love with her. He was a S. S. hauptstung fuehrer, back from the Gestapo from the building department. He fell madly in love with her, and she's attracted with him.

Him and her helped me a lot. I got a very good

position.

And when the uprising in the ghetto was-- I used to take the streetcar and go back and forth to the ghetto because I was so homesick, till somebody said, "You, I see you many times here."

Well, anyhow--

Q Did you get contacts with your family going back and forth?

A No. My family wasn't coming. So far, I had gotten one letter, and I would not part with that letter.

Well, anyhow, we exploded, and the flames -- a dark-haired girl that came to our house become-- Well, that's not important.

Anyhow, the walls of ghetto, we got a lot of girls which I deposited in (Inaudible)

Q Yes.

A When you worked with the Germans, you had it safer, because there were no (Inaudible) Poles.

Well, anyhow, they raided our place, they found my letter. There was a head-- There was a 2,000 zloty or whatever it was -- I forgot -- a bonus for my head, to get me.

Well, I walked down the stairs, then I walked up the stairs. And they said, "Did you see that beautiful girl?" I had my hair up to here but not in the way.

And that was me.

Well, anyhow, things got very bad. I had to leave

the country. And so--

Q How did you leave it?

A I wrote myself a beautiful resume. And so I had very German friends who had--

Q On stationery?

A On stationery. And I told them the hauptstung fuehrer sent this.

A VOICE: He knew; he knew.

A And I got to New Karasmisdorf. And they had given me address to go to Germany, Breslau. The address never existed.

I was too hot to handle. They wanted me out of the country.

But anyhow, I got myself a very good job and had more time-- I forgot the names. There were about forty girls from Eukreinei. It was a brick factory. And I was supposed to take care, to see to all of that.

Q Was that for the (Inaudible) organization?

A No. It was a private man, a German Nazi, with a beautiful, big estate. And he had 40 or 35 -- I forgot -- Eukreina girls working who make the bricks. I was supposed to take care of the food, the rations.

All was said, I had nothing to do with -- I mean, absolutely nothing.

Q But you got food for yourself?

A I got-- Ja, sure. Everything was there.

And one day my boss told me that, "Tomorrow 28

Jews are coming to work here," and he gave me the rationing of what to give to them.

And I said, "Yes, yes. Sure, sure."

And I went in to the Eukreina girls, and I said, "Let's look at them."

I looked out of the window where I seen the (Inaudible) and I had not -- I was not supposed to show nothing.

But I went to the Eukreina girls. And I tell you, I took up everything and gave it to them. They want a second soup, "You want a second soup?"

And that poor man -- he bothered me enough -- he said, "I've never met anybody like you. You're so kind." He was over helping me.

And I said, "Please get away. Get away."

But one day an accident happened, and one of the men started to bleed. Instinctively, I went to him and tried to help him.

And my boss came. "You don't help any Jews."

I decided I couldn't take it any more. Time for me to leave. So I want to process some more papers. I had stolen that pen from the S. S. -- my beautiful girl friend gave it to me. And-- (Pause)

Q The wedding is also?

A From there I-- Meantime during the uprising, my sister came to Warsaw, and I said to her--

OTHER VOICE: The Warsaw ghetto was burning.

A And I said to her, "You must go to Germany. You cannot stay in Warsaw because the ghetto is burning. I must get you to a slave camp."

Q But that was a working camp?

A Ja. It was.

Q Your sister had a better chance to survive?

A Ja. Sure.

And my sister had no hair, and it was growing in white.

I said, "Before we do anything, come with me."

I took her into a barber shop.

Listen to this.

I said, "Listen. I have a gun. Lock the door. I have a gun. Give her a good haircut or I kill you." All hot water.

Anyhow, I had got them away. I had brought them down to the Sa-ma-la-ga. I had got them into Germany. And after this, nobody could get out.

I had-- Well, I had to get out, even I had the papers, and I wanted to go to Germany too. I wanted to be close to my sisters where I knew I would be safe; much more safer than Poland.

Q Did you make it to Germany?

A Well, I went to Sa-ma-la-ga and write myself in and everything.

And I bite myself, combed my hair and no lipstick. I tried to look real awful. I had cried all night.

And I wrote everything out, and the secretary was smiling, smiling, smiling.

And behind sets-- There was a man there, there was a vehrkeitsreichen there, a golden vehrkeier und reichsten. And he looked at me, and he said-- He gave me some kind of movement that I had to follow him.

He went out. No. I went out, and he followed me. Or, we went out -- I don't know (Inaudible).

And I went into a doorway, and they said, "Listen to me. You are very young, and you are very pretty. They know that you are Jewish. Are you Jewish?"

I have never told anybody in my life.

I said, "Yes."

He said, "Listen. You are not getting away. Come in three days. I will be in the Detler's apartment. Try again."

I went over there. Same thing happened.

And he said, "I can't help you."

And he give me a vehrkeitsreichen, official. Watch the (Inaudible) after you fate. What fate? Look everybody straight into the heart.

"I have a golden vehrkeiratsreichen, but I have got to do something for you."

Well, I got to the place I had the job, and then I decided -- I knew where my sisters went. I had contact with them.

OTHER VOICE: Adie De Burch.

A Adie. I had contact with them then that-- She was killing herself, tried to kill herself on the cemetery, the little one.

But anyhow, there came these two farmers, different farmers, you know.

I had contacts. I wanted to go to Switzerland. So I wrote myself papers so I can go to Konstanz or Bodensee, the port.

Well, I got to my sisters, one and then the other, and we talked, and they kept me for two days.

And I went on my way to Switzerland. I got to Konstanz, and I got passport.

Meantime I took to me -- I don't know -- I found her living there with Allega, (Inaudible) myself. I crossed my (Inaudible). I have now-- I put on my Swiss lace dress. I had on my best shoes. And it was 10 to 12:00.

I said, "Ten to 12:00, you have got to go to Switzerland. I must go at 10 to 12:00. Let us not set."
(Inaudible)

I never went to (Inaudible)

But, you see, before I could go there, I had to get to Breslau to arbeitsamt to get paper.

And she said, "I'm sorry, the boss isn't here."

I said, "I wait."

"I don't know when he is coming."

I said, "I wait."

"I don't know if he will talk to you."

And about an hour later a man come in -- that's the truth -- he looked at me. And then he said, "Come into my office." And he looked at me, and he said, "I know you."

I said, "That's impossible, you should know me."

He said, "I know you from Frankfurt."

By then I knew already -- I learned never to contradict anybody because you (Inaudible).

I said, "Yes, you are right."

"You see, I know you."

I said, "Yes, you are right. I was in finishing school. But I'm from Poland, and I lived on the German border that (Inaudible)." So then he gave me the papers.

So when I got to Konstanz (Inaudible), I went to the Gestapo. And I said, "I have papers." Ja, I did. I am rather the liar, that I work with the Germans and all of that.

He said, "Yes."

I wrote him a-- I'm supposed to go to, in a hotel. I think I write. Papers, then I know how to handle.

He said, "This-- We are close to Nie Munstrum. You have got to get out of here."

Well, Nie Munstrum, because it--

I went back during the night. I was caught by a German soldier.

Q You had German (Inaudible) ?

A German (Inaudible). He said, "Listen, my dear lady. You look--" I said-- "What are you doing?"

I say, "My parents are in Switzerland. I got to go to Switzerland."

He said, "It's not going to do you any good. The Swiss won't let you in. They shoot you (Inaudible)."

I be back in three hours.

I fear you have got to get you back to Germany.

Back to Konstanz, and I was sitting at the lake. And a man was sitting next to me. And he looked and looked and looked at me. He said, "You have such an unusual face. There is so much pain in your face."

I knew that I'm from Vienna and he is my (Inaudible). I'm a movie director. (Inaudible)

And all of a sudden, the sky lights up because I knew there may be hundreds of (Inaudible). I go to Vienna. So I went to Vienna. Until I got there-- Well, anyhow, I got to Vienna. It was about 6:00 o'clock in the morning.

Q And how old were you then?

A Twenty-two (Inaudible). And everything in Vienna was so exciting. And I looked-- There was this beautiful, beautiful building. I had never seen such a building, and I stood for ten minutes.

And a man came up and said to me, "Gestapo. Ausweiz."

I said-- No, I didn't.

(This marks the end of Side 1 of the tape and the beginning of Side 2 of the tape, which was not labeled on the tape.)

A "And then you won't tell me?"

I said, "Well, it's a beautiful building, and I just got here. Now (Inaudible) please. I don't know nothing and nobody."

He said, "Go back to North Bahnhof. And they put you up."

They put me up. She was a Lesbian. But then she took it. Oh, my God.

Well, anyhow, as I say, I never went to the tail, always to the head.

I went out to the rotensicher to find that man, and they said, "Look at this face, the (Inaudible) photograph and so on."

Meantime, that Lesbian moved out.

I stayed with a old lady. And then this was propaganda -- propaganda ministerium, and I was afraid of Goebbels.

Q This was Germany? Germany?

A No, Vienna too. And that's under Goebbels. That's all I needed. I run away.

Q From Vienna, you went?

A No, I'm on my way, left him. I never went back. And I got to the arbeitsamt, and I got a job as a assistant to a doctor, where I lived there, and that's where I learned how to keep house and to clean and to polish and clean up after sick stomachs and all of that.

And then my life turned. I could not contact my

sisters from there. I could contact them, but they could not contact me.

And one night I was in the streetcar. I was paying my 50 or 60 (Inaudible).

And a man behind said, "I pay for the lady."

I said, "No, you don't."

It was the most gorgeous man I have ever seen. And we had coffee together in the coffeehouse. I don't know.

And on the way home, he got fresh, and I slapped his face. I had a date with him for the next day, but I did it so fast and so hard; he was used to it.

But I went into my room. I looked in the mirror. I said-- My face said as much. I just knew it. I just knew that my whole life was changed. I looked for him for six weeks every day in the city.

Q Did you ever find him again?

A And one day I go to the open cafe, and I hang up my coat, and I go through, and there he was sitting with the friends, with two girls.

And I turned around to walk back. He left them, came after me, helped me with my coat.

And shortly after we got the papers, we married in the Karl's Kirsche. That's where the royalty marries. That's (Inaudible).

Then he kept on telling me about a strange story. It was a strange story.

And I told him about my sisters. And he didn't believe me.

And one day he went to see my sisters, and then he got me the papers, to bring one sister and then the other. That's in -- I lived in Vienna.

And one day he told me the craziest story. I never believed him. And one day he disappeared.

A VOICE: He disappeared. O. K.

A He was listed for dead. And I was swimming in money, anything I wanted. He was a spy. And he took what he took.

Q Five hundred Germans.

A And the organization insisted that--

A VOICE: Benne Engli.

A That he marry this Benne Engli, and they insisted that I work for them. I should get up at 4:00 o'clock in the morning and go with them to the -- in the free truck to the ammunition to listen to the Goebbels.

He said, "Not her. Anything, I will do, but not her."

Q And where was this man born? Was he from Vienna?

A From Yugoslavia.

Q From Yugoslavia?

A From Yugoslavia. He was Yugoslavia. Ja, ja, ja, ja, ja, ja. He told me how he become a spy, how they trained him in all of that. I thought it was weird.

But anyhow--

Q He brought out both sisters?

A Yes.

Q And they lived in Vienna?

A With me, both, ja. You know, I went back -- we went back to meet him, and then I brought the little one. No, I brought the-- I brought the older one -- the middle one. I never forget that experience.

I went to the village where he was, where she was working on a Saturday afternoon. I was beautiful clothed. A small village. A doll. And I was waving and I was waving and waving. It was Sunday afternoon.

And all of a sudden I see three girls walking down, and one of them was my sister. She became paralyzed. Couldn't even--

Q (Inaudible)

A (Inaudible)

I had long, beautiful hair. And I wanted to fix it.

And she became paralyzed. And I said-- She went into the house, came out with a little toothpick. It was dinnertime. Everybody was eating American (Inaudible). And believe it or not, she dropped that toothpick, and everything fell out. And we walked down the street, the Nunstrassen, you know.

Q Yes.

A To go to the train.

I said, "Listen to me carefully." I said, "Your

name isn't So and So."

No, she didn't eat the sponge cake. Yes, she ate the sponge cake.

But yes, she spoke to me. She was a very intelligent girl. And she was with me in Nineteen-- I don't know.

I said, "Listen carefully. You go in two separate wagons in the train. When the police comes, the Gestapo comes, you tell them -- listen carefully -- that you are (Inaudible) that in Vienna and that your brother is very, very ill. He is dying, and you did not have time to get a travel permission. You had to go straight back, back to work.

And I seen the Gestapo go in there, you know, to her. And she wore all her clothes, whatever she had.

Then they come into my compartment. I took out a cigarette. "Would you care for one?"

They never questioned me.

Q But you were above suspicion then.

A I did-- I looked down at them. They didn't look at the whole effect, you know. I was never bothered.

And we got to Munich. They just had bombed Munich.

Well, anyhow, that man had said to her, "Listen. I am supposed to take you in to Jay, dear, and find out if the story is true. But I tell you something. I believe you. I let you go because the State will lose hours of labor."

Well, we got to Vienna. I had them put the
(Inaudible) in my bags. (Inaudible)

After three weeks, I said, "You've got to go."

"I'm not going."

I said, "You have got to go out of here." A dozen
words.

So the old lieder heider, we went swimming. While
we were swimming, was a group of French people sitting over
there.

I said, "You go over there, and they tell you--"

He told. He was very-- He said, "You go over
there, and you tell them that you come from the French
border and that your parents got killed in the last
(Inaudible) and you are here and you don't know what to do."

So she went over, and, they told her, "Go to the
French -- to the Vichy, ja, to the Vichy, the French
government, and you tell them the story."

Now she goes there, and she comes back with a man.

And I said, "Who do you bring?"

"That's my husband."

Q Had she married him so that she could?

A I said, "What do you mean, he is your
husband?"

She said, "I was sitting there. There is hundreds
of people waiting to get in. He comes up to me, and he
said, 'Please take me.'"

She said, "How can I help you?"

He said, "Listen. I run away. I'm a prisoner of war. I run away. I have real papers for my brother-in-law. Be my wife."

She said, "O. K. One French."

Q So she became his wife?

A She became his wife.

Q Yes, the French citizen?

A No. Just-- She said, "I am his--" She took his-- He gave her the papers from his wife.

Q So they became a couple?

A True. And then I said, "Get rid of him. Away."

But he contacted her. Then he got her a -- she got a better job. It was incredible. And she worked with Polish women together in the biggest (Inaudible) butcher shop in Vienna.

Q That meant food, huh?

A The biggest.

He was married to a countess.

Q The butcher?

A VOICE: From Budapest.

A But he was always for a while going out with Marlene Dietrich. I'm just telling you.

He went from Slav to Baslav, this man Pompei.

Well, she was working there, and they put them all in the rooms to sleep. And she spoke Polish, but she could

not afford to open her mouth.

So they had the piano, and she played beautifully piano. And she was sitting there playing piano and so on.

And he kept on looking at her. He said, "She is not what I think. She (Inaudible)."

He said, "You come tonight home with me."

And he took her home.

She had disappeared. I got restful. Eight days later, she comes.

After what happened, she told us, "They have a daughter, one daughter, and they had at that time during the war, three servants, and I teach the daughter French, and they -- I have my own room. And she has made me this chance of (Inaudible)."

A VOICE: Rationing, we call this.

Q (Inaudible)

A She states that, "If you will come with us, he will tell us. I have two friends here." And she was friendly. "They will be easy. They will have everything. I mean, there is no question about it. They will say she bring the cakes and the food and everything she wants, you know, weekends."

Well, my younger sister was still over there. And the Gestapo was after her. They had found out she had run away from a labor camp. But anyhow, the baumers stuck up for them. They said, "We need them for the errands, and we need them. We need them. We need them. They work very

hard."

(A MAN: More hot coffee?)

A And on June the 6th, 1944, going to June the 6th, Nineteen-- when was the invasion of -- it was June the 6th, 1944 -- of Normandy.

A VOICE: Yes. It was "D" Day.

A I believe that was "D" Day.

A VOICE: Yes.

A She comes on the train. She was -- she was about 14½ years old. She was a gorgeous blond with beautiful blue eyes, beautiful hair, beautiful skin. Very beautiful, essentially.

And she told the soldier -- she comes up, "I want to go to--."

(Pause on the tape.)

And I looked in, and I said, "Who is it?"

A And she said, "This is a very aristocratic man from a very old aristocratic family, and his wife, now she is (Inaudible). She is a Jewess from Budapest." You see.

And there was a very old (Inaudible), and they talked often about that Count.

Q And they left home, did they?

A Ja. She was leaving with the transport. And the little grocery store, they talked about, warned her that he pay \$2,000 a head for the Jews.

Q To save them?

A Ja. They talked about it all down the street.

Well, anyhow, things got very, very tough.

Q Not for you though?

A Now wait a minute. I had the name of Lilli Carter.

Q Yes. Was that the school where he taught without (Inaudible) on her?

A Without anything on her.

Q Yes.

A Because I had worked for this German.

Q Yes.

A And I kept this. And when I finished the job, I went to the arbeitsamt, and I told them-- They said, "You go to other jobs now."

I said, "No, not me. I'm very German friendly. I came here and I worked, and I was promised a vacation to go back to Poland, and you Germans don't-- You know, this point, do you keep?"

They said, "Yes. You get a vacation."

And they wrote out a paper. And in this way I could keep the name Lilli Carter.

Q The ration card?

A I didn't care about the ration. It was-- The most important thing on the street that you are working for is this what-have-you-got department. That was the most important thing.

Anyhow, I got married after, and I told my sister, "We got to do something about it. We cannot believe him."

Nothing. I tell you what. I take this to Gestapo headquarter."

She was terrified.

I said, "No, it's very simple. We go in different streetcars. You go in. And you tell them--"

A WOMAN: Twelve years old.

A "--that you --" I forgot the town. "You tell them was here some place in -- in -- what you call it -- Sudeten Deutsch North Africa. You tell them the house collapsed and both parents were killed, and you didn't know where to go. You just run. 'And here I'm in Vienna. I have nobody. I don't know anything. I know nothing.'"

And I waited downstairs. (Inaudible) I waited. She never came down. I went crazy. But I always told her, you know, whatever. I mean, you can always run through.

She was young, she was very beautiful.

And after an hour and a half, she comes down. She wouldn't look at me. Never knew me. I was hysteric.

And then she dropped something on the floor.

Q A note for you?

A A note for me. I have forgot what the note said. But it said, "It's O. K. Go home. You will hear from me."

I did not hear from her for a week. Then she showed up.

They took that beautiful blond. They took her to a hospital, and they said to become a nurse. They could

teach you to become a nurse, eine braune schwester, and this (Inaudible). And, "Heil Hitler, heil Hitler," it went the whole day.

Well, this girl refused to have sister, and they gave her name to Lilli Carter.

Q Had she had another ration card that--

A Let's go back. It wasn't so much-- That you can show it on the street, that you are working there, ja.

Q The privilege.

A Ja, ja. And when she got the card, she didn't see it and came to us. That, you see.

Q She learned something from you, how to?

A So I always tell that till this day, "Never bother with the tail, it's always the head."

I'm very well known in San Francisco. It's embarrassing for my husband, you see. He must be a (Inaudible) Huffman, one of them.

So let me state--

Q In Vienna?

A In Vienna during the war till the Russians came in.

Q Had you ever (Inaudible)

A Ah, yes. But I-- We did not go on the streets. Because what the Russians did to the Viennese girls, they deserve it, the way they were treating, their talk (Inaudible), they deserve it all.

Nobody touched me, nobody hurt me, any, ever.

Q But you didn't go out any?

A After a while we went out, and we stood in line. And I took my little sister Heide. Now, my other sister was on Schwatzenberg Platz. And I had to see my sister. So I run through the city. They wouldn't let me through. I run through anyhow. And I just see the beautiful opera house burning. I run through the fire to get to my sister. And my sister was saved. Ja, she was saved.

But another day later on -- later on I -- I wanted to take her something.

I said-- I go-- Ja. We were standing in the street, and I was hiding her, and I was hiding myself.

And I see a very important, very important Russian officer standing there surrounded with Russian officers. And I was horrified. I stood in a corner, not to see me.

A few days later, I decided to go to the Commandant Schuitz. I had to get some place. I had to get out. I had to find my mother, anything. And--

Q How about your husband? Was he still there?

A He was still there. He was a very unfaithful man. Very handsome.

Q And he stayed there? He didn't run away from the Russians?

A No. But why should he? He was a Tito man. He was a--

Q He was a (Inaudible)?

A No, no, no, no.

Q He was quite foreign?

A No, no, no, no, no. No, no, no. We had ammunition dumped under the bed, you know.

I go there to the Commandant Schuitz. I go to the Commandant Schuitz. And I wasn't going to talk to any clerk.

I said, "I want to speak to commandant."

Q Where did you want to go, really want to go?

A I had no idea. I knew nothing. It was too early.

But I want them to know I'm Jewish.

And the door was open, and there was the same man that hold hands from Russia I seen on the street. And there was a beautiful girl, and she was from Lapland. She was living here while she studied medicine. And he asked her why she didn't go home and help the people. What did she stay in Vienna for?

I was horrified. I was so horrified. But I couldn't go back. I couldn't go out.

Then she left, and I came in. And he said, "And you? What do you want? (Inaudible)"

Q Was he Jewish?

A I said, "I'm a Jewess."

He looks at me. "Yes?"

I said, "Yes, I am."

He said, "You know how many people were telling me

today they were Jewish?"

I said, "But I really am."

He said to the adjutant, "Close that door."

And he said, "Then you prove it."

And I said, "Tamai es voy."

He took my head, looked (Inaudible), and he kissed me.

Q He was Jewish?

A He kissed me.

A VOICE: Yes.

A MAN: He brightened up his eyes.

A "Anything you want, tell me."

I said, "I want to have a gorgeous apartment from the Nazis."

"It's yours." Where it is located there in that (Inaudible).

I got it. My sisters and I moved in.

Q Was it three sisters?

A And my husband.

Q And your husband, yes.

A We were three by then. I moved in.

And he was immensely jealous. He had no reason. Because I was afraid to open my mouth. And he had a big stick, and he said, "I kill you--" and he took a -- "before I see you leaving me."

I said, "I'm going to leave you."

"I kill you." He took his arms.

I lost consciousness. I passed out, and my sister screamed, "Help," for help.

And the car stopped, and this officer come up. And he said, "What did you do to her? Don't you know what she went through?" Back and forth, back and forth.

And he came and started to date my middle sister. And that man said to me--

Q (Inaudible) sister?

A Dated my sister.

And my husband said, "It's not your sister. It's you."

And he is asking, what is it I wanted?

I said, "I want a number of the (Inaudible). I have the guns and the ammunition under the bed."

He said, "That's against the law."

And he told him, "I give you five (Inaudible). I will arrange for you to leave the country. If not, we go to jail."

Q You wanted him to go back to Yugoslavia?

A We left, and I was afraid. And it turn out that he went for me.

And meantime General Eisenhower got into Frankfurt.

She said, "Not me. (Inaudible)"

I said, "You go. You speak the language."

She couldn't get out, she couldn't leave until--

I said, "I take you over the Russian border, and

you go," which I did.

She went to Frankfurt. She arrived looking awful. She went to the Jewish organization. And this mouth was slipping from her head. She wore it in her head.

And they called--

An American came in, fell in love with her, married her. She was the first war bride.

Q And she lives now in Cherry Hills?

A In San Francisco.

Q In San Francisco?

A Near San Francisco, ja.

Q And the third sister?

A Lives in San Francisco too.

Q So you are all three united. And to whom are you married now, to another man?

A From Germany, ja.

Q Not to the Russian officer?

A No, I wouldn't marry a Russian, no.

Q So your husband is a survivor too?

A He got away in '39 to Havana and then to the States.

Q Of course, he is Jewish.

A Ja.

Q And those places in time.

A Ja.

Q And do you have children?

A No, we have no children. But my sisters has.

Q Oh, good. So you are a family again.

A Yes, we are a beautiful family.

Q Thank you so much for telling the story. It was--

A We turned the (Inaudible) response, which I didn't. I couldn't.

(At this point on the tape, it would appear that another woman was being interviewed.)

A Well, you ask me. The worse thing was the loneliness, to be a teenager and living and lying continuously and having nobody to tell your pain to. It was the most difficult thing I can think of.

But in an other way, I can say it made me love my own company. I enjoyed most-- When I am out two days, the third day, I have got to be home alone.

Now my husband comes home, and he knows that, don't worry. The bank is closed, you know.

I got some letters from Philadelphia that he would be asking me to record some more things. You want to listen to some more if they come into my mind?

MAN INTERVIEWER: Yes.

A Oh, the night of the bordello. I was living in Warsaw. Hugo Hoffman, the man she finally married, beautiful Eva, he was a sergeant in the German Army, and he was in charge of the main hospital in the Lan Sarette of the

food supply. And I mean -- guess what -- you couldn't pay for a job like this.

And he brought her and me always a lot of food, and he was working -- he was married to a German -- to a Jewish woman. He was 28 in September. Very nice, very (Inaudible).

She had left for America. And he got involved also with the underground, that when Effie worked with the underground had been a spy and all of that.

And one day she came in. She said, "We have to go to a certain place, you, me, and Hugo comes with us. He wears the uniform, it will open the doors."

Q So when was that? What year?

A During the time in Warsaw, 1942. It was cold now. My father was dead. I knew that.

I was sitting in the kitchen. I remember, I had the riding boots, put on my riding boots, and I swear that my arm got paralyzed. My father was standing behind me. "Don't go. Don't go. Don't go."

You know, I could not move.

Well, finally, put on the shoes. I knew I was in danger. And we went. I could not say, "No."

So we went into a beautiful building. They had this old patricia houses. We went up, I think the second floor. And we came in. Beautiful chandeliers and crystal and food and mountains and gorgeous girls. We were in a bordello.

I did not-- And we were supposed to pick up papers. I went on the telephone, snapped, cut the line. I had to cut it, you know, telephone, and they couldn't get out.

And she took a-- I don't know what she took. But anyhow, she took a big bag, and she said, "Grab everything into the bag."

I was so flabbergasted, I didn't know what they were doing, and the lights and the girls screaming and him in the uniform.

I seen a gold cigarette case. I took that.

I don't know. Police was coming. An other girl, we were three girls there. We were running down.

The police was coming up. And they gave one look at her. She had a famous face, being in the movies. They looked at her.

And meantime, I run. I couldn't care less. I run for my life.

Now the streetcars, at that time there weren't too many streetcars. And people were hanging outside around the streetcar to get places. I hung on. And they wouldn't shoot into the streetcars. That, I knew. They never done that.

They would stop the streetcar and take people off the streetcar.

Well, I got away. Effie got away. That other girl never got away. That's one of the things.

Q Do you think you were ambushed to go to that place so they could grab you?

A No. One of the girls from the bordello got down somehow and out of that apartment and managed to call the police.

This was one incident where we got away.

When the ghetto-- Ja, most people never talk about this. I don't know.

Before the Warsaw uprising, few months -- I don't know -- I think maybe a year before -- I don't -- I get mixed up with the date.

I know it was a beautiful night in Warsaw. I had the apartment near the hospital. And the alarm sounded. And I came running down and went into the hospital. That particular hospital then had got bombed. The Russians--

I never forget. I wore a beautiful silk robe. And the sleeves were not up. It was light blue. And here were blue velvet ribbons. It was just gorgeous. And I'm out in that. I remember that.

And there was an attack, and they bombed.

And later on -- I don't know -- they say that during that attack that the Russians throw ammunition into the ghetto. I don't know. I know only one thing. The next day a lot of damage was done. The ghetto was not hit.

And I walked down the street to look, and somebody came up and said to me, "Estelle Steffen."

I look around. That was the man who -- from whom

I had bought the first forged paper.

"And how do you recognize me?"

He said, "There's only one person who walks like you. I recognized you." And he said, "I must talk to you. It's very important. Where do you live?"

"So and so."

He said, "I come there that day."

So he came, and we went into that little back room the apartment was. I was living with Effie.

He said, "Listen. I make you a proposition. I did you a favor. You do me a favor."

I said, "What is it?"

"You have a big position," he says. "You know the trains are going to Russia and they are coming from Russia." They were freeing the road to invade Russia. "I want to have a train wagon of sugar."

I say, "How can I get you the sugar? You are crazy."

He said, "I tell you. You will make connections and you will manage to get me such sugar. I want a whole train wagon of sugar."

I said, "I can't do that."

He said, "We see each other again. Think about it. Contact this and this people. You speak the language."

By coincidence I knew the person, by coincidence. I was very, very known because when there were conferences or anything, I was always there.

If I tell you my -- my Polish is so terrible that it isn't funny. But I made the impression that I knew it all, you know.

Well, anyhow, meantime I took up -- I taught myself to do stenography, all kinds of things.

But I never, with that deal, I couldn't.

One day, ja, I was with her. There had been the front, the head of the kitchen. And her father worked in a factory, and at night he repaired shoes. But-- And she had a sister and a brother. The sister -- the brother worked for the telephone company. Eva was very, very beautiful, very talented. And she was a very fine human being, and Poland was her country.

And there was a bed there in the kitchen. Her parents left them that bed. And then they had the nice living room, which was the dining room. In the back was a little corridor of a ice lift, and in the back was a bed where she slept with her sister.

And the ammunition factory exploded one day and at 5:00 o'clock in the morning.

(End of Tape 1, Side B.)

THE TRANSCRIBER HAS THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

Although the interview commences of a lady named Estelle Kiefer, it appears to this transcriber that another and unidentified woman started to be interviewed on page 11, line 1, and that another and unidentified woman started to be interviewed on page 41, line 8.

Attention is directed to my comment on page 1 regarding the fact that this transcript precedes that of the tapes of the interview of Estelle Kiefer which I have previously transcribed.

Certain words in this interview were difficult and impossible to understand, particularly because of background noises, overlapping voices and accents. In the interest of accuracy, I would encourage the participants in the interview to review the transcript with the original tape.

I was glad to be of assistance to the project by completing this fourth transcription.

March 17, 1989

John W. Schrimper
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

3 made
HK

1 HOLOCAUST MEDIA PROJECT, 639 14th Avenue, San Francisco, Cal.
2 94118

3 *From: Austria now San Francisco*

4 INTERVIEW WITH: ESTELLE KIEFER

5 TRANSCRIBER (A COURT REPORTER): JOHN W. SCHRIMPER, Cedar

6 Rapids, Iowa

7 *By Judith West*

8 A An end came to ^{Saida}~~Tenna~~ Marie. They were looking for
9 somebody, a brunette.

10 They came to my bed first because I was it. They
11 look at me, "Get up. You are the one." (Inaudible.) I
12 couldn't talk. I was paralyzed. There was nothing-- I
13 could not move.

14 She run out of the bed, came in. They looked at
15 her, "Oh, what beautiful teeth. It was you."

16 She said, "Wait one second," she says. She gave
17 everything to her sisters. And, "Get out of bed. Go in the
18 cellar. Bring up the hen. Bring up the schnapps. Bring up
19 everything. Turn on the fire. Make the biggest breakfast
20 you have ever seen."

21 She made some breakfast till I (Inaudible.)

22 She said, "Stephanie, get up. Comb your hair.
23 Dress yourself. Stop shaking."

24 She made the biggest breakfast.

25 They left, never to come back.

PENGAD/INDY. MUNCIE. IN 47302
SF-404

1 She was something.

2 Well, they had found the letter, you see. I could
3 not part with that letter. The Gestapo had come and found
4 the letter. ^{They ransacked the apartment.} (Inaudible.) But they knew this were Jewish
5 people.

6 Q (Male Interviewer) Now which letter is that?

7 A I had gotten one letter from my family. I could
8 not answer that. I cherished that letter.

9 They took that letter, and they told them that
10 somebody was living with them, and so on.

11 And then, they tried to catch me. O. K.? They
12 were coming and coming, and I didn't sleep there any more.
13 I went to other places to sleep, here to sleep, there. They
14 said, "They are coming, and they are finally looking for
15 you."

16 They put a price on your head. There is always a
17 consortium, these houses. I was afraid to go there, back
18 and forth, so on.

19 One day I walked down the stairs, they came up,
20 and they said, "Look at that stubborn girl." It was me,
21 they picked up me there.

22 Time had to come, I had to go. The ghetto was
23 burning. People were coming out. I've got some of them out
24 of the country; some, I couldn't. I took them and put them
25 into the Natzarecht to work. I got them a place to sleep.

1 They didn't-- I didn't ask them if they was Jewish.
2 But they picked such-- You know what they picked, names,
3 they were so strange, like-- I don't know. How should I
4 explain that to you? Names which come out of romantic novel,
5 things like that, which sounded silly.

6 Q Very phony?

7 A Well, very phony, you know.

8 Well, I went over, slept here, slept here, slept
9 here.

10 There were two sisters there. That's a very inter-
11 esting story too. They were there before the ghetto was
12 burning. They both ^{worked} ~~were~~ with me.

13 And one day, the younger one came to me, and she
14 said, "You know, I'm going out and throw myself under the
15 streetcar."

16 I said, "Why?"

17 She said, "You know, the police, Gestapo came, and
18 they wanted to take my sister away to prove that she is
19 Polish."

20 I say, "Are you?"

21 She said, "No."

22 I said, "Who are you?"

23 She said, "I'm not supposed to tell."

24 I said, "Who are you?"

25 "I'm Jewish. I'm going out, throw myself under the

1 streetcar."

2 I say, "Wait. Wait."

3 Then the sister came, and she said, "Listen,
4 Stephanie, I have the paper."

5 She didn't have something with paper.

6 I have to convince the Gestapo to go back to Ledver
7 and bring some more papers. It's too long ago.

8 "I'm going to do it," I said.

9 "They won't let me."

10 I said, "Do you know what?" Our ^{boss} ~~boy~~ that was a--
11 He was a doctor, he was a general by then, a German general.
12 I overheard him screaming once that the ghetto was burning
13 over the loudspeaker say, "If any of my men will enter that
14 ghetto and loot it, I will send them to the ^{front} (Inaudible.) "

15 I found out that his sister was married to English-
16 man.

17 And he once told me -- I ^{had} ~~have~~ to do something or
18 ask him something -- he said, "I don't know who you are. I
19 do not want to know."

20 No. I came that night to him and asked him, "I
21 have to ask a big favor."

22 And he looked at me, he said, "Listen. I don't
23 know who you are. I do not know what you want. I do not
24 want to know who you are. How can I help you?"

25 I said-- "She was a little girl, we called her

1 "kleinst," which means very little.

2 *Kleinsten* The Gestapo came. She has to prove that she's
3 Polish. They want some certain paper that she's Aryan."

4 He said, "What do I got to do with it?"

5 I said, "You know something, please, you're a very
6 important person. Tell the Gestapo to give her one of these
7 times to get the papers."

8 He picked up the phone and telephoned. The girl
9 went away, got the paper. O. K.?

10 I stole one of his stamp too, then to have a stamp
11 from a general.

12 I used to plant it (Inaudible.)

13 Well, things were getting desperate. My sisters
14 were gone.

15 I used to be so homesick. Terrible.

16 There was a streetcar going over through the ghetto.
17 They would close the gates, and the streetcar would go. And
18 I would go on that streetcar. I would look at the people
19 like this, you know. I had to. I just had to do it.

20 And one day the conductor said, "I see you here
21 the sixth time." I never went ^{back} ~~six~~.

22 One day things were getting terrible for me too.
23 People were hiding, they picked up.

24 The girls were going, trying to get to Germany the
25 way I got my sister. My sisters got out in time.

1 They took them straight up to the Gestapo.

2 That Gestapo man who gave me the golden vatheit-
3 seichen had told me, "Listen, I took a girl-- The way I
4 help you, I tried to help her, but she didn't listen. She
5 came back the third time, and they took her."

6 *Q "What is the golden ..."*
 When you are very high official, like a big ~~man~~ ^{metal}--

7 MAN'S VOICE: You got one?

8 A Yes.

9 MAN'S VOICE: You gave it to me.

10 A Things were very, very difficult. I slept overnight
11 some place else, some (Inaudible).

12 But anyhow, I went for lunch at the finest place,
13 which was the Grand Hotel. Yes, I think it was the Grand
14 Hotel. I had a paper which everybody had. But on the top
15 it said, "This is good for non-Germans." I cut off the
16 top, so they couldn't read that, which was not too good.

17 But anyhow, yes, when I got that gold case, I ex-
18 changed that gold case. A new law came out: You had to get an
19 other identification card. And I got a new identification
20 card, which was (Inaudible) registered.

21 But anyhow, things were better. I went to this
22 very fine restaurant. And I was eating there, sitting--
23 Only Germans could go, nobody else. I couldn't care.

24 I went in. I ate my dinner. And when I was just
25 walking out, the SS hauptstung fuehrer hellahper came in.

1 He said, "Stephanie, how are you?"

2 I said, "I'm fine."

3 He says, "Where's Effie?"

4 I said, "Effie's at home."

5 And I walked out, and I went to the house to her
6 mother, who was very good there. I couldn't work; ^{any more} I had no--
7 That's an other story.

8 Well, anyhow, hour later, two or three of the
9 hauptstung fuehrerin came in, and we were sitting down hav-
10 ing tea. All of a sudden, a knock at the door. I knew the
11 knocks on the door. I disappear. The kitchen table had the
12 apron. I went under the apron.

13 In come two SS of General Ehnmedahpt, and they
14 said, "We are looking for Stephanie Tirkopska."

15 Well, Stephanie was under the table.

16 And they came in. They see the hauptstung fuehrer
17 there. They stood up, salute.

18 And she said, "I don't know where Stephanie is."

19 But he had just seen me two hours ago. He said to
20 her, "What do you mean, you don't know where she is?"

21 And she looked him straight into the eye. She
22 said, "You know she left three weeks ago. You know we don't
23 know where she is."

24 They left. I came out under the table.

25 So we decided things were too tough, I got to leave

1 the country.

2 And that's when I started to leave the country.

3 You know (Inaudible.) That's one (Inaudible.)

4 But the other one, I was going to say. Let me
5 see, what was the other one? What's the other one?

6 There are so many things were happening. (Inaudible.)

7 Just turn that off for a moment please.

8 During the years when I lived in Vienna, there were
9 no coals, for instance. You couldn't get coals. You had to
10 get-- There was a small business that had coals.

11 And the man would come up and said, "Sissie, here
12 are your coals."

13 I wanted to get a wedding band. Forget it; you
14 don't get a wedding band. Gold and all.

15 Q It sounds like you had (Inaudible.)

16 A I'd like to have something. I say-- I went to a
17 jewelry shop, and I said I wanted to have the wedding band.
18 I want to get married."

19 I figured because when we go to the priest, to
20 have them.

21 He looked at me, and he looked at me, and he says,
22 "You know what? Come back in two days and sleep here."

23 So I got back there two days later. And he was
24 there, and he goes to the back and calls out his wife. He
25 said, "Look at her. Sissie is here." And he gave me the

1 rings.

2 Wherever I went, I stopped traffic. I didn't know
3 what happened, and I was frightened. I didn't understand
4 it. "Sissie, Sissie."

5 And people would do things for me and give me things.
6 Unbelievable. I wasn't beautiful at all. It wasn't that.

7 Then one day many years after the war, I go to --
8 Indie and I go to the museum. And there I see myself hanging
9 in a (Inaudible.)

10 Q I didn't know that.

11 A And under it, it says, "Kaiser and Empress Elizabeth,
12 Sissie."

13 And now you can see why I got away with everything
14 in Vienna, when you look at the portrait.

15 Q Yes. What a resemblance.

16 A I had the same height, the same measurement.

17 Q You see, that's why you were able to survive in
18 Vienna.

19 A In Vienna. I mean, those people did for me, strangers.

20 But to see myself hanging at the museum, I didn't
21 believe it, had I not bought the book.

22 What else happened? Let me think. So many things
23 in between. Just let me think please.

24 Turn it off.

25 You have to be out by 1:00 o'clock. My husband

1 comes back.

2 Q Oh. O. K.

3 A My sister got back to Frankfort, and the first day
4 she met this very nice man. I had given her a bucket of
5 lard because of some food to take, she needed exchange in
6 cigarettes, whatever. And she had put it in her head. I
7 can't imagine what she looked like.

8 He came in and gave one look at her, and he was
9 going to marry her right away.

10 I was in Vienna. I haven't heard from her any
11 since. No communication, there was no mail, no nothing.

12 And I decided one day to find her. And in the
13 morning I went to all the officers, and I was the night.
14 You had to have special papers to leave the country, to go
15 in, and all of that.

16 Well, what shall I tell you. The next morning I
17 was gone. I was already in Germany. And I got to Frankfort
18 and looking for my sister.

19 And wherever I went to, when I told the name, the
20 people looked at me. They looked at me.

21 And I figure, "What's wrong with my sister?"

22 She had meantime started the-- People came back
23 from the camps. They opened up a very big camp near Frank-
24 fort, Zweitzvein. Mr. Fossenburg came. Senator Liehman came.
25 And she worked with them. And she got a uniform, she got a

1 Univar uniform.

2 Anyhow, I finally relocated her. Somebody was
3 getting married, and they said, "If you go to this wedding,
4 you will find her. She's a friend of her."

5 I went to that wedding. I didn't know the people.
6 I walked in. There she was.

7 She said, "I'm so glad you came. I've been wait-
8 ing to hear from you. I'm getting married. I think if you
9 are here, we get married in two days."

10 I say, "Whom are you going to marry?"

11 She said, "You know something, I'm married to some
12 jungkind. I don't care for him. But, then we can go to
13 America."

14 So I met him, a delightful man.

15 And they got married. She was the first war bride.
16 Her child was the first child born after the war. And Mrs.
17 Mamie Eisenhower came often to visit her baby, because he
18 was a "gawd" band leader for General Eisenhower.

19 Q He's the what?

20 A The "gawd" band leader--

21 Q Oh.

22 A --for Eisenhower.

23 I went back to Vienna. You know, I was very happy.
24 And I sent my little sister, Ida Mae, to Vienna.

25 I met General Patton.

1 Q You did?

2 A Oh, yes.

3 There must be picture some place.

4 I remember I went to the first artvartball, first
5 ball, after the war. I went. I had a dress made, I remem-
6 ber.

7 General Patton was there. He was there with Mata
8 Harren, a very skinny movie actor. Shortly after, he got
9 killed in a car accident. I remember this.

10 And I remember-- Yes, we were still in Vienna for
11 some time. My sister stayed still. No, my sister-- No.

12 One day I had to look for my sister. I went over
13 there. I said, "You stay here till we settle this, Effie."
14 Fabulous place on Schwartzenburgplatz.

15 And I came home. In the afternoon, I walked all
16 the way home. And there was nobody on the street. People
17 didn't go in the street yet. It was very, very shortly after
18 the Russians had come in.

19 And was a very hot summer day, and I walk to go
20 back. And I see a Russian officer coming with-- How do you
21 call it? A saber? You know, where you-- How do you call
22 it? Feschting?

23 Q A saber?

24 A A saber, yes.

25 Q A sword?

1 A Yes, a sword.

2 And he was drunk. He was so drunk, it wasn't funny.
3 And he seen me coming, I see him coming. And my heart just
4 went down and down. And I stood up straight, and there we
5 stood looking at each other. He was drunk.

6 And he put out his hand to grab me. And I just
7 walked slowly, while he walked, straight ahead. Very slow.
8 I didn't run.

9 Then I looked back. He was still standing there
10 with his mouth open.

11 Then I started to run, get away.

12 But that's not what I wanted to tell. I wanted to
13 tell something else. What was it?

14 Let's turn it off again. I forget.

15 Yes. Yes. She was-- I went back. No. That's
16 O. K. She went back, and I came. I got the tele-comm in
17 Vienna. I was staying with friends in Vienna then. I had
18 made some friends, and I stayed with them.

19 She was a beautiful blond. She had-- She had mar-
20 ried to one of the cousins from King Faruk. They were-- He
21 was living in Vienna, where she met him. He was a cell mate
22 of Ahbs-A-Semmit. She couldn't marry him. Then afterwards
23 she went to Switzerland and she married him and escaped from
24 her odd one.

25 Yes, I got the telegram, "You're leaving for the

1 United States."

2 I wasn't going to no United State.

3 While living in Vienna, I met two American officer.

4 One was-- His father at that time, I think, was Assistant

5 Secretary of War. His name was Peters. And I lived in

6 that beautiful place. And the other one was a very, very

7 high, important Navy man.

8 I forgot. I couldn't spend both of them. I met

9 them at the-- Oh, it was my big birthday party.

10 I met them at the opera. We were going to the

11 opera. And there were no tickets, nothing. Couldn't get

12 anything. It was Tales of Hoffman.

13 And I said to the portier, "Here are the cigarettes."

14 He said, "O. K. I have a box. It's reserved for

15 -- for very special people."

16 I said, "I'm very special. You have the cigarettes.

17 In we go."

18 So we went in. And then these two officers came

19 in: generals, and that's the way that we met them.

20 And then we went out occasionally. They came to

21 my place. And they looked around and said, "I tell you

22 something. Don't go to America," they say. "The rich don't

23 even live the way you live. Don't go. It's not for you."

24 So then months later, I got that telegram, I'm go-

25 ing to America. And I figured, I said, "You know, you got to

1 take the opportunities, because you might regret it later."

2 You know what I mean?

3 So I went back, managed to go. And I got to the
4 States.

5 And I've never been more unhappy in all my life
6 than in the State. I've never been more hungry than in the
7 States. I nearly starved in the States.

8 Q Where did you come to?

9 A To New York. First I went to a small town, to New
10 Jersey, to be with an aunt of mine who was very poor. And
11 I couldn't take the mentality, I couldn't take it. And we
12 went to New York.

13 I was-- I got myself a job. Very interesting.
14 I got myself a job. You know, I made \$32.

15 My younger sister was very sick. She couldn't
16 walk. I carried her many times on the back through the
17 streets of New York. She was very beautiful, and all the
18 cars stopped, and everybody would come give us lifts; I
19 said, "No." She couldn't drive in the car. She lost weight.
20 She wanted to go. That was terrible.

21 I got myself a job. And, I mean, I knew nothing.
22 I always loved beautiful clothes. I always had better
23 clothes than most of them. And when I was 14, 15, I used
24 to design clothes and make clothes when people wanted me to
25 make the clothes. But I barely knew nothing.

1 I got that job, and I made up my mind to learn.
2 After ten days-- The first day, she said, "You do this."
3 It was a beautiful cap.

4 I said, "I could never do that in my life." And
5 I mean, I'm tired.

6 And doing this ten days, I was fired. What I
7 learned a lot. I learned so much, took ten years some place
8 else.

9 I got an other job at Ehlert Women-- No, that was
10 (Inaudible.) I went to Carnegie, Hettie Carnegie, which was
11 the place in the States. She made the clothes for Marlene
12 Dietrich, for Elizabeth Taylor, for anybody.

13 And a woman was sitting next to me, and she said,
14 "Two days in the week, I will be here for, it will be my
15 25th year, it will be."

16 I said, "Ah. Twenty-five year. You're getting a
17 gold watch. They give you a party."

18 She said, "Don't tell nobody because I be fired.
19 They will tell me I'm too old."

20 And I went home that night, and I said, "That will
21 not happen to me, never." I went back to work, and I watch. #
22 And the boss, big boss, went around. And he said, "Listen,
23 Estelle. Let her watch. Don't worry if she does good or
24 bad. She's interested more than any one of you. Let her
25 learn. Let her watch. Be nice to her."

1 Well, I wanted a new suit. That suit, it said
2 (Inaudible) fifty dollars, which was like 3,000 today.

3 So I bought the material, and I was going to make
4 myself a suit.

5 I was going to burn the suit, I was going to tear
6 it to pieces, I was going to drown it, I was throwing it
7 out of the window. Six week it took. I made my suit.

8 I come in to work.

9 "How can you afford a suit like this?"

10 I say, "I made it."

11 The fellow at the chairs laughed.

12 Q This was the job you had in New Jersey?

13 A No, it was in New York.

14 Q I mean in New York.

15 A They laughed. I said, "Why are you laughing? You
16 didn't make said suit." I said, "I quit. If I can do this,
17 I can do other things. I quit."

18 And I've never taken a job since. Always did
19 things on my own, you know.

20 Q Well, that sounds like that's getting your style.

21 A I don't know. But we were hungry. We lived on
22 three apples a day. We were very hungry.

23 We were very proud. We were much too proud.

24 We could have gone to the highers of the Jewish
25 agency.

1 Q How long did that go on, Estelle?

2 A My sister was very sick.

3 My other sister was still in Europe, you see.

4 They were in the Army. And I did not know what to do, you
5 see.

6 We were so unhappy. We had nobody to talk with.

7 I had somebody living down the street. She was
8 married. And she had Passover. And I was alone. She would
9 not invite me for Passover.

10 You know, I've never for--

11 Not so much me; my sister.

12 When I was living at my aunt, she had a daughter
13 that was very beautiful, was once up at the time Miss New
14 Jersey. And it was Yom Kippur, and they were giving a dance,
15 and she would not take. To the dance, you can take anybody.

16 I've never seen her again. I would have nothing
17 to do with her. Never forgiven her for it. Not for me.
18 For my sister.

19 So we were lonely and hungry in New York.

20 Q Yes, that sounds.

21 A That was the worst, you know.

22 Once hope has been taken away from you, that's it.
23 I had no more hope.

24 Q You mean after what you had been through during the
25 war, and then coming over here and-- (Pause.)

1 A Somehow, I had hoped my -- I would go back home.
2 You have hope to see your family. There is hope of some-
3 thing.

4 There was nothing.

5 Q How long did they have to go hungry?

6 A I didn't know what to do with my sister. She was
7 so sick. There was a doctor down the block, and I went down
8 to him, and I with him, and he says. So we decided to help
9 my sister to Italy. And I would send her. (Inaudible.)

10 So we went-- Meantime, I met a young man. I wanted
11 to marry him. He wanted to marry me. But his parents, "For-
12 get it." I did not know what a mother complex was. I don't
13 think that belongs here.

14 You know, about the Czechoslovakian was always in
15 my mind, when this year he went to Prague.

16 I addressed everything with me.

17 And I was going to call, and I said -- and I
18 started to think, "No, it's not fair to me to call. She
19 will be horrified that it slipped. I had ruined her life.
20 If she finds out that you didn't go to prepare (Inaudible.)"

21 And I kept on saying, "No. Please don't make me
22 call her." I was dying to tell her, "Go down, take a taxi."
23 And that wasn't right to.

24 I looked well. I was well dressed and, you know.

25 And today, sitting here, I feel very good that I

1 did not go, that I did not go to see her.

2 Q Effie?

3 A Effie.

4 Q Why do you feel better that you didn't see her?

5 A I feel I could have -- I could have destroyed her
6 life if he would find out that after she has been married so
7 in
8 many years, went/to Germany to see him and he did nothing.
9 Something would have come out.

9 Q Oh, I get it. Yes. Right.

10 A And I did not want to do that.

11 (A bell rings.)

12 WOMAN: You want something, Honey?

13 MAN: Where am I going?

14 WOMAN: You're going to the library?

15 MAN: No, no.

16 A So you have any questions?

17 Q Well, I'm just curious. Did it finally get better
18 in America for you?

19 A Yes, it got better, you see. Isn't it O. K.?

20 Q But it was worse those first--

21 A First few years.

22 Q --few years. And--

23 A It was the worst during my whole life.

24 Q Than the whole-time previous?

25 A Than the whole thing, yes.

1 Q I know what I wanted to ask Estelle.

2 You said that people haven't wanted to hear about
3 this.

4 A Yes.

5 Q When you first went to New York after the war, did
6 your friend talk about it? Were people pretty much -- didn't
7 want to hear it, they didn't want to hear it?

8 A Yes. Or, if they wanted to hear, I would get so
9 upset that I couldn't talk any more.

10 And people who were with me in the ghetto, they
11 came. They would come and say, "Tell us. Tell us. Tell
12 us." Because nobody believed I was alive.

13 I started to get better, I used to.

14 I went home and started my sewing at home, you
15 know. And one day, it was a beautiful day, and, "I think
16 I'll go out to lunch today." It was just gorgeous.

17 And I went to a cafeteria in New York.

18 Is it on?

19 And I have a tray with food. And all of a sudden
20 I see a couple of the men coming. And I look at him, and I
21 dropped the tray. I put my arms around him. I said, "Mr.
22 Taylor. Mr. Taylor."

23 And he looked at me. And the people said in Yiddish,
24 "A crazy American woman," "Weschuken Amerikanerin."

25 "Out of the way. Out of the way. You are crazy."

1 I said, "I'm not crazy. I'm Estelle. I'm Estelle."

2 And he said, "But you're supposed to be dead."

3 I said, "No, I'm here."

4 And I took him, with his wife, into my one room.

5 We all slept on the floor. And I got him the job, the first
6 job. He became a very, very-- He was the head man at
7 Carnegie, at Elizabeth Arden, Oscar Dellaventa. I have
8 clothes which he made for the Kennedys. Whenever I go to
9 New York, what is it you want? I have fabulous clothes he
10 makes me, you know. And I consider him my brother and his
11 wife my sister.

12

13 (The following interview was recorded on the reverse
14 side of the cassette tape above transcribed. No designation
15 was pasted to this side, but the speaker sounds the same.)

16 A And I woke up one night. I was in sweat. I was
17 just besides myself.

18 I said, "I must go home. I must go home." I went.
19 And when I went back, they had already closed in the ghetto.
20 There were only streets where they used police there that you
21 can go in and out. And I did not know.

22 And I took a carriage, and I said, "Bring me to
23 Such and Such Street."

24 And he said to me, "Oh, no. That's the ghetto.
25 You can't go there."

1 I said, "When I was there, there was no ghetto.
2 I'm a German," I said.

3 Then he brought me some place else, and I got be-
4 hind it, and I got into the ghetto.

5 And then I looked at the people, what they looked
6 like. That was terrible.

7 I got in. My sister was dying of typhus.

8 I had taken with me some gold, certain things
9 which were valuable. Gold. I wasn't on the black market,
10 that's-- And because of that, I could buy medicine for my
11 sister, you see.

12 Q Well, she was really in the--

13 A Yes. And she got well.

14 But-- Oh, before I left the first time, I was
15 dealing with the money. I would go out at night with the
16 Poles outside, and I've got marks. I changed dollars and
17 cents. And it was very dangerous. I didn't come in the
18 morning.

19 One night I knew of two men that were very bad.
20 They were Germans. They had a big dog. And the dog was run-
21 ning after me and bit me. But I got in again. It wasn't
22 as important.

23 Oh, I used to operate people. You know, when you
24 have no food, you get bowls. (Inaudible.)

25 I had to operate somebody on the behind, and I came

1 out with a knife, and they start running.

2 And it was, we dull it with ice, and she fell, and
3 the whole thing opens up. But I used to cut them up, you
4 know, the (Inaudible.) the soldiers.

5 I've very good hands. People say I have healing
6 hands. They used to say that.

7 Q Estelle, you mentioned a camp. Which camp was
8 that?

9 A It was in Tamaschaft. It was a ghetto, one of
10 the first ghettos.

11 You see what happened, we stayed in Poland. It was
12 a year before in September, war started September 1, '39.
13 And we stayed with relatives and friends, and the first
14 bomb was falling around.

15 Q Yes.

16 A You know what it is? All, the whole city was run-
17 ning away. Beautiful small town. And I had a bed, and I
18 had bread, and I had a roof over my head.

19 And I said, "I'm not running, Mother."

20 She said, "We're the only people left in town.
21 We've got to go. The Germans are coming."

22 I said, "I'm more afraid of the Russians than the
23 Germans. I'm not going."

24 And the knock on the door, and the woman said, "I'm
25 going with my two children. Please come with us."

1 I said, "I'm not going."

2 Then a man came. He says, "I want you to know
3 there is nobody left in town. You are the only dahsrit
4 girls, you and your mother. Get going."

5 I said, "I'm not going."

6 What shall I tell you?

7 The woman came back. Her little boy, the shrapnel
8 had cut off his head. Now listen, that's a mother, a good
9 mother. She says, "You know what I did? I dropped my other
10 kid and run."

11 Could you imagine, to do a thing like this?

12 The man came back. He lost his leg.

13 Nothing has happened to us. You see?

14 Q So was the camp clear there?

15 A It was-- It was not a ghetto yet. It developed
16 into a ghetto.

17 This friend of ours, they had a 15-room apartment.
18 And we had nothing and nobody. They gave us one room. That
19 later on happened to become the ghetto.

20 Like when I left the ghetto, after I came back,
21 and it was a ghetto, and I was leaving the ghetto again, it
22 was very early in the morning, and my mother brought me
23 down. And the two Jewish policemen were there, and they
24 said, "Don't try it."

25 I said, "I'm going."

1 And I didn't get turned away, so that they couldn't
2 be seen.

3 And up comes Polish policeman, and he was known to
4 be very bad. And I gave one look at my mother, and my mother
5 was petrified. She stood there.

6 And the policeman, I swear, he became deaf, blind
7 or anything. He didn't see me; nothing, nothing.

8 And that night I spent with her Gentile friends.
9 I slept there (Inaudible.) I had to get up early in the
10 morning to catch a train to Warsaw.

11 And my mother was far away, that's the truth. She
12 was in the ghetto. I was out. And she woke me in the morn-
13 ing. She wasn't there. And I woke up. I had a beautiful
14 bracelet. I took off the bracelet and gave it to the people
15 who kept me, you know, and I went away to the train, I managed
16 the train. I came back to Warsaw.

17 And I can remember writing a letter to these people
18 to tell my mother that I was safe and to keep the address--
19 No, no. The address, I gave later on.

20 Because, you see, my sisters knew where I was.

21 My indigence is getting worse the more I talk.

22 Because while I was working, one day somebody said,
23 "You've been asked to come to the front door." There stood
24 my sister. She looked like Sis.

25 Now I had a handbag. My papers were in it and

1 something for (Inaudible). I never forget them.

2 She says, "I need 2,000 zloty."

3 That's quite a bit of money.

4 "The carriage I came with--"

5 Now wait a minute. I lost.

6 She said, "I'm Jewish, and he wants to get paid
7 off. Get me the money."

8 I went in, I woke (Inaudible) to a doctor. I
9 said, "Listen. I need this money."

10 "Why?"

11 I said, "Don't ask any question. I need it now.
12 I need it now. You'll get it back."

13 I took the money, gave it to her, went out. We
14 walked outside. I handed the man the money.

15 At that moment, a young boy came and grabbed my
16 bag -- my bag. My life was in that bag.

17 I started to run. I'm not a runner. I started to
18 run and scream. He dropped the bag. I got the bag back.
19 That was easy.

20 Now what do you do with her? I was living with
21 her, with a girl who hated me. She was very ^{sister} generous of me.

22 And I took her in, and I said, "That's a friend
23 of mine. She has got to stay."

24 And my sister, anybody was-- The Jews, the way
25 they looked, and so on, you know.

1 Well, anyhow, that was already after-- That was
2 just before the ghetto was burning, or after -- I forgot.

3 That's the way I got her then out to Germany.

4 And a few days later, I opened the door, my other
5 sister, the younger one, only 12 years old. I look at her.

6 She said, "I'm hungry. I'm hungry."

7 I said, "You can't come in here."

8 "Why can't I come in?"

9 "You can't come in here. They're building a house
10 over there, an apartment building. Take some blankets.
11 Now hop you in the blankets. You sleep there tonight."

12 "I'm not going to sleep there."

13 "You stay there tonight," I said. "You don't move.
14 You cannot come in here. The girl said no."

15 She was there overnight. How she lived through
16 that night, I don't know.

17 I went over to my friend's, to Effie's mother. And
18 I said, "Listen. My sister is here."

19 She said, "Bring her."

20 So we brought her over to Effie's. And Rohrback
21 knew that was my sister. This fellow, I mean he was--

22 That's how I got out to Germany, you see, I got
23 out. A months's later, I couldn't have gotten him out.

24 Oh, yes, that girl I lived with who was so generous,
25 reported me that I am not Polish and that I am not bad, to

1 arbeitswachter, this department of labor. That is a paper
2 you have got to have. You've just got to have that paper.

3 When I had that job in the palais, working for
4 a gonnosizicheon-tock, when I finish, I got my book back.
5 It's called a arbeitsbuch. The law. This is very important.

6 When I took this job-- When I got out of the
7 hospital, I couldn't work any more. So that I took this
8 job temporary. I did not register.

9 They took me and my (Inaudible). You know, I made
10 a good impression, and you are to talk.

11 That was very interesting too.

12 I was in charge over 10,000 people. I-- They were
13 building very low-ded-low, 10,000 people, the headquarter.
14 I worked in the headquarter. And I had to pick out the
15 hours and the-- Go pick out 10,000 people in your head,
16 there's better to do.

17 I got smarter after a week. I just wrote down fig-
18 ures the way they came to my head, if I liked the name.

19 Well, anyhow, there was-- What was I telling?

20 Yes, I got her out, and the others.

21 Yes. While I was working there -- yes, the arbeits
22 ahmt -- I got it. I got it, Effie..

23 A telephone call-- I got a letter to come to the
24 arbeits ahmt, to the department of labor. The big shot was
25 ready for me. They knew who I was. They knew everything

1 about me.

2 Here I was, sitting in the office. I don't know,
3 she had to go out of the office. I pick up the phone, and
4 I call the general.

5 I said, "Mr. So and So." He was-- He had-- He
6 knew he had Jewish people hiding there. He knew that. But
7 he--

8 I said, "Listen. Something is not right here. I
9 want you to telephone. Tell them that I am an excellent
10 worker; that he cannot do the work without me; to release
11 me immediately." I said, "Five minutes, call in."

12 He called.

13 They stood up and bowed in front of me, apologized
14 (Inaudible).

15 Q I see.

16 A I had called myself, and I said, "What do you want
17 from this person? I'm the boss here."

18 She said, "She has no papers. We have to see."

19 I said, "I had called before I went there. You
20 treat her gentle. She's very important."

21 Q So you called for yourself?

22 A That was one of the stories.

23 Q Creative.

24 A You get very smart, believe me.

25 Q That's very interesting. You had to.

1 A You get very bright.

2 I'm today a good judge of people. Sure, I was
3 forced to learn the hard way.

4 To me, people have become glass. I look right
5 through them.

6 It wasn't easy.

7 But the worse thing when my first two years in the
8 States.

9 WHISPERED WOMAN'S VOICE: You can tell him.

10 A It were just-- You can't imagine what it meant to
11 be in this rich country with Inkle and sick and nobody to
12 talk. to.

13 You can turn it off.

14 What do you have to listen to?

15 (End of the interview on the reverse side of the cassette
16 tape.)

17 -----

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 THE TRANSCRIBER (A COURT REPORTER) HAS THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

2

3 A few times, the "swish" sound on the duplicated tape
4 sent to me for transcription made hearing difficult.

5 Two tapes were sent to me, one designated "Estelle
6 Kiefer 1" on one side, the other tape designated "Estelle
7 Kiefer 2" on one side. Both of these original sides were
8 exactly the same. The taped interview continued onto the
9 reverse side of both tapes, also being identical on the re-
10 verse sides.

11 Although the woman interviewed is designated as Estelle
12 Kiefer on the label of the cassette tape, the transcriber
13 feels it is possible there were two women being interviewed.
14 Occasionally during the interview, the speaker refers to
15 herself as Stephanie Tirkopska. Accordingly, it was diffi-
16 cult for this transcriber to distinguish between the ladies
17 being interviewed. It would be in the interest of accuracy
18 if one of the individuals present at the time of the inter-
19 view: the interviewer, Estelle Kiefer or Stephanie Tirkopska,
20 could examine this transcription and supply the correct
21 designations.

22 It is also noted that the commencement of the tape
23 furnished to me appears to commence during the course of
24 the interview and not at the beginning of the interview.

25 Certain words in the answers were difficult to understand

1 due to accents and due to the emotions with which they
2 were uttered.

3 I was glad to be of assistance to the project by com-
4 pleting this third transcription.

5
6 August 19, 1986

7 John W. Schrimper

8 Cedar Rapids, Iowa

9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25