

A. All the poor people. city project.
And you pay the rent if you could pay that and if not they
didn't throw you out.

Q. WOULD IT BE CONSIDERED LOW COST HOUSING TODAY?

A. Yes. The city project. And I didn't have bad summer
times. We used to run around short, barefooted. Going to
swimming in a

Q. WAS IT HOT IN THE SUMMERTIME THERE?

A. Oh, yes. Beautiful. Beautiful. Nice and hot. I don't have
bad growing up like that going to school.

Q. WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST MEMORY IN SCHOOL? HOW FAR BACK CAN
YOU REMEMBER THERE? DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST YEAR YOU SPENT
IN SCHOOL?

A. I considered myself a good student. Everybody said so.
Funny thing. I had probably, I was always very sensitive,
high artistic. Back in this time it was customary to keep,
not lunch, they used to call it Hungarian teaser, or a break.
They used to have bread with butter or something like that
and they used to ask your family situation, if you have a
wealthy family teaser, if not you don't have nothing.

Many time I don't have nothing, anything, usual my friend used to share his between us.

Q. WHAT TIME DID SCHOOL START?

A. School started 8 o'clock and finished 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

Q. YOU WENT FROM 8 TO 4, THAT'S AN 8 HOUR DAY.

A. Yes. And after school twice a week they had a so-called religious hours except that Catholics, they just how do you say. They never have to go in the afternoon. Sometimes, depending, on different process. 9 o'clock, 10 o'clock, the same classroom we used to go except we not Catholic have to live there. classroom joined somebody else or if the priest wanted you could stay over there. Any other religion. Jews or Evangelis, they used to call. They have to go in the afternoon. That say you finished school at 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock you have to go 5 to 6 or 6 to 7. You have to go back to school. I remember, we used to go twice a week.

Q. WAS THIS A PUBLIC SCHOOL?

A. Yes.

Q. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL?

A. Oh, who knows?

Q. YOU DON'T REMEMBER?

A. No.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF YOUR TEACHERS?

A. No. No. I remember, yes I remember one teacher, but this time I was higher grade and this time we moved back to the city, which was called . . .

Q. WHEN YOU WERE LIVING IN TRIPOLI, THAT WAS BEFORE YOU STARTED SCHOOL?

A. No, I was in school over there.

Q. OK. BUT YOUR FAMILY WAS LIVING THERE BEFORE YOU STARTED SCHOOL? YOU WERE STILL IN THAT NEIGHBORHOOD WHEN YOU STARTED SCHOOL? RIGHT?

A. Yes.

Q. THEN YOU MOVED. WHERE?

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A. No, No. This must be third or fourth grader and later on we moved into the city. OK. Back in Hungary, first of all, you have to go eight grades. After eight grades, you qualify to go , which is equivalent of high school here. So anyhow, we moved into the city. We have a better place to live over there.

Q. HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU MOVED?

A. I tell you how old I was because this time I was beginning to play soccer in an organized soccer and I must have been around 11 or 12 years old.

Q. TRIPOLI, THEN, YOU'RE SAYING YOU MOVED FROM THERE INTO THE CITY. WHERE WAS TRIPOLI LOCATED?

A. The city was outskirts . . .

Q. A SUBURB OF BUDAPEST?

A. Yes, a poor suburb. They have the so-called city project which was outskirts of the city.

Q. WHAT DIRECTION WAS THAT, NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, WEST?

A. I really don't know.

Q. PEST OR BUDA?

A. None of this was direction.

Q. ON THE PEST SIDE?

A. Yes, it was on the Pest side. Yes. On the Pest side.

Q. THAT WAS EAST RIGHT? EAST OF THE DANUBE?

A. Yes, well Pest is east of the Danube.

Q. I'M ASKING. I DON'T KNOW, I'VE NEVER BEEN THERE?

A. (laughs) It was in Pest. You don't have to cross the Danube. You're still on the Pest side.

Q. FROM THERE YOU MOVED . . .

A. No, no, no. You're talking about . . . Let's go back to this one. I only remember one teacher, one teacher . . .

(Phone rings. Interview in interrupted)

A. I want to talk about this teacher. The only one I remember. Naturally, I have to emphasize at this time in Hungary there was no such thing as boys and girls in the

same class. In all my school years, I never have any girl in our class. The girls were in a different school. Different building, different school, different location.

Q. AND THESE ARE ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

A. All public schools, right. Never have they co-ed. Only the boys and girls. So anyhow, like I said, we moved into the city. I was sort of 12 years old. 12? Yes, I have to be 12 years old. I remember the only teacher and this time at the young tender age you were very sensitive about being . . . suddenly your discover you are different from the other children because you are Jewish.

Q. THIS IS THE SCHOOL WHERE YOU MOVED TO OR WHERE YOU CAME FROM IN TRIPOLI?

A. Yeah. We came from Tripoli, moved into the city.

Q. AND SO THIS TEACHER WAS IN THE NEW SCHOOL?

A. Yes. In different neighborhoods, you have to go to different, nearer, schools. This time, I was a tender age 11, 12, you were vary sensitive because you suddenly discovered you were different as everybody else. You have no money, you are poor. You are the same color, talking the same language. But somehow they make exception of you

because you being Jewish. And everywhere you go, people you seen on the street, placards on the street, the Jews are no good. And trouble with the world has this stereotype of the Jews.

Q. YOU SAID YOU WERE 12, SO THIS WAS 1936?

A. Oh, yes, right. 1936, yes. I was born in '24. This time I really feel like I was a good student because I did my homework. I have no trouble passing the grades and this teacher must have like me. I had to doing all kinds of favors. You could say I was his teacher's pet. If he needed something, some extra work, to buy something for the class, and once in front of the whole class oh, he never called me my right name. He never called me my first name. He never called me my last name. He always used to call me "Kishido." Little Jew. This I'm telling you because it's only teacher I remember. I can remember none of them. He was for me a young man and once in front of the class he said, "Class, look at that guy. He is a nice, bright, young boy and only thing he's lost failure is Jewish.

Q. THE ONLY THING IS . . .

A. He is a Jew. He is a nice guy, a good student, excellent, he has one failure . . .

Q. FAILURE!

A. Failure, he is a Jew. He made a lots of compliment, but he emphasized too bad, this is too bad he's Jewish. So he's no use for it. I mean he has use for me, but society has no use. You ask me this, but this is only teacher I can remember.

Q. SO THIS IS WHAT SCHOOL IS LIKE?

A. Is what school is like, yeah.

Q. WELL, WHEN YOU LIVED IN TRIPOLI, WHAT KIND OF HOUSE DID YOU LIVE IN?

A. OK. This Tripoli, this house we were living in sometimes was a city project which is consists, I believe, how can I explain that?. They was building for well-do people, because they have a kitchen, two bedrooms. I don't know. So, anyhow, to make the story short, all the poor people's apartment divide it for two. This family who had the kitchen then have the bedroom, they have to go through in our living room, you could say, to get to the bedroom.

Q. SO TWO FAMILIES SHARED A BATHROOM?

A. No, no, no. Different bathrooms. But somehow they have two entrances. No problem entrances. But I remember these people had a kitchen had to go through the bedroom

Q. HOW STRANGE. LET ME ASK YOU THIS, WAS THIS A HOUSE OR APARTMENT THAT USED TO BELONG TO SOMEONE WHO WAS WELL-TO-DO?

A. The city build that for . . .

Q. THE LOW-INCOME PEOPLE, NO?

A. No, no, not the low-income people. They city built later they changed their mind and they put all the low-income people there in one apartment they let shared by two families.

Q. OK, SO PRETTY MUCH IN TRIPOLI THEN YOU WERE LIVING IN AN APARTMENT.

A. Yes.

Q. WITH YOUR PARENTS AND WERE BOTH, OR ALL THREE OF YOU . . .

A. Three.

Q. ALL THREE, SO THERE WERE FOUR BOYS AND . . .

A. No, three boys

Second, unknown person: One died.

A. Let's see, the little one, his name was Where were we living when he was born? Yeah, we were living in same place, right? I can't remember. He was born and he died at an early age. He was very sick. He got some kind of sickness. It was contagious. They took him to the hospital, which was hospital, only sickness, only when contagious sickness. You could not go in and visit him. They took him to hospital, they never took him out. So actually . . .

Q. I THINK GRANDMA SAID IT WAS TUBERCULOSIS . . .

A. No, he had difficulty breathing. He had so-called whooping cough. Then he got something in his stomach ^{SP} in hospital, they call him Hungarian Rouge. Rouge is contagious. We were kids and we could not visit him, only the parents could visit him.

Q. HOW MUCH YOUNGER WAS HE THAN YOU?

A. He was number four. He was maybe 10 years older.

Q. YOU KEEP SAYING HOW YOU GUYS WERE SO POOR? WHY WERE YOU SO POOR?

A. (laughs) I don't know. That's a good question.

Q. WHAT DID GRANDPA DO?

A. I really don't know. He did odd jobs or something.

Second, unknown person: He said he worked in newspaper.

A. Yeah, he got all kinds of odd jobs.

Q. DID GRANDMA WORK, TOO?

A. Well, that I can't remember. She was telling me when I was very, very young, maybe about two, three years old. Actually she has a trade. She's an excellent bookbinder. She was bookbinder, but when she had four children she just couldn't go to work. 'Til she has one or two, yes, but later

Q. HOW MUCH YOUNGER WAS MICKEY THAN YOU?

A. Three years.

Q. THREE YEARS

Second, unknown person: No

A. I was born in 1924 and he was born in 1927. Three years.

Q. HE'D BE 30 YEARS YOUNGER THAN ME. HE'D BE 56 RIGHT NOW.

A. No, when he died, he died at 17, close to 18 and I was 20 years old.

Q. OK, YOU GUYS MOVED FROM TRIPOLI. YOU WERE IN AN APARTMENT THERE. SO EZRA DIED WHEN YOU WERE LIVING THERE.

A. Yes.

Q. AND YOU WERE ABOUT 11 OR 12? YOU MOVED OVER TO . . .

A. Into the . . . Tripoli was in Budapest, too. Outside, outskirts of the . . . move close to the downtown, they used to say . . . This was a long, long street and crossed by curl, famous Hungarian curl around the city and on the west part of the curl was typical Jewish neighborhood . . .

Second, unknown person: Ghetto

A. And the east part was not the Jewish . . .

Q. WHAT KIND OF HOME DID YOU MOVE INTO?

A. This time we were living in apartment with a kitchen and one bedroom, just one bedroom and this was a building . . .

Second, unknown person: A project . . .

A. No, no. This was a typical city apartment home. We were living on the third floor. They close up the door at 10 o'clock sharp each night. If you're not home until 10 o'clock, you have to ring the doorbell and the manager had to come out and you had to pay for it. So people used to rush home to save a dime or something. Well if you went in after midnight, that even cost much more.

Q. WHY DID THEY DO THAT?

A. I don't know. (laughs) This apartment was completely safe. Everybody knew each other. I believe each floor had one 15, 20, I don't know how many, apartments.

Q IS THAT BUILDING STILL THERE?

A. Oh yes. Still there. (laughs) Actually, the building was damaged during the war, though the bombs or something I met somebody in San Francisco, there was Hungarian lady she talking about it and she was lived in the same building.

Q. OH, YOU'RE KIDDING.

A. I'm not kidding. It happened. I met her in the hotel and we talked about and she said I just came back from Hungary. Yeah. And she showed me picture from the house. There's still the same way, they have, how you call it, big, wood holding up one wing so so won't collapse.

Q. (laughs) STILL THERE. FUNNY. DO YOU REMEMBER THE ADDRESS?

A. 74 Dobud .

Q. 74 DOBUD SIDE.

A. Third floor.

Q. THIRD FLOOR. YOU WERE THERE. WHEN WAS IT YOU REALLY STARTED PLAYING SOCCER?

A. OK, That's the time I used to go out, there have a park called .

Q. WHAT WAS IT?

A. Omarsitar Park

Q. OMARSITAR.

A. Yeah.

Second, unknown person: Apple Square.

A. Doesn't matter. We used to hang around there. Opposite to our home, they had a huge empty lot we used to call it "Grund."

Q. GRUND.

A. Grund. Ground. Grund. I mean it was an empty lot.

Q. GRUND IS A GERMAN WORD FOR GROUND?

A. Grund, yes. And lots of soccer went on and people bought a little rubber ball and they used to come to lot and all the time over there. Two blocks away from that and I get to know all the people. And I believe I was 11 1/2 years old. So then the one guy approached me, he said . . . Hungary at this time, they have lots of soccer almost every street has a soccer . . .

Q. EVERY STREET . . .

A. Ah, lots!

Q. YOU MEAN COMMUNITY TEAMS . . .

A. Yes. No. You see, when you're in school, except you are in university and the schools have absolutely no sports program. You boxing, gymnastics, or wrestling or whatever you want to in the private clubs they created some people who paid a fee for that or something like that. Anyhow, they have lots of soccer teams and they have professional soccer teams and every professional team had a so-called amateur team.

Q. SO YOU'RE SAYING EACH OF THESE CLUBS HAD A PROFESSIONAL SOCCER TEAM?

A. No, no. They have professional soccer teams and every also had an amateur teams . . .

Q. WHO SPONSORED THESE PROFESSIONAL SOCCER TEAMS?

A. They make money. They have income. People, people sponsor, whoever, like here. You got the president or something like that.

Q. OK.

A. This time because they want to improve the soccer in Hungary someone came up with the idea of build you own future. That's mean every team, the soccer forced them to have a little league team, which mean regular competition between boys age 12 to 16 . . .

Q. LIKE A LITTLE LEAGUE . . .

A. No, no, no. They play championship, lots of them. Every district has them. Every group they have brought teams. And regular we went to championship. And every team after this, the first team, I'm not sure the professional they could not participate in competition if they don't have any week-to-week team, which mean ages of 12 to 16. After 16 you were in juniors. Sixteen to eighteen. If you was over 18, then if you good enough to make first in line, fine, if not you played the second team or something.

Q. IS THAT STILL THE AMATEUR TEAM?

A. Yes.

Q. OK.

A. And if you were 18, otherwise, it was good for professional, they took you to professional. When you were amateur, you could always plays for the professional team.

But if you were a professional, you could not play for the amateur. You could go up, then you were up and professional . So anyway, one guy approached me and he said, he would be the manager if I would like to play for that team. And I said fine.

Q. HOW OLD WERE YOU THEN?

A. 11 1/2.

Q. OH. OK.

A. This time I was begging to play in organized soccer. We practiced twice a week and every Sunday, except in wintertime, we had a game. So I played for a team, which they used to call , the translation would be Boat Club. This club had a professional team they used to call Nemsén Team, they played in the professional league. Very good team. They traveled a lot all over the world. And this organization mostly by Jewish people. I mean, not necessary, this wasn't a Jewish team, but happened to be the president . . . It was a very good team. One of the top Hungarian professional team and they have amateur team, which they called , see, and the little league carried the same name, . So, this we tried to teach the guys, the 16, in the junior team, they teach them if they good enough, so they can use the first team. THIS was

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the idea. They're looking in the schools, they have their
own .

Q. JUST A LITTLE BIT OFF THE SUBJECT, COMPLETELY OFF THE
SUBJECT AS A MATTER OF FACT, WE'LL GET BACK TO THIS. GRANDPA
PLAYED SOCCER FOR A WHILE DIDN'T HE?

A. Yes, he did.

Q. AND DO YOU REMEMBER, WELL, WHAT HAPPENED?

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A. I believe my father So as a young boy I really
lived for it. On Wednesday I was thinking about the Sunday
games could not concentrate on anything. I loved that.
There was practice. I remember played soccer team as a
little boy, and I see him, I don't know, a couple of time .
. . .

Q. YOU SAW HIM PLAY?

A. He was a goalie. What happened to him. The story is he
was suspended. He could never play. He was suspended because
of a problem with one of the referees.

Q. I THINK YOU TOLD ME HOW HE BEAT UP . . .

613
A. So, anyhow, he was suspended and it was a big deal because he was a Jew. If he would not be Jewish, they would have given amnesty. So they didn't give him amnesty. They let him play, but he never could play in the competition, only in the exhibition games. And then he wanted to play and which was very difficult. He used to come and watch me. Not all the time, but

Q WHERE YOU THE ONLY ONE AMONG YOUR BROTHERS WHO REALLY PLAYED SOCCER?

A. Yes.

Q. WHEN WAS HE SUSPENDED, HE WAS WHAT, 24?

A. Something like that, 22.

Q. SO YOU WERE YOUNG THEN . . .

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A. Very young. I only thing I know about it is they tried to lift his suspension some newspaper came up to our home and talked to him. I remember this. But like I said, he never could play, only in exhibition. He never got full amnesty. They just him. Period .

Q. DID YOU EVER GO TO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL? YOU KNEW YOU WERE A JEW BECAUSE EVERYBODY TOLD YOU . . .

A. No, I have to go, have to go. Like I said, twice a week, in every school and . Over there it was different. If you don't make your grade, you cannot advance. You have to repeat the same classes. Let's say you was in the third grade and you were one F, you failed. Over there, they say five. They grade one, two, three, four, five. If you have one five on your report card, you couldn't advance. You had to repeat the same thing until you pass. If you were stupid enough you might stay in the third grade five, six years, they'd never let you pass. I was not a good regular student, but . . .

Q. BUT THAT WAS JUST GENERAL JEWISH EDUCATION, WASN'T IT?

A. Yes. Right.

Q. BUT DID YOU EVER GO TO HEBREW SCHOOL?

A. No, no, no, no.

Q. THIS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WAS REQUIRED BY THE . . .

A. By the law.

Q. AND SO AFTER YOUR REGULAR HOURS OF SCHOOL, I GUESS THIS IS WHAT I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND. TWICE A WEEK YOU WENT BACK TO YOUR CLASSROOM SEPARATELY TO STUDY WITH A RABBI?

A. Exactly.

Q. OK. HOW ABOUT AT HOME. I KNOW GRANDMA'S NOT JEWISH, BUT .

. .

A. At home I don't know anything about. Actually, I learned about Judaism much more often after the, during the war.

Q. SO YOUR FAMILY WASN'T RELIGIOUS IN ANY WAY AT ALL?

A. No.

Q IT WAS AS IF THERE WAS NO RELIGION.

A. No, no. But I know who I was. The people let me know who I was.

Q. SO THAT'S AS FAR AS THAT WENT. HOW ABOUT POLITICALLY? WHERE GRANDMA OR GRANDPA INCLINED POLITICALLY IN ANY WAY ONE WAY OR THE OTHER?

A. No.

Q. WHAT I MEAN IS, DID THEY TAKE MUCH ACTIVE INTEREST IN POLITICS OR WHAT WAS GOING ON?

A. They have no politic over there. They have a governor. I really don't know about . . . I wasn't that much interested and I not even know how they electing their representative. They have a Senate I don't know who is elected

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End of Tape 1, Side A

Beginning of Tape 1, Side B

A. But like I tell you, around the '30s, is when you're growing up you are this thing is really hurt. Because everywhere you go is Jew, Jew, Jew, Jew, Jew, and no good. When they blame us Jew and you come to the point when you try to hide your identify. You don't want to tell. I don't say deny it, but if you don't have to tell anyone, don't tell, don't tell. Because you hear it so much, you really believe it you blame yourself because you're Jewish. and naturally, they progressed for us to the war is getting worst and worst and worst.

Q. OK. BE MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT THAT, PERSONALLY. WHAT STARTED HAPPENING THAT STARTED AFFECTING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY DIRECTLY?

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A. I can tell you like, we talk about the soccer and us living for it. I always wanted to be a good soccer player, most probably professional. Living like that. I never smoked, never dranked, stay away from the dancing . .

Q WHY?

A. I don't know. I believed is no good for you. If you mix up with girls, you see.. .

Q. OK KIND OF SOCIALIZING. YOU ASSOCIATING DANCING WITH SOCIALIZING . . .

012
A. They used to come with the dance schools, the kids used to on the weekend. I never went. And I was almost 20, 20, I don't know how old I never danced. I used to go with my friend and listen to music, but I never danced. Stay away from drinking, no smoking. I was the latest 10 o'clock in bed, every night.

Q. REAL SPARTAN . . .

A. No, no. The story not that When I reached 16 years old and I couldn't play for anymore in the minor league, I became a junior. So the junior league was 16 to

18. This time they came all kinds of laws in Hungary, the so-called Jewish law, that's mean the Jews cannot work offices. I mean, this time if somebody was working in the offices intellectual, respected jobs that's the way they were thinking over there. This people who was goldsmith, or tailor, or shoemaker or plumber, just a working stiff. The people was respected was working in offices. The so-called intellectuals, to make it short . . .

Q. NO, NO DON'T MAKE IT SHORT . . .

A. No, no, not to make it short. So they said Jewish law, they used to come . . .

Q. CAN YOU REMEMBER WHAT YEAR THAT WAS? YOU SAID YOU WERE 16? 1938?

A. This was . . . Yes, 1938.

Q. 1938, 1940?

A. Yes. When Hitler came.

Q. THAT'S ABOUT 1930 . . .

A. OK. Jew could not go to universities. They have to leave. Jews cannot hold any office jobs, only manual labor kinds of

work. The Jews cannot participate in any sporting event. They cannot even go to watch sporting events. And they cannot be members any sporting club. That law came in winter time and this team I used to play like I said with they were dissolved because all the Jewish law so they just give it up. But I some team which was , a suburb of Budapest, they have a factory. There's a team, at the factory a team.

Q. CHEKBOUND?

A. Chekbound, yeah. Big factories and they had a factory. They used to make clothing and they have excellent soccer organization and from my club they take all the players. And this happened to be I played for them one year in the junior division. They have first, second, third, four division. And the winners go up and the losers go down.

Q. CHANGING AROUND IN DIVISIONS . . .

A. Right.

Q. DIFFERENT TEAMS, YOU MEAN.

A. Yeah, different teams. And we were in the first division. Excellent team. I really enjoyed that. They really liked me over there. So I happened to be in wintertime, naturally

we used to practice indoor in the gym because keep
 you shape we used to practice. It happened to be this time
 they came up with the Jewish law and I used to go out twice
 a week in the afternoon practicing and the coach told the
 team, he said, "It's too bad that these Gene can't be
 with us anymore." Even I went to They
 didn't believe it because I didn't look like Jewish. I
 didn't have long . I could pass as Gentile very easy and
 I did. Many times. This is probably what saved my whole
 life. He said , "No, No, he be kidding." Because they really
 liked me. And they didn't believe 'til the first spring and
 they couldn't dress up. Everybody came up to me, how sorry
 they are. This was one of the . You couldn't go if
 I wanted to go . You have to wear the Jewish star in
 the street.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER HOW OLD YOU WERE THEN?

A. This time, I was 17, 18. All different kinds of laws.

Q. GRANDPA'S JOB, WAS IT AFFECTED AT ALL BY ANY OF THESE
 JEWISH LAWS?

A. This time, he was in labor camp. He was in Russia.

Q. OK. WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME ABOUT HOW HE WAS TAKEN AWAY?

A. Ok. Let's go back. This time by Hungarian law, you have to join twice a week., every male, not females, every male. Soldier training . . . obligatory.

Q. OH, PRE-SOLDIER TRAINING . . .

A. Pre-soldier training. Over there, they don't call you when you are 18 years old. They call you when you are 21.

Q. OH, MILITARY SERVICE.

A. Military service. And you have to serve 3 years, 21 to 24. Except if you can't pass the physical. If you can't pass the physical, is tragedy. Everybody say, "Oh look at him, the cripple." One guy killed himself because he couldn't go Army. That was the stupid Hungarian intellect. Didn't go in the Army, killed himself. especially in the provinces. Not in the city. The city doesn't give a damn. But in the provinces you couldn't pass the physical, it was a tragedy. He killed himself. Anyway. And they decided to start the para-military training when you were 12 years old. You have to go twice a week and to teach you how to march, how to turn around. Every year When you reached 21 years you were perfect soldier. You know almost everything. This was obligatory. If you missed one, one day, the next day the police showed up and them take you in.

Q. EVEN IF YOU'RE SICK OR SOMETHING?

A. Well, if you sick and you can prove it, but you have to prove it. If you just missing one. The next day the police are looking for you to take you in. I see lots of guys jumping out the window when they say the police coming. OK. I was like that. And suddenly, I believe I was 14 years old, or something like that, no this has to be 16 we used to teach by regular, professional soldiers . . .

Q. YOU WERE TAUGHT BY PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS . . .

A. Yes. They used to come up and this was our leaders.

Q. RIGHT.

A. OK. One winter night I remember they come to gym they

Q. THE WHAT?

A. The gym.

Q. YOU USED TO GET MEAT AT THE GYM?

A. At the gym.

Q. FOR YOUR TRAINING.

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A. Winter. Summertime also. the order of the day. Which according to the Hungarian minister of the defense, the Jews is not trustable to carry guns and this case not trustable them to the Army so they have to leave. Actually, what he did, he called everybody by name. Like roll call. And he said this over there who was Jewish and this corner is the

Q. YOU MEAN HE CALLED YOU BY NAME ?

A. Yes. They separated . . .

Q.

A. Exactly. They separated. Roll call. In town he reads the order and this group is Jewish, according to law they not trustable to carry guns or rifle or something don't anymore in the same group. But also obligation to the nation they have to serve but not carry rifle but hard labor. You have to carry shovel, wheelbarrow or something. You have to practice as soldier, digging holes or something instead . .

Second, unknown voice: Cleaning toilets . . .

Q. COMMUNISTS?

A. communists. That happened and I was present. They have thousand groups. I don't know.

Q. IT WASN'T YOUR GROUP. SO WHAT HAPPENED WITH GRANDPA, THEN?

A. So here again, the Hungarians entered the war as allies to the Germans. They mobilize everybody. First they start at 21, then 20, then 19, the 18 and even those over age, 26, 27. And I believe they called everybody into the service. And my father was not eligible so have to go to labor camp. So they called him in the labor camp.

Q. SO SIMILAR TO WHAT THEY MADE YOU DO HERE, DIG HOLES PRE-MILITARY TRAINING SINCE HE WAS OF MILITARY AGE TO BE A SOLDIER HE WAS INSTEAD OF GOING WITH THE ARMY, THESE MEN WERE PUT INTO LABOR CAMPS. WHAT EXACTLY DID THAT MEAN TO BE PUT INTO A LABOR CAMP? DID IT MEAN . . .

A. Labor camps were under the Army's supervision.

Q. INSTEAD OF GOING TO WORK EVERYDAY YOU WENT TO THIS LABOR CAMP?

A. No, no. They take him into the service, but instead of having a regular military service, he has to work.

but instead of carrying guns or shooting cannons or handling empty aircraft, he has to work, building roads, building airports.

Q. HE WAS WORKING IN THIS LABOR CAMP IN HUNGARY?

A. No, no, no. They called him This time the Hungarians and Germans were in Russia. They were in .

Q. IN THE RUSSIAN FRONT?

A. Yes. And they took him over there working in the forest.

Q. AND THAT WAS WHAT HE DID WITH HIS FRIEND IN ISRAEL.

A. Exactly. Hold on a second. He was close to Kiev . . .

Q. KIEV?

A. Yes. He Somehow after three or four years they all come back. I don't know. They have a new Hungary minister of defense. He didn't like the Germans and he tried to pull all the Hungarian troops back but he managed to get all the Jewish people in the labor camp to come back. So they come home. When they come home after a couple of months, they recalled them again.

This time I have to go in, 19 years old and coming into the labor camp.

Q. OK. LET'S BACK UP NOW. WHEN GRANDPA WAS CALLED INTO MILITARY SERVICE, WHICH FOR HIM WAS LABOR CAMP, HOW OLD WERE YOU?

A. 17.

Q. SO YOU WERE IN YOUR JUNIOR LEAGUE, THEN?

A. Yes.

Q. AND YOU WERE AROUND 17?

A. Yes.

Q. SO THIS WAS WHAT 1941, MAYBE? '40, '41?

A. Yes.

Q. SO HE WAS GONE.

A. He was gone.

Q. SO WHAT DID YOU GUYS DO FOR MONEY?

A. This time I was finished school and I entered apprentice program. In Hungary it was customary the boys who finished the school mandatory . . .

Q. MANDATORY EDUCATION . . .

A. Mandatory. You could enter higher education, the university or something, or you learned a trade. Right. to learn the trade they have lots of individual tailors, watchmakers, shoemakers, craftsmen and this is very profitable for the owner. he was a master. He had a master degree. By law if you want to open your own shop, first you have to be an apprentice. You have to have five years, no three years apprentice and then you post this and you go to school and then you make a contract with your master. He's going to teach you three years everything that has to be teach in the trade and you have to attend trade school twice a week.

Q. WHILE YOUR WORKING?

A. While you're working. Yes. And you go in the afternoon. And after 3 years when your time is expired, you have to go to the union .

Q. HOW DO YOU SAY IT AGAIN?

A. Saksaidit. Every trade has their own organization. They send you to a different shop and that guy grade you how much you know. You have to work a whole day over there and he is going to grade you to the trade union. And you go to trade union and they ask you questions. And you pass this one and you're journeyman. You got higher wages. You're journeyman and you know a trade. And then you have 5 years journeyman and you're eligible to apply for master degree and again you have to go through a test you have to know about . If you don't go through these procedures you can't open your own shop. That's the way journeyman. They know what they're talking about. They really it doesn't work over there. They learned it right from the beginning.

Q. IN A VERY SYSTEMATIC WAY . . .

A. Right. So I entered a three year's program. the first year, they gave me, I don't know \$5 a week.

Q. AND WHAT KIND OF PROGRAM DID YOU ENTER?

A. I was a metal polisher and galvanizer . . .

Q. GALVANIZER . . .

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A. Galvanizer, metal polisher, both. They have a shop that had the boss who owned the shop and we have over there about two, four, six journeymen. He was working. His wife was working. His son was working. And we have two or three apprentices. He pay only the minimal and we was working 50, 52 hours a week.

Q. CHEAP LABOR . . .

A. Yeah. Cheap Labor. And the second year, he had to pay more and third year he had to pay more and then you're finished. Naturally, he teach you everything .
You have to give me more money or something. You make good money. Regular working was work 10 or so day and half a day on Saturday. We used to work 8 to 6, one hour lunchtime and Saturday 8 to 1 or 8 to 12.

Q. IT WASN'T REALLY A PROBLEM YOUR BEING JEWISH TO GET INTO . . .

A. He was a Jew. (laughs)

Q. BUT HE STILL HAD HIS OWN BUSINESS AND EVERYTHING?

A. I believe his sons was to labor camp and I believe he never come back or something. After a while I went to visit this place and I find his wife only and one

of his sons. I believe one of his sons did come back. So I really don't know. He closed up during the war.

Q. BUT AT THE TIME HE WAS THERE IT WAS STILL OPEN?

A. Yes, and I finished it.

Q. SO YOU WERE THERE THREE YEARS?

A. I was three years there and I became a journeyman. But this time situation was so bad

Q. WAIT A SECOND. WAIT A SECOND. THERE'S A LOT I DON'T KNOW. YOU HAVE TO BE VERY SPECIFIC. SO WHEN YOU STARTED YOUR APPRENTICESHIP YOU WERE 17?

A. No, no. 15.

Q. FIFTEEN YEARS OLD . . .

A. I was 18 when I finished.

Q. SO YOU FINISHED ALL YOUR MANDATORY EDUCATION, YOUR HIGH SCHOOL, BY THE TIME YOU WERE 15? IS THAT THE USUAL AGE PEOPLE FINISH?

A. Yes.

Q. THAT YOUNG?

A. That young. Eight years. That's the mandatory.

Q. JUST EIGHT YEARS?

A. Yes, right.

Q. OK. THAT WOULD BE LIKE THE EQUIVALENT TO A SOPHOMORE IN HIGH SCHOOL HERE? I MEAN BY THE TIME YOU'RE 15 HERE . . . HOW OLD DO YOU START SCHOOL IN HUNGARY?

Second voice: 6

A. I don't know.

Second voice: 6

A. Figure it out. Figure it out. If you have eight years . . .

.

Q. EIGHT YEARS, ALRIGHT, SO YOU'RE SEVEN YEARS OLD . . .

A. Seven years, yeah, six years.

Q. OK. YOU FINISHED YOUR EIGHT YEARS OF SCHOOL. YOU WENT INTO THIS APPRENTICESHIP WITH THIS METAL POLISHER . . .

A. Yes.

Q. AND YOU FINISHED YOUR THREE YEARS THERE. YOU BECAME A JOURNEYMAN?

A. Right.

Q. NOW, IN THOSE THREE YEARS YOU WERE AN APPRENTICE THERE, THINGS STARTED GETTING . . . THE SITUATION WAS DETERIORATING. AND IN THE MEANTIME, AS YOU WERE AN APPRENTICE, GRANDPA WENT AWAY TO LABOR CAMP.

A. Uh huh.

Q. OK. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR BROTHER, MICKEY? OR IS THIS LATER ON?

A. Oh yeah, my brother Mickey . . .

Q. MAYBE WE'D BETTER WAIT FOR THAT . . .

A. No, no. My brother Mickey was . . . and he went to school and got odd jobs in summertime. He loved to go swimming and all that and he was sport-minded guy. Very

athletic. And he got odd jobs. My mother my father
 wasn't home years and years and support the family he had to
 do all kinds of odd jobs. All the little money that I
 earned I give that to her. Only thing I so I can
 go streetcar to play soccer. If I wanted to go to
 soccer to watch a game, then I had to jump over the fence.
 That's not so funny. Lots of young kids I used to remember a
 little boy used to hang around the big stadium and somebody
 go could you please take me in and they have a rule
 to take his son so they let him through. So he said this is
 my son and they let him through. (laughs) That
 was lots of fun. Going to the bicycle races. Going to the
 movies.

(Phone rings, interrupting interview)

Q. WHERE WERE YOU?

A. I was talking about boys and not having money. I was not
 the only one. I had lots of friends to the movie houses and
 the show was so bad try to sneak in or force the
 door out, things like that. It was lots of fun. Hanging on
 the streetcar.

Q. HANGING ON THE STREET CAR?

A. Yeah. I mean free ride and what do you call it when the cop come you have to jump off. Things like that. Just kids.

Q. OK. GRANDPA WAS AWAY AT LABOR CAMP, SO YOU . . .

A. OK. Let's go back there. So all the money I earned, I told you, I give to my mother. Here again, I have to go back again. When we were still in school, my brother and myself summertime, we used to go early in the morning to the market summertime, lots of Hungarians used to buy lots of tomatoes, prunes, and they used to make tomato sauce at home. Marmalade. And they used to buy heavy . . . We used to ask them, "Do you need some help?" baskets and we used to make a few pennies. Some days . . . They used to do that every summer. All kinds of odd jobs. I don't know how, but we just went by. We have lots of hungry nights. When we ask for a piece of bread and anything for dinner. You have a choice. You eat it now or you eat it later. (laughs)

Q. SO THIS WAS WHEN GRANDPA WAS . . .

A. Yeah.

Q. AND AND DID A LOT OF ODD JOBS AND YOU WERE AN APPRENTICE? AND YOU GUYS ALL BROUGHT THE MONEY HOME?

A. Yes.

Q. YOU DID WHAT YOU COULD WITH THAT?

A. What we could, yeah.

Q. 'CUZ WHILE HE WAS GONE LABORING FOR HIS COUNTRY, HE WASN'T GETTING ANY PAY FOR IT OTHER THAN HIS KEEP . . .

A. No.

Q. HE WAS STUCK UP BY KIEV?

A. Yes. He was very deep, very close to Kiev, yes.

Q. WHEN HE WAS TAKEN AWAY, IT WAS ABOUT '41, DID YOU SAY?

A. '41? Yes.

Q. 1941. SO THEN YOU WENT THROUGH YOUR APPRENTICESHIP AND THEN AFTER YOU FINISHED THAT YOU WERE 18?

A. When I finished, like I said, inflation, you just couldn't buy nothing with your money. No clothing, food was nothing absolutely couldn't buy nothing. first paycheck was no such a thing as check, but I remember

I had the money but I don't know what to do with it. If I wanted to buy a shirt or a

fake shirt you couldn't buy it. No. No.

Disappeared.

Q. WHY WAS THAT?

A. Because the war.

Q. THE WAR EFFORT?

A. I don't know. This was . . .

Q. YOU WERE 18 YEARS OLD WHEN YOU FINISHED YOUR APPRENTICESHIP. BY THIS TIME IT'S '43, '44?

A. No, '42.

Q. IT WAS 1942 WHEN YOU WERE 18 . . .

A. It was end of '42. Alright, here again, like I said there were lots of good friends, all Gentiles. I hardly ever Jewish friends because I was not in that kind of neighborhood. but this time, they couldn't pay the rent in the so we had to move again, somewhere else, even a worse neighborhood.

Q. WHAT WAS THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

A. I forgot?

Q. WHEN DID YOU MOVE?

End of Tape 1, Side B

Beginning Tape 2, Side A

I was 18, 19 years old at this time.

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Wellisch: Okay. Now, let's go back -- I told you about it -- when the one guy told me I cannot play any more soccer because I am Jewish.

Interviewer: You were finishing the junior league?

Wellisch: No, I was not finished yet. But I had lots of good friends that know me and send me to play soccer. And one guy approached me and said, "He play for the hospital team."

And this hospital team was into different (inaudible) organization by law. This (inaudible) was this time, but even before they kept Jews, by law, Jews cannot be members. Like you might have this club where Jews cannot be members.

Interviewer: I hope not anymore.

Wellisch: No, no, no. I mean --

Interviewer: You mean at one time.

Wellisch: No, no, no. I'm not talking about now. And that guy told me, he said, "Listen, Gene, I know you." He said, "Why don't you can play with us?" He said they not ask him anything because they know the Jews cannot (inaudible).

So, he take me to his manager and this team was (inaudible) hospital, one of the biggest hospitals. They was devoted to charity.

Interviewer: Do you remember the name of the hospital?

1 Wellisch: I believe this was San-fish-wan.

2 Interviewer: What?

3 Wellisch: St. Stephen.

4 Interviewer: Stephen.

5 Wellisch: I believe it was one of the biggest city hospitals.
6 Everything was there. I remember he took me to the office and
7 told that guy, said, "Hey, here's that guy, he's excellent
8 soccer player. Want if you sign him up."
9

10 The guy said, "Okay." He said, "Come Sunday. I am going
11 to put you on the second team." Every Sunday the first and
12 the second team used to play.

13 And my friend said, "No. Why don't you put him on the
14 first team?"

15 He asked me how much expert I have in soccer.

16 I said, "Oh, I used to play in the street."
17

18 Interviewer: (laughing) Good.

19 Wellisch: I couldn't tell him. I tell me name, everything.
20 And he told said, "What you are talking about that guy never
21 played for the City."

22 He said, "Believe me, that guy is good."

23 So, anyhow, he said, "Okay. You come on Sunday and you
24 going to play on second team. So, on Sunday on the half time
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1 he pulled me out. "Hey, you not going to play on the second
2 team. You going to play on the first team."
3 Interviewer: (Laughs)
4 Wellisch: So, everything went beautiful. We play until one
5 day my friend comes and says, "Gene, don't show up anymore.
6 That guy know who you are. He is not going to make you any
7 trouble. He likes you." But he said, "Don't go near to him.
8 He said he let you go. He give you the release. But don't
9 you ever show up because he's afraid of something happening.
10 to him.
11
12 And so here I am. Here I am. I have a regiment release
13 so I could go anywhere to play, if I want to. Because if
14 someone asks where you went to play, here's my paper.
15 (Laughing) So, I know how I lined up (inaudible) a factory
16 team and the factory team they play on Sunday like
17 Interviewer: These were all amateur teams, right?
18 Wellisch: Amateurs. This was Hut-ter and Let-thair soccer
19 team.
20 Interviewer: What were their names?
21 Wellisch: Hut-ter and Let-thair.
22 Interviewer: Huttel and --
23 Wellisch: Hutter, H-u-t-t-e-r.
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1 Interviewer: Hutter and --

2 Wellisch: Hutter and Lever, L-e-v-e-r.

3 Interviewer: Hutter and Lever.

4 Wellisch: Yeah. I know they have a big factory and my friend
5 took over there and asked me where I played and I said, "Here,
6 I have my release." He said, "Okay, you come out for the
7 practice." So, I went out to the practice. He said, "Okay.
8 We sign you." And they give me a job at the factory.

9
10 And here I was working the factory under, my name, but
11 they did not know about my religion. The first day --

12 Interviewer: Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Before you go
13 on, let me just put this in perspective then. This is while
14 you were still working as an apprentice then?

15 Wellisch: No, no. I was quit.

16 Interviewer: This is after --

17 Wellisch: I just quit practicing. I was workless.

18 Interviewer: Okay. After you finished the apprenticeship,
19 there was no point going on, it was just too hard?

20 Wellisch: No, no. Yeah.

21 Interviewer: At the end of 1942.

22 Wellisch: Right.

23 Interviewer: So this, now a little over 40 years ago that --
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25

1 you were playing, while you were playing soccer then for the
2 hospital team, you were released from the first team --
3 Wellisch: Yeah.
4 Interviewer: Well, you never got to play for that first team?
5 Wellisch: They did play.
6 Interviewer: Well, you practiced with them but you never got
7 to play first string
8 Wellisch: No, I'm talking about the junior team.
9 Interviewer: Right.
10 Wellisch: Yeah, the time I went to the hospital team which
11 was an amateur team. But not junior, a regular team.
12 Interviewer: Oh, a regular amateur team?
13 Wellisch: Right, right. Because I got good enough to play
14 for it to they took me.
15 Interviewer: So you were on that hospital amateur team?
16 Wellisch: Right, the first team.
17 Interviewer: That normally doesn't accept Jews.
18 Wellisch: Yes.
19 Interviewer: But you got released from there so you were
20 picked up by this factory team?
21 Wellisch: Right.
22 Interviewer: Who not only, you were playing, was it for their
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1 amateur team you were playing?

2 Wellisch: The first team on the factory, they were all
3 amateurs, right.

4 Interviewer: And they gave you a job in the factory?

5 Wellisch: Well, I went over there and they see I am a good
6 player and say, "What you do?" I say, "I am just looking for
7 a job." So they give me a job. And the first day --

8 Interviewer: When was this, now?

9 Wellisch: This was in 1943.

10 Interviewer: About what time of the year?

11 Wellisch: This was in springtime.

12 Interviewer: Okay.

13 Wellisch: I then took practicing first and he look at me and
14 said, "Okay. We sign you."

15 Interviewer: All right.

16 Wellisch: It was no problem. I don't have to go to the
17 doctor. Usually you have to go to the doctor for examination.
18 Because I have (inaudible) on this team he said, "Bless you,
19 you can go play over there. So this was a passport to freedom
20 I should think.

21 And the first day I work in the factory I find a girl
22 over there I know very well. We used to live in Tripoli, the

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1 same place. And she look at me, look at me, and she doesn't
2 say anything. She was nice enough, nice enough, doesn't tell
3 nobody who I was. (Laughing)

4 Interviewer: (Laughing)

5 Wellisch: I mean, you have good people, a few. She could
6 hand me some problems. She said, "Gene, you working?" I
7 said, "Yes."

8
9 I didn't told anything but she know right now and she
10 doesn't say anything.

11 And I was very well liked over.

12 Interviewer: No other Jewish people were working over there?

13 Wellisch: No, they could not have work over there. Besides
14 that, this was --

15 Interviewer: Which was the general situation of the Jews in
16 Hungary at the time, then -- or in Budapest then? Okay. You
17 were working in the spring of 1948?

18 Wellisch: In 1948, yes.

19 Interviewer: In the spring of 1943, what were Jews limited
20 to do then, as far as you know?

21 Wellisch: Okay. They could get all kind, whatever they could
22 find. I don't know. But this factory was working for the
23 government, for the army.
24
25

1 Interviewer: Oh.

2 Wellisch: I would never get (inaudible)

3 Interviewer: Oh.

4 Wellisch: And this factory was through and the guy that was
5 director of factory was member of the Hungarian --

6 Interviewer: Arrow Cross?

7 Wellisch: Yes, he was. And

8 Interviewer: Oh, my God.

9 Wellisch: And funny thing, he liked me so much he
10 (inaudible) of me.

11 Interviewer: (Laughing)

12 Wellisch: He used to come look for me in the warehouse
13 (inaudible).

14 Interviewer: The factory owner?

15 Wellisch: No, he was the director.

16 Interviewer: The director. But he was a member of the
17 Arrow Cross?

18 Wellisch: Yes, he was one. He was wearing the uniform.

19 Interviewer: Oh, my God.

20 Wellisch: So, and here I was. And one day I was, let's say
21 I played for the team and they was, they really liked me.
22 The chairman of the team, I can't remember his name, but a
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1 fine fellow he was, he was a social democrat.

2 Interviewer: Meaning?

3 Wellisch: Meaning he was a Leftist.

4 Interviewer: Which was as bad as being Jewish, wasn't it?

5 Wellisch: Something like that. But he was a gentile.

6 So, politically he was (inaudible). He was a timekeeper. He
7 was a manager. And the soccer field kept us very close.

8 (Inaudible). And I got a notice I had to go into the
9 (inaudible).
10

11 Interviewer: Okay. So, in other words, this was pretty much
12 like your being grafted into the Army --

13 Wellisch: Right.

14 Interviewer: -- when you come of age?

15 Wellisch: Right. (Inaudible). It's before everybody have to
16 go register, all the Jews. This time you went on the street,
17 how you say --
18

19 Interviewer: A line?

20 Wellisch: All the Jews in the city have to register. You was
21 lining up and people come (inaudible) with the Hungarians to
22 pass by (inaudible) Yeah. They used to make (inaudible).
23 And you got a passport or something. And they got a huge red
24 letter cross. And you got to keep this so they know who you
25

1 are wherever you go.

2 Interviewer: These are identification papers?

3 Wellisch: Yeah.

4 Interviewer: You have to carry them on you all the time?

5 Wellisch: You have to carry on. And you have to have them
6 when you register.

7 Interviewer: Now, wait a minute. You said this was a couple
8 of years before --

9 Wellisch: They (inaudible) it.

10 Interviewer: Now, wait a minute. As far as this registration,

11 Wellisch: Yes.

12 Interviewer: You guys were living where, now?

13 Wellisch: Dachau. No, no, no. We was living at this place.
14 We have to move. We moved from Do-gul-storf to -- I can't
15 remember.

16 Interviewer: That's what you never finished telling me, where
17 you moved to.

18 Wellisch: Yeah. We moved to places, a couple places.

19 Interviewer: Yeah, but --

20 Wellisch: I can't remember.

21 Interviewer: (Inaudible).

22 Wellisch: Wait, wait. I thought something. No, no, no, no,
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1 no. Now I think about it. I tell you why. Because when I
2 was finishing apprentice, I have a boy who work with me. A
3 good friend, he was, apprentice together. And he told me, he
4 said, "Don't you be stupid. Don't work. There's so much
5 work. Now I think about it, you can go anywhere to work."

6 So, now I think about it. I left, I left my boss. I
7 went to work in a factory, we was 50, 60 people, bicycle
8 factory. Now I think about it, I used to work over there as
9 a jewel maker.
10

11 Interviewer: Doing the same work?

12 Wellisch: Doing the same work, yes, as a jewel maker. The
13 same work. And Ha-vas said that I needed some papers because
14 I didn't have any papers. So I went to the secretary with
15 that and I told her I needed some papers and she (inaudible).
16 She said she would get me a paper with my picture on it, my
17 name, my father's name, my occupation, where I live, where I
18 work. But she left out religion which was very helpful at
19 this time. Okay. We jump back and forth, back and forth,
20 back and forth. Okay. Why I tell you it was very helpful
21 was because in 1943, March, I remember it was Sunday, I had
22 to go out and play soccer. And they come in the morning
23 and walk through the plaza over there and see all German
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soldiers.

Interviewer: March 19 -- that was '44, wasn't it?

Wellisch: '43.

Interviewer: '43.

Wellisch: '43. So, the Germans completely occupied Hungary and they needed a ring around Budapest. So, anybody wanted to go in or out the city limit have to go through the (inaudible). The streetcar have to stop. The police came out looking for (inaudible). And the purpose was they doesn't want them to leaving the city (inaudible). And anytime I went somewhere, let's say you went to Buda or I-va or Cheka (inaudible) they always came to you ask papers. And I have these papers the factory where I was working with everything on and anytime the guards looked at me talked to me, look at the picture, they always give it back to me. They never ever asked my religion. Lucky. Good-looking.

Interviewer: (Laughing).

Wellisch: (Inaudible). Because I was working in this factory. And I see the Germans in March. In April, exactly one month later the same year we have the first air raid, daytime. The army came and bombed the city.

Interviewer: God.

1 Wellisch: And I remember I was in the factory in the bunker,
2 bunker, in the basement, and when this whole thing was over
3 not everybody was (inaudible) at 1:00 in the afternoon. They
4 come everyday, exactly 11:00 or 12:00, same time, boom, boom,
5 boom. You know that. (Inaudible). So, anyhow, when I went
6 home, I tried to go home, but no streetcar --

7 Interviewer: This is when you were working in which factory --

8 Wellisch: In the --

9 Interviewer: -- the soap factory?

10 Wellisch: This is when I was working in the bicycle factory.
11 And they remember I want to go home and they should ask no
12 streetcar, we don't know what happen. And I did not have far
13 to walk home or something. Everything smoking, smoking. And
14 where I was living, I just couldn't recognize the whole
15 neighborhood because some of the houses just completely
16 disappeared. And I don't know what happened. My mother was
17 seldom home. But fortunately, (inaudible) the neighbors a
18 couple of blocks was home.

19 Interviewer: You were just lucky.

20 Wellisch: Yeah. And I don't know why at this place, they
21 have no more more over there.

22 Interviewer: At the bicycle factory?

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1 Wellisch: Right. There was no more business. There was
2 nobody -- I don't know (inaudible).
3 Interviewer: All right. Where were you playing soccer at this
4 time?
5 Wellisch: At this soap factory. And I asked them --
6 Interviewer: Oh, you were working at this bicycle factory
7 and you were playing on the soccer team at the soap factory?
8 Wellisch: Right, right.
9 Interviewer: As an amateur, though?
10 Wellisch: Right, right, every Saturday.
11 Interviewer: Okay.
12 Wellisch: And I asked them if they can give me a job. And
13 they give me a job.
14 Interviewer: At the soap factory.
15 Wellisch: Right.
16 Interviewer: Since there was no more work --
17 Wellisch: Here again time I got my notice I have to go into
18 the service, the military.
19 Interviewer: Okay. Normally it would be just calling you to
20 duty.
21 Wellisch: Yes.
22 Interviewer: But you being Jewish, like you said before,
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1 your grandfather, (inaudible) labor camp --

2 Wellisch: My age group comes to drafted, you see. The
3 Hungarian army first takes 21 years old. Then they went over
4 to who was in the army before, they called them. Then they
5 went down to the younger, 20, then 19, then 18.

6 Interviewer: And you were how old then?

7 Wellisch: I was 19.

8 Interviewer: You were 19.

9 Wellisch: So, my turn came around.

10 Interviewer: This was 19 --

11 Wellisch: '43, '43. So, I got my notice I have to go. I have
12 a game this Sunday. So, I have argument with my mother. I
13 would like to go out to play the game. She said, "No, I don't
14 want you to go."
15

16 Interviewer: Do you remember what day it was?

17 Wellisch: I don't know. It was a nice sunny day, I know.
18 It was a Saturday.
19

20 Interviewer: It was Saturday, a nice sunny Saturday in the
21 spring of --

22 Wellisch: This was in -- no, this was not spring. It was in
23 the summertime.

24 Interviewer: Summertime.

25

1 Wellisch: This must be in May or June. So, anyhow, I left.
2 The destination I have to report.

3 Interviewer: Which was what?

4 Wellisch: No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. I have to report --
5 I can't remember where I have to report. I can't remember.
6 So, anyhow, I come back to that later.

7 Interviewer: Okay.

8
9 Wellisch: And so then I have the notice, after I left, and
10 when the guy see I didn't show up for the game, he says to
11 my mother, "Where is Gene?"

12 She told him, "Gene just have to go."

13 He said, "Why he so stupid? Why he doesn't tell me? I
14 could have helped him."

15 And mother says, "It doesn't matter." (Inaudible).

16 Interviewer: What was the argument you were having with
17 grandmother?

18 Wellisch: Because I wanted to play the game and she said,
19 "No, you go."

20 Interviewer: If you were to go play the game you might not
21 (inaudible).

22 Wellisch: I will be late. No, I would be gone, but I will be
23 late.
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25

1 Interviewer: You might not have gone, though.

2 Wellisch: No, no, you have to go.

3 Interviewer: All right.

4 Wellisch: But anyhow, anytime I -- you have to report -- oh,
5 I know. You have to report and they took us to Mo-sho-ya-va.

6 This was (inaudible) which all that people they called over
7 to this was close to the Austrian border. And this time --

8 Interviewer: Which part of Hungary was this, north, south,
9 east?
10

11 Wellisch: It's west.

12 Interviewer: West Hungary.

13 Wellisch: West. It's close to the Austrian border.

14 Interviewer: Okay. I don't know my geography.

15 Wellisch: Yeah, well, (inaudible). They used to have a huge
16 factory (inaudible). And I met Zoey over there. He come back
17 from Russia and they caught him again.
18

19 Interviewer: Oh, my gosh.

20 Wellisch: Yeah, they caught him again.

21 Interviewer: Zoey is older than you?

22 Wellisch: Certainly. He was with my father in Key-ya and
23 they all came back.

24 Interviewer: Your father came back at the same time?
25

1 Wellisch: With him, yes. But to leave, they call him again.
2 So he has to go again. Then they call me.
3 Interviewer: Your dad came back --
4 Wellisch: And then they call him again -
5 Interviewer: And you lived in these other quarters in
6 Budapest --
7 Wellisch: Yes, yes.
8 Interviewer: (Inaudible).
9 Wellisch: Yes.
10 Interviewer: And so he's back from labor camp and you get
11 called?
12 Wellisch: No, no. But they called him a few months later.
13 They called him and -- no, no, I can't remember. They called
14 him or something. Okay. To make the story short, I met in
15 Mo-sho-noy over there I met Zoey over there and I met my
16 father's brother, (inaudible). But he was sick. And they
17 let him go home later on. And from there I was transferred
18 to Sho-vak, which is by the Czech border and --
19 Interviewer: This is in Hungary then?
20 Wellisch: Yes. And from there they took me up to a place in
21 the Buck-win Mountains, they call it.
22 Interviewer: Buck-win Mountains?
23
24
25

1 Wellisch: Buck-win, O-coot. Yes, this was a little mining
2 town.

3 Interviewer: When you were transferred from place to place,
4 was it just like you were being transported --

5 Wellisch: Yes, transported. They put you on a train and you
6 go. That's how you got there.

7 Interviewer: Your trip on the train, it wasn't like going to
8 concentration camp?

9 Wellisch: No, no. This was only the people who was working.
10 This wasn't the concentration camp.

11 Interviewer: I know, but --

12 Wellisch: You was serving your country, not carrying gun, you
13 carrying shovel and you working manual labor.
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1 . . . you have a yellow arm band and ^a ~~the~~ soldier ^{hat} ~~had~~ and
2 you were (inaudible) your clothes. I don't think so.
3 Later, (inaudible) I don't know, nothing, you just wear
4 your yellow band and that's it. And you -- everybody who
5 was going into the (inaudible) they try to get before they
6 leaving, they have to get you clothing because they don't
7 give you nothing, so I took the best that I could, my
8 shoes, my best, I don't know, you don't have any idea what
9 will happen to you so, whatever you have, you take with
10 you. You can't take too much because if you take too
11 much, they take away from you. They always searching you
12 and things like that.

13 So from there, we took us the 0-1-c-o-t, is a
14 little village up in the mountain, mining town. Then you
15 go through a physical examination and they divided you
16 three groups, but this time, this was a mixed group, not
17 the same age as you are, all kind of ages, young, old,
18 doesn't matter, and they divide that in three different
19 categories, the young and strong, they qualified
20 underground work. That is when you have to go down the
21 mine.

22 Q Under the ground.

23 A Underground. That who was not that healthy,
24 they was working above ground, and the 3rd category was
25 who was not too healthy and they give then some easier

1 job. At least they were decent about that. So we was
2 working there.

3 Q And you ran this, the Hungarian military?

4 A Yes. Actually we was under the mining compound,
5 you know, I don't know what you say. We was with the
6 workers. No soldier came down there but we were sleeping.
7 We were supervised by the soldiers, we couldn't leave. We
8 were under supervision.

9 Q Hungarian soldiers?

10 A Yes. Whenever we went somewhere, we was always
11 -- this was a compound, so used to march like a group and
12 we was always under supervisor, but when we was working,
13 then we was working directly with the local workers who
14 was miners. We don't know anything about mining, so we
15 had to work with them as a helper, as a helper, right.

16 Q First of all, let's just make a correction in
17 what you said earlier about the year.

18 A To listen to the tape, I have to admit I made a
19 boo-boo. This was not 1943, it was in 1944.

20 Q So, everything happened, when you were called to
21 labor camp and when they started bombing Budapest in March
22 and in April, this was 19 -- everything who happened in
23 '44?

24 A Yes. '44, exactly.

25 Q Okay. The other thing I wanted to ask you about

1 before we continue was the story -- I wanted you maybe to
 2 explain about the registration, that ~~what~~ever law came
 3 down, you said there was a time that when they started
 4 passing all these Jewish laws and when things started
 5 getting bad and they progressed to the point where Jewish
 6 people were forced to register, so how did you receive
 7 your notices? Who was delivering?

8 A This was obviously Hungarian army and they
 9 issued you some kind of a record, you call it a passport
 10 or something like that.

11 Q You have described that already.

12 A Which is everything in that which is identified
 13 you as being Jewish because have a huge Z across the
 14 thing. That is when they tried to keep you under leash,
 15 so they know.

16 Q Do you remember when this was, at least what
 17 month it was?

18 A I really don't know. I really don't know.

19 Q Do you remember what you were doing at the time,
 20 were you working, were you playing soccer?

21 A No, at this time, I didn't play soccer. This
 22 was wintertime.

23 Q So this was later on?

24 A I really don't know. This must be in --

25 Q Was this before or after the German occupation?

1 A Everything came after German occupation.

2 Q After the 19th of March, everything started
3 happening?

4 A Everything started, and hell broke loose this
5 time. Absolutely. Everything. All the Jewish law, all
6 that -- before, even before it was no good at all but
7 after the Germans totally occupied Hungary, the whole
8 thing started. They created the ghettos which were no
9 (inaudible) before. And they also created -- first of
10 all, the people, this was people was living outside of
11 city of Budapest, left the country, they had the worst
12 one, because they create the ghetto and soon the ghetto
13 has so much suffrage, they just deported them.

14 Q As soon as what?

15 A They established the ghetto. They deported --

16 Q They established, the people were -- go. *End of*

17 A *Beginning Tape 2, Side B*
Go what? *Tape 2, Side A*

18 Q Well, where you left off.

19 A We left off when the German occupied the entire
20 Hungary, like I said before, a-u-t-a-f-e-n-e, cities in
21 the country, they created the ghettos, and they was able
22 to deport those people to the concentration camp. They
23 created -- actually they created the ghetto in the City of
24 Budapest, but they just didn't have any time to complete
25 the work because they just run out of the time.

1 Q The Russians were closing in?

2 A Yes, they closing up, and to deport the people
3 from the Budapest, they supposed to be a railroad, way, a
4 railroad --

5 Q Railroad? Railway?

6 A Right, which will go into the ghetto, which was
7 located actually the center of Pest, not Budapest, but
8 they just couldn't do that. It was too much.

9 Q That's what the Germans were planning to do?

10 A Yes.

11 Q From the ghetto, right?

12 A Right.

13 Q Well, let's leave that just for a moment. As I
14 was asking earlier, you never got to finish answering, I
15 was asking you when you went for registration and you got
16 these official papers, you couldn't exactly remember when
17 it was or where you were working or --

18 A No, no, I cannot remember.

19 Q It was wintertime sometime? It was after the
20 Germans --

21 A I was 13 some there because I remembered the
22 (inaudible) which I told you before. I can't remember
23 what -- I must have been work somewhere because one
24 morning I went to work and the streetcar had end of line,
25 the streetcar, it happened to be, was the building where

1 was quartering the Hungarian army and all the people has
2 to report over there and early in the morning, this was
3 early in the morning, people see all the Jews was lining
4 up in the court, more of them on the street. One of the
5 Hungarians which was passing by me, or pass, made a
6 remark, look at that (inaudible) of the nation. But I
7 don't know, I really mixed up. I can't remember exactly.

8 Q Okay, when was it when you had to wear the
9 yellow star?

10 A The yellow star, before I come -- all right.
11 Here again, I just cannot state the exact date but --

12 Q I'm not asking you that.

13 A -- but this was part of the so called Jewish
14 law, so every Jew, when on the street, have to wear 9
15 centimeter by 9 centimeter yellow Jewish star sewed to his
16 coat or suit, whatever he was wearing, so whenever he was
17 walking on the street the people should know that who is
18 he.

19 Q Right. Well, did you wear one?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Do you remember when you got it?

22 A From where I got it?

23 Q When you got it?

24 A No, no. Well, soon that the law came into
25 effect.

1 Q Did that come after the registration?

2 A I believe so. I really don't know. I really
3 don't know. But everything is come the same time,
4 everything is come the same time.

5 Q After March 19, things just started happening
6 one after the other?

7 A Everyday, this order which was in force one day,
8 be different rule the next day and you never know what
9 happen. We just walked on the street and they have that
10 notice they paste it on the wall, on the trees, which is
11 the order of the day and you have to obey this one.

12 Q Okay. You had to go off to labor camp, it was
13 summertime, 1944, right?

14 A Correct.

15 Q Well, let's just break away from you. How did
16 your brother die?

17 A All right, brother Mickey, let's see, how did he
18 get over there. Oh, after we -- after I escaped from the
19 labor camp --

20 Q This was after that?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Okay. I'll let you tell that story, then, we'll
23 go back?

24 A All right, all right. So what happened was
25 somehow through some connection, because this time, lots

1 of Jews being, well, escape to labor camp because --

2 Q Escaped from?

3 A From labor camp, able to go back to the city and
4 this time the city -- there couldn't have been very
5 (inaudible) control because the constant air raid in the
6 daytime, nighttime and the same time, lots of Hungarian
7 soldiers, when they find out the war is losing, they
8 losing the war, they try to save their skin and they all
9 rush back to Hungary, back to Budapest, get civilian
10 clothes, that somehow the whole control us that close that
11 they just lose their grip on it.

12 Q This is toward the end of 1944?

13 A This was after October. So, anyhow, somehow,
14 some -- I can't remember how but this time, like I said,
15 all the Jews come back. They all was seeking all kind of
16 papers, just to walk on the street and somebody approach
17 us and he said the organization, the chief will supply you
18 with all kind of papers you want. So we went to a certain
19 place, a nice apartment, was run by other Jewish family
20 and he told us that yes, he can forge papers, he has good
21 connection, and this was some kind of, you can call
22 underground organization. I remember we have a few
23 families who was not Jewish but the main purpose of this
24 organization was to supply us some paper so we will be
25 able to survive the whole situation. I can't remember

1 what his name was but he has excellent information,
2 excellent connection, expert forgers who made the papers
3 which was carrying the German army's stamps. He was
4 always joking about it. This look even much better than
5 the original one. And many times he made us up some
6 document, we have a few (inaudible) who was dressed up in
7 Hungarian army uniform and some kind of order went into
8 certain camp they was keeping Jewish woman to get it. The
9 papers state that this and this section, Hungarian army,
10 need 20, 25 woman, for some working, and they release that
11 for this (inaudible) as soon as read the count, they let
12 the people go home. So this was that kind of organization
13 that tried to --

14 Q Rescue operation.

15 A You can call it rescue operation. So anyhow --

16 Q Do you remember any names here of people or what
17 they called themselves?

18 A No, no, I can't. So, anyhow, we was to report
19 every morning 9:00 and even -- you could heard that
20 Russian kennels, which were probably 50, 60 kilometers
21 outside of Budapest, but he warned us, he warned us, he
22 said, don't wait to -- don't make any false pretense.
23 They won't be here in a week or so. So, we said, how is
24 that possible, (inaudible) he said no, no, they won't be
25 here. (inaudible) and he was right. I get information

1 but he was right. So anyhow, my father, my brother and
2 the young man, they also used to love to visit this garden
3 which everyone has to report, but the way this happened,
4 we were always walking doubles. Nobody was walking alone.
5 I have my partner, my cousin George, my brother have
6 somebody else, so if something happened to one of us, the
7 other one able to alert the others. So one morning,
8 George and myself, we went into a house which was -- I
9 used to call the house, the people who have special, you
10 used to call it s-h-u-s-p-a-s. This is the (inaudible)
11 what you read about it and this time it was (inaudible)
12 houses which was under the protection of the Swedish
13 consulate, the Swiss, and the Vatican. Now these people
14 have a paper, that is what they used to call
15 s-h-u-s-p-a-s, which mean they are a, prospect to cities
16 in this country. If they ever to leave Hungary, they
17 travel to Swiss, to Sweden or to the Vatican and they will
18 become this country, (inaudible) that mean they under the
19 protective of this consulate. We went into this house
20 that belong to the Swiss consulate.

21 Q To the Swedish or the Swiss?

22 A Swedish, and we went into the upper, and maybe
23 50 or 60 families was living in the big house there and
24 this was one of that best part of the city, luxury
25 apartments. So I make the story short, George and we went

1 and I don't know what was the reason for it, but we was
2 visiting a family who was living over there and the first
3 time in my life I ever been in a luxury apartment like
4 that, and I was sitting on the couch and I was feeling so
5 good, so luxurious and so rich, I didn't want to move, and
6 my cousin George, he went into the conversation now, young
7 lady who was sitting over there and he liked the lady and
8 finally he decide that he's got to go the 9:00 meeting.
9 We supposed to go. He going to stay over there so
10 (inaudible) we didn't went to the meeting. We stay over
11 there a long time and left there and went home. I was
12 living together with my mother, she has apartment, and
13 when I knock on the door, she open the door and she said,
14 get out from here, don't show up, move quickly as possible
15 because something happened to your brother and to your
16 father, so I rush out the house.

17 Q Let me ask you this before you go on. You and
18 Uri were at this consulate or whatever, home where people
19 were being kept, and grandpa, Bundy and Mickey?

20 A They went to the meeting.

21 Q They went to report?

22 A Yeah, so I really don't know what happened but
23 my mother was really scared. She said, get out, get out,
24 because of this (inaudible) get out soon you can, so I
25 left and I don't know where I spend the next two nights

1 but to the end, we could just find out the Germans was
2 watching this place. They know --

3 Q Where you guys all --

4 A Right. They were watching it. They seen this.
5 They knew what happening, and this morning, when they knew
6 was almost everybody entered, they just close up the door,
7 went up and they raid it.

8 Q Raided the place?

9 A The place, and they took everybody who was in
10 there, took down the headquarters and they were
11 interrogated over there, and when they came to my father,
12 they asked him what he was doing over there, he had some
13 kind of explanation. I can't remember what it was and he
14 has his papers, has his papers, which they accepted it but
15 one of the interviewers, he was Hungarian-speaking,
16 German, who happened to be know my father personally, but
17 his luck was -- but he use his own real name, they used to
18 play cards in the coffee houses so if he would use a
19 different name he would be dead today, so that guy know
20 him exactly and he talked to the --

21 Q What did you mean about the name? Grandpa used
22 his right name on the papers?

23 A Right, right.

24 Q And the guy knew him by his right name so he had
25 the correct name on the papers?

1 A Exactly.

2 Q Otherwise, then, if he used a different name, he
3 would have been dead?

4 A He would have been dead because he knew. He was
5 luck. Our luck was, everybody, everybody in my family was
6 hiding. We use our real name (inaudible) hide our
7 religion. That was safe, that. Lots of things that you
8 see, we are talking to you and whoever you know in my
9 family here, they survive that, they very lucky because
10 dozen, dozen times -- in fact, I'm talking to you, I
11 consider me lucky, very lucky, one of the luckiest who
12 survived. We survived because we're lucky. If we were
13 unlucky, we wouldn't survive. You couldn't do nothing.
14 Pure luck because you were the hunted and they were the
15 hunter. You being the hunted, you had no defense and you
16 cannot resist, you just try to escape. If people take a
17 chance to resist, something else, but we have no chance at
18 all. So there we were.

19 Q Well, you were talking --

20 A Okay, all right.

21 Q So the guy saw that it was grandpa's real name
22 and recognized grandpa.

23 A Okay. He went to the -- this is the story what
24 my father told me. I was not there. Only thing I can
25 relate to you what he told me. And that guy went to the

1 --

2 Q The police officer.

3 A -- the interrogator, German SS, and he said, I
4 vouch for the man, I know him. And he told my father
5 Hungarian, he said I don't care if you were Jewish, but if
6 you would be a communist, I would kill you right now. So
7 he let him go. Finally came to my father (inaudible) and
8 he was dressed up in the Hungarian uniform.

9 Q He was?

10 A Yes, he was the only one in the soldier uniform.

11 Q What was he wearing a uniform for?

12 A He can move much easier around the city.

13 Q But where did he get a uniform?

14 A That was easy. You can have uniform. They
15 threw away, (inaudible) there is no problem to get
16 a uniform, problem is to get the papers, uniform is no
17 problem.

18 Q Okay.

19 A You can wear the uniform but if you have no
20 papers, it's no sense, because regardless you wear a
21 uniform and on any corner somebody could have you halted
22 and ask you for the papers and that's it. You never know,
23 you never know who's come, hey, stop, may I see your
24 papers and that's it. So anyhow and he faked the
25 so-called peasant language. He doesn't want to, sounds

1 like boy from the city, because in Hungarian language they
2 know right how you are from the province or the city. The
3 city folk was talking like city dialect or something, and
4 he was faking and the guy asked him, he said, what the
5 heck you doing in this place? He said, I just came in, I
6 have to visit one of my friends, and they close the door
7 and here I am. So they believed him and let him go. when
8 Then, they came to my little brother, and here again, I
9 wasn't there, my brother and my father was over there, and
10 according to their story, he was acting a little bit
11 nervous, and the German get suspicious, and when they ask
12 him, are you Jewish, he was (inaudible) trembling and they
13 didn't believe him and he said, okay, pull your pants
14 down, but this was not so bad, this was not so bad, but
15 happened to be this time he was carrying some kind of
16 sickness. He was mixed up with some ladies, girls,
17 something.

18 Q He had venereal disease?

19 A Not venereal disease. He had something on his
20 thing over there and when the German see that, he said,
21 (inaudible take him out, because the German was
22 (inaudible) so they didn't give any chance to explain to
23 them, they just took him out, my father say they took him
24 in the schoolyard and shoot him on the scene. That's -- I
25 understand that. That is what my father told me. He say

1 when he was dead already (inaudible) on the floor, to
2 taking him something, he could do nothing about it. He
3 could not even speak up because if he would speak up
4 something like that, he would have been shot, too. So
5 that is what happened to him.

6 Q So grandpa saw them do it?

7 A Well, yes, absolutely. He couldn't do anything.
8 He has to keep his mouth shut. He don't have to but it
9 would be the safest. I was not present. This I
10 understand that what I have been told. So this is what
11 happened. I know that could happen to me if I were over
12 there but I lucky not to go because I was so comfortable,
13 so luxurious. I never felt (inaudible). That is what
14 happened.

15 Q It was at some schoolyard?

16 A Well, the high school, something, in the gym.
17 They get the people in the gym.

18 Q So, this place where you guys all reported was
19 some apartment, though?

20 A Yes, this was a private apartment.

21 Q They closed it up and they took --

22 A Yes, they took the school and I believe this day
23 they have the -- many other places or something because
24 they constantly tell the people who was picked up for
25 wrongdoing or something like that. They have lots of

1 people over there and they have people over there who be
2 not Jewish, be accused of being communist or something
3 like that. But this group was over there, too. I believe
4 this has to be one of the Gestapo.

5 Q It was just one of their roundups of people --

6 A Right.

7 Q So among them was this group of people they had
8 been watching at this apartment and they hauled them over
9 to the gym with all these other people and questioned
10 everybody --

11 A Right, this was some kind of political
12 headquarters, screening headquarters.

13 Q Do you remember when this was?

14 A Yes, I remember this was around December, 1944,
15 and four weeks later, the Russian liberated Budapest. We
16 were liberated (inaudible) because at least we don't have
17 to worry about being indentured because we are Jewish.

18 Q At least not for the time being.

19 A No, no. The Russian don't bother because we are
20 Jewish.

21 Q They bothered everybody else.

22 A I mean to them was the same, Jewish or not
23 Jewish, doesn't matter, doesn't matter, but at least we
24 know we don't have to be afraid because we are Jewish.
25 Our life is not in danger being Jewish. This was three

1 or four weeks later. This was around early December, and
2 the first Russian I see, I believe in the middle of
3 January in 1945, of the City of Budapest.

4 Q Now, if you don't mind going back a little bit,
5 to the point where you were taken to labor camp, you told
6 me how the workers were divided according to physical
7 ability to do work, more or less.

8 A Yes, this was the place I was working. I don't
9 know how they did in any other area camps but because we
10 are, our labor was very valuable for them because this
11 mine, whatever the problems over there, they was using for
12 --

13 Q The war effort.

14 A For war effort and they needed it, the labor.

15 Q It was fuel, wasn't it a coal mine?

16 A No, it's not the coal mine. This was -- I can't
17 remember what was the name. This (inaudible) we were
18 mining over there, they used a mixture to producing steel.

19 Q So, it was some kind of metal that you were --

20 A No, not metal, not metal. This was some kind --

21 Q Some mineral?

22 A Right, which they used to make the steel, okay,
23 iron to making steel and this material which was mined
24 over there, used to make steel, for (inaudible), right,
25 this was very valuable for the German army, but actually

1 this little village where the mine located was all the
2 (inaudible) the folks was living over there, this work to
3 so-called s-c-h-w-a-b, which means --

4 Q Sounds like a German name?

5 A They have territory German, it's called
6 s-c-h-w-a-b. These people is for German descent. They
7 live years and years in Hungary, they have their own
8 community, they hard working farmers or whatever, and
9 German speaking. They picked up the Hungarians. They
10 speak (inaudible) English, they know right now is
11 something not kosher then, but this time when Hitler came
12 power, they declared themselves German citizens, and they
13 very clean people, very clean, like all the Germans,
14 extremely clean. The homes, houses we were living in,
15 this was very, very clean. They have painting every year
16 but this time they have the name of their (inaudible) and
17 they have that so-called h-o-k-e-n-h-a-u-s.

18 Q Swastika?

19 A Swastika, and they say, I don't know, Joseph,
20 this and this, belong to the consulate. They were very
21 proud of it. But this time, when I went over there, you
22 see, summertime end of the July, August, September --

23 Q You went to camp at the end of July, '44?

24 A Yes, I was -- then we were transferred over
25 there. I believe we were over there two months or -- I

1 can't exactly remember, but anyhow it has to be around
 2 summertime because exactly 11:00 every day, right on the
 3 second, we could see the American airplanes coming,
 4 shining in the afternoon sunshine, and they was bombing
 5 all over the Hungarian certain place, every day, no
 6 exception, we know that, and everything has to be stopped,
 7 we lay down and just look at how beautiful the sun hit the
 8 airplane and there was shining over there and because this
 9 time they have the invasion in Europe and they get closer
 10 and closer and they know, so they tried to hide, they
 11 tried to repaint their homes, what happened to be big
 12 letters wrote (inaudible) they couldn't destroy it.

13 Q Like show it to everybody?

14 A Show everything they have, yes.

15 Q So, okay, here you were at camp and you worked
 16 in the mine itself, right?

17 A Yes.

18 Q So, describe to me what a typical day was for
 19 you in camp?

20 A All right, we was -- okay, like I said, they
 21 have three shift, the morning shift, afternoon shift and
 22 night shift. I was, since I was working the so-called
 23 mine or underground, we have to go 80 meters, 100 meters
 24 under the ground. We was --

25 Q 80 to 100 meters underground.

1 A Underground. Miners, we not was working above
2 the ground, we working like -- actually what we has to do,
3 they have what you can say the mine, it was like in coal
4 mine, you see a little ones --

5 Q Carts?

6 A Carts, right. We was working in team. They
7 have a real miner who was living in the city --

8 Q A paid worker?

9 A Yeah, a worker, he know what was to do. Three
10 men was working with him and three of us, three Jews, this
11 was a team. So one was helping him. He used something, a
12 jackhammer, a --

13 Q A pickaxe?

14 A Yeah, jackhammer.

15 Q Is it shaped like this?

16 A No, no, electric --

17 Q Oh, electric

18 A Motor, like a drill, or he used a pick.

19 Q All right.

20 A All right. And the time when he advanced three
21 or four meters, that had to be build for the
22 reinforcement, so the whole thing is (inaudible), but he
23 was a professional miner. But since they were assured
24 help, because everybody has to serve the army, then they
25 get the force slave. So we can't do this because we are

1 not qualified for that. We were not --

2 Q You didn't know what you were doing?

3 A Right, but one guy was helping him, the other
4 guy has to use the shovel and load that cart and my
5 (inaudible) was pushing the cart that was full. We was
6 not like here you could see everything ahead but we have a
7 little lights, kerosene lights.

8 Q A lantern.

9 A A lantern, and when they was working, you have a
10 full load to take to the elevator which bring up to the --

11 Q Surface?

12 A -- surface, is went downhill, so you don't have
13 to push on it, because --

14 Q They are heavy?

15 A But we bring the empty ones. We have to push a
16 little bit uphill. So that was my job, back and forth,
17 back and forth, eight hours.

18 Q How did this paid worker, the man who was
19 skilled, how did he feel working with a bunch of forced --

20 A They have lots of conflict. We have been told,
21 because they are all German speaking, they know who they
22 are.

23 Q These people in the town are very nationalistic
24 Germans?

25 A Right, and you picture yourself, you working

1 with German it was so pitch dark, if your lamp somehow
 2 goes out, you must complete your (inaudible), you don't
 3 know even what you make. There you light it. Many times
 4 you just stay over there until somebody else comes down to
 5 help you, and the part of it was short of oxygen. This
 6 mean when you went down and you do nothing, you almost
 7 freezing, you feel cold. Soon you working, you be
 8 sweating. So anyway we have a half hour lunch, because
 9 after we don't know what to do, sit down eat or move
 10 around, our faces get cold.

11 Q It was hard to breathe down there?

12 A Very hard, very hard, very hard. So, and I have
 13 no problem with it, but I know some of the Jews just
 14 couldn't keep their mouths shut, many of them was speaking
 15 German, so I didn't speak German, just I wouldn't talk.

16 Q You didn't understand anything either?

17 A No, and I understand that they have a few
 18 accident because the guy in the mine didn't like it and
 19 told the guards, okay, you lay down, and pick up something
 20 and let thing drop over his head or something, so miner
 21 said, well, you couldn't do anything about it.

22 Q What, some of these paid miners didn't like the
 23 guys they were working with, so they --

24 A No, they were going to (inaudible) them or
 25 something and they tried to hurt them. They pick up

1 something and with a pick someplace and they follow these
2 --we know this but not too serious but -- *End Tape 2, Side B*

3 Q *Beginning Tape 3, Side A* What you finished saying on the last one, you
4 only knew Hungarian up until this time?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And, well, okay, the next thing I wanted to ask
7 you then was, how did you escape?

8 A Like I said, around end of September (inaudible)
9 -- coming to the, especial up in the mountains, beginning
10 to rain, getting cold and it happened to me I have only
11 one pair of shoes and they have a hole in them on the
12 sole. And I know I won't be able to get any shoes, I know
13 I won't be able to repair that, and I picture myself in
14 wintertime with snow and everything, what I am looking
15 for, I picture myself laying in the bed with high or
16 something fever and all that and I said, nope, I won't be
17 able to survive, I have to go. So I make up my mind and I
18 am gone. And through pure luck, very much so, I was able
19 to reach Budapest.

20 Q Okay. I would like --

21 A You want to know how I did that?

22 Q Yes, I want the details. I know that you
23 escaped, but --

24 A Everybody, everybody, everybody have different
25 story. You can talk to a million Jews who survived, they

1 have all, they all individual stories.

2 Q Sure, I know that.

3 A My story is the same.

4 Q Be careful not to talk that way?

5 A Talk that way.

6 Q Talk to me, right here.

7 A So anyhow, I decided, like I said, we was
8 sleeping in the quarters of the Hungarian armies. Okay, I
9 was a miner. Any time I was working -- oh, one week we
10 was working night shift, the next morning, the afternoon
11 shift.

12 Q You never did tell me what shift you worked?

13 A 7 to 3, 3 to 11, 11 to 7 the next morning.
14 Every week we change the shift.

15 Q So, for one week you're working on one shift,
16 the next week another one?

17 A That's correct, and I was a miner. When we
18 finish our shift, we have the privilege, because we was
19 dirty to go into bathhouse. They have a shower and like
20 in the mine there, we have a privilege to take a shower,
21 but these people --

22 Q After they finished there --

23 A All the people who were not working under
24 ground, they have a privilege once a week, on Saturday, in
25 the afternoon, go and take a shower. Other days they have

1 to wash at all, and this was the story, and this Saturday
2 afternoon, this afternoon, I don't know, how I was not
3 working. Maybe I was doing work, I don't know, but I
4 heard the guy, I know they going to line up all the people
5 was not working under guard. They are going to line up
6 and going to take them to bathhouse to take a shower and I
7 know this going to happen and I have a partner and I told
8 him, mister, we have some money, or something like that, I
9 pick up my best available clothing I have over there and
10 we split the money we have over there --

11 Q First of all, how did you have this money?

12 A Well, we have some money. I don't know, my
13 mother used to send us something, not much.

14 Q You even got things people sent you?

15 A Oh, yeah, they could send (inaudible).

16 Q And you managed to get it all?

17 A Yeah, we get it, right.

18 Q Who was your partner? What was his name?

19 A I can't remember.

20 Q Just a friend you made in camp?

21 A Yes. Friend, same age, was good Jewish boy,
22 scared all the time.

23 Q Like you?

24 A No, I never scared. I not scared.

25 Q No?

1 A Oh, no. So anyhow, I wasn't too scared. When
2 you're young, you really don't know what danger you are.
3 So anyhow, I told him, we have the money. I said, I'm
4 going, he said go where? Said, I'm going to leave. He
5 said, you must be crazy. I said, no no, I'm going to
6 leave. I said, well, if you want to come with me,
7 welcome, if not, I'm just going. He said, no, you can't
8 do that. So, split the money.

9 Q You don't remember his name?

10 A No, I can't remember. If I would see him
11 (inaudible) I can't discuss what -- 40 odd years. Only
12 thing I remember, I have a pear over there, fruit.

13 Q A pear?

14 A I put in my pocket and when they ask the people,
15 say, okay, let's line up, I line up, too and one of --

16 Q You -- this wasn't really supposed to be your
17 group though, right?

18 A No, no. Listen, I come to that. One of them
19 say, what the heck you doing today? You not supposed to
20 be here. I said, shut up. So time they have Hungarian
21 soldier, everything was being (inaudible) because he was
22 not speaking very well Hungarian, and he counted 3, 6,
23 because we have to line up three and four in rows and one,
24 two, three, said, okay, let's go, and he was (inaudible)
25 us to the (inaudible) and this was --

1 Q Accompanying you up to the bathhouse?

2 A This was about 20, 25 minutes walk.

3 Q 25 minute walk?

4 A Walk, through the village on the mountain, only
5 road they have, and suddenly, I become nervous, and I have
6 the urge to run to the toilet, and I ask permission to the
7 guy if I could run because I have to go to the toilet. He
8 said, go ahead, run before we reached the bathhouse, so I
9 know the place very well so I run to sit in the toilet and
10 the group arriving in the front, when the manager the bath
11 house said, stop, I'm sorry, everybody has to go back, I
12 have no hot water. And here I am sitting in the toilet.
13 That's what I call luck, pure luck. Here I'm sitting on
14 the toilet when I heard that officer, turn around, march,
15 and they march back. He forget I was still over there,
16 and when I was finished, (inaudible) my nervous gone, I
17 peeking through the window, I see they are disappeared. I
18 just came out and just walk. I have to walk through a
19 little forest. I didn't want to walk on the highway.

20 Q So, you waited here until the group left?

21 A Left, yeah, and they left me over there. He
22 didn't know that. He forgot it.

23 Q This was a Saturday afternoon, you say?

24 A Yes.

25 Q It was your birthday, wasn't it?

1 A No, no, this was not my birthday. Was late
2 September.

3 Q Late September.

4 A Well, anyhow, so, I didn't want to go on that
5 only road they have, because the people know me. I don't
6 want to be --

7 Q You'll be recognized?

8 A Yes, and I have idea that road is curving to the
9 right, if I go straight through the forest, I have to
10 reach the end of the curve, and this time is getting dark.
11 This was in the end of September, 6:00 or something, and I
12 keep on walking, the forest, the forest, and I just
13 couldn't find the road. I get scared, so I think I'm
14 getting lost in the forest, but finally I made it. I
15 would check and I happen to be, I was very close to the
16 railroad station, too. Okay. This was Saturday night,
17 lots of workers was (inaudible) to the train to go home
18 because these people used to come once a week. They
19 coming like parties or (inaudible) come to the city work,
20 they stayed the whole week, only the weekend, Saturday,
21 they're working 'til noontime, Saturday afternoon, they go
22 home and come back again Monday. They not commuting
23 everyday, just on the weekend, and lots of people was
24 waiting over there. So I have a little looking around and
25 said, how I'm going to go to the window and buy my ticket.

1 Q You had some money but --

2 A I had some money but I was very neglected how
3 I'm going to buy the ticket because it could be dangerous.

4 Q Why would it be dangerous?

5 A Because they know there is lots of Jews working
6 up there and they know they try to escape and people, and
7 these people didn't know each other over there.

8 Q So, okay, you looked like a stranger that --

9 A My asking some questions and I have no papers at
10 all, nothing, and if I would have papers, they could turn
11 me off. So, and I am looking, looking, looking and
12 suddenly I see a familiar face. His name was Meyer Boshe.

13 Q Meyer Boshe?

14 A Yeah, was his name, Meyer. We used to
15 (inaudible) and I know him because I brought -- he was,
16 once he went to Budapest and he visited my mother and I
17 sent a letter with him to my mother and my mother bought
18 him anything he wanted, so we was in good standing.

19 Q Wait a minute. How did --

20 A I know him from work. He was working with us in
21 the mine over there.

22 Q He was a miner?

23 A He was --

24 Q A regular worker?

25 A A regular worker, but he was a good man.

1 Q You would send messages with him home to your
2 mother?

3 A Yeah, he went to Budapest to visit my mother and
4 he got lots of goodies because I sent a letter with him to
5 my mother, take care of this man. So we become good
6 friend. He was profited from that. He used to -- he was
7 a heavy pipe smoker and he has no tobacco and my mother
8 was supply all the tobacco he needed because he couldn't
9 get it over there. And he was smoking his pipe and he see
10 me over there, he almost (inaudible). He said, what the
11 heck you doing here. I said, listen, Meyer Boshe, I
12 escaped, I'm going home. He said, you can't do that. I
13 said, what can you say, I'm here. I said, could you do me
14 a favor, could you buy me a ticket, so he bought me the
15 ticket.

16 Q So you --

17 A So the train is coming. Naturally it was slow
18 but they have a station which we know is very dangerous
19 and this was very on their surveillance by the police or,
20 then you have to change train and we heard lots of
21 stories, lots of people been caught over there, been
22 caught because they know what happening, the Hungarian
23 soldiers try to escape for (inaudible) and the Jews are --
24 they know this place, so --

25 Q What is the name of the place, do you know?

1 A I can't remember.

2 Q What was the name -- do you remember what the
3 name of the station was near your camp, the one where you
4 got your --

5 A Olcot, I was in the place and this was the
6 station for Olcot. This was the railroad station.

7 Q But wasn't the name of your camp something
8 different?

9 A No, no.

10 Q It was Olcot?

11 A No, this was the last one I was transferred from
12 Moshoyava to Olcot.

13 Q Right.

14 A Yeah, Olcot, this was the place.

15 Q Okay, I'm sorry.

16 A Okay, it's in the Buckwin mountain.

17 Q Okay.

18 A The Buckwin mountain, the place called Olcot.
19 And I really was very concerned what would happen there
20 and suddenly when our train stopped and we heard from the
21 boss keeper, (inaudible), connection to Budapest on this
22 and this number train and everybody was rushing and they
23 said hurry up because the train going to leave in five
24 minutes, and everybody was rushing so no way was able to
25 (inaudible) so we were safe here.

1 Q So this dangerous checkpoint --

2 A It happened to be because the connection --

3 Q They didn't have time to stop anybody?

4 A No, no, no way because everybody was rushing
5 back and forth and the people, (inaudible). So we get on
6 this train and the destination was Budapest and naturally
7 the train was full, only standing room and I stand on the
8 (inaudible) fellow labor camp guy, who (inaudible) and we
9 get together, he said, oh, my gosh, and this was -- his
10 character reminds me because he was so typical Jewish
11 looking, big pointed nose, and this time lots of
12 Hungarians because they know he is Jewish and this boy was
13 really scared and he stick to me and I tried to comfort
14 him, don't worry about it, so to make the story short, we
15 was reaching Budapest station, he say to chendamarin step
16 into the chair. This chendamarin we call them in chender,
17 this was --

18 Q Chender?

19 A Chender. This was the police force in the
20 province. They never perform any duty in the city. They
21 were the most savage, tough guys, not to us Jews, to the
22 farmers, savage.

23 Q These are Hungarian?

24 A Hungarian air raid police, not city police.
25 This was State Police, I should say.

1 Q Kind of like a sheriff?

2 A Yeah, but they was very dangerous. They used to
3 work (inaudible), and they have a --

4 VOICE: A rooster.

5 A A rooster. (inaudible). Yeah, and they was
6 savage, as cruel --

7 Q Why, against whom, the farmers?

8 A Against everybody didn't agree with them, who
9 didn't agree with the country, but the Jews -- even the
10 farmers in the little village, they was afraid of them
11 because they have authority, nobody could say no to them.
12 They was ruling by themselves or they commandeered the
13 entire village, and they could do anything they wanted.

14 Q These were government employees?

15 A Yes. It's like State Police. But they not in
16 the city, only in the province, and naturally they were
17 all to the Jews, this was the number one target for them,
18 and when they was walking on the train, said, oh my gosh,
19 I hope they are not coming to us and asking for papers,
20 and they looking, looking around, they pass by us, but
21 this time my heart was beating because they asked
22 something, no way.

23 Q Doesn't matter what you answer?

24 A I had no papers, they take me to the station, so
25 anyhow, they pass by us, as my friend was scared too, so

1 here again, the biggest obstacle, you reach your
2 destination, the station that you want to go and then you
3 leaving the station, they still asking all kind of papers.
4 Wherever you go, if you leave the city, come into the
5 city, they always ask you papers, papers, papers. Finally
6 we all off to Budapest said I'm going to go out for a
7 beer. So you cannot take, you just go. They happen to be
8 (inaudible) the people and somehow nobody asked me. Take
9 the streetcar, this was the next morning, because
10 (inaudible the whole night, take it when I was outside on
11 that railroad station. I could (inaudible) because I know
12 the city, I know the street is not proper. So I went
13 home, knock on the door.

14 Q You still had some money left so you could ride
15 the streetcar?

16 A Oh, yeah, I had some pennies.

17 Q And you were wearing what was left of your best
18 clothes?

19 A Yeah, whatever I have left. I can't remember,
20 but I was not walking naked.

21 Q It wasn't dirty from your mining work?

22 A No, this I didn't use for the mining. This was
23 in, oh, what you say, in the holiday's clothes.

24 Q Your Sunday best?

25 A Sunday best. Not too good, but -- so anyhow, I

1 go home, I knock on the door, mother opened the door, she
2 said, I know you coming home on your birthday.

3 Q It was your birthday, Sunday?

4 A This was my birthday, October first, I was 20
5 years old to be exact, this was 1944, say I know you're
6 coming home, I fix your favorite dish, polacheeta.

7 Q Oh, God.

8 A So this was a -- from then on, here the Russians
9 coming. This was the toughest, toughest I can remember,
10 toughest because the situation was so bad, not because you
11 have been a Jew being a young man, you not in the army so
12 what are you doing. If you're not Jewish and not in the
13 army, what you doing on the street, and every day the need
14 a different papers, and you never know if you -- and they
15 was bombing the city, by sharing the city, you were
16 hunted, you have no place to stay, you have nothing to
17 eat, no money, no work, so what you do, you still
18 survived.

19 Q Where was Grandpa?

20 A Oh, okay. In this time, when I escaped, the
21 whole family was worrying about all the poor innocents and
22 what the heck is going by himself somewhere and I was the
23 first one that escaped and when everybody noticed, they
24 all come. My father was in labor camp, brother was, Zoey
25 was, Urie was in labor camp and when they know Gene is

1 home finally they take the courage and they come home,
2 too.

3 Q How did they know you were home?

4 A I don't know. Somebody told them. I was the
5 first one and everybody was, poor Gene, what happened.

6 Q You were the first one. So grandma was alone
7 when you came there?

8 A Grandma was sleeping this time -- okay, this
9 apartment, she was living there, they used to (inaudible)
10 to Rosie's parents and Rosie was living over there and
11 they took my mother over there, and when they came home,
12 everybody was home. And this was the apartment, when this
13 happened to my brother, and the mother doesn't let me go
14 in there.

15 Q Okay. Because you might endanger everybody
16 else?

17 A Certainly, because they was watching, too much
18 activity, so I go in later.

19 Q So, Rosie was there, were her parents still
20 there?

21 A Yes.

22 Q So they took grandma in and then everybody else
23 who escaped, they took them all in?

24 A Yes, many times we was sleeping three, four of
25 us in one bed and my time, when they have air raid, and

1 everybody supposed to go down to the basement,
2 underground, so this is a place you're supposed to be
3 safe, we couldn't go, we have to stay up there and
4 happened what happened. We heard the bombs firing, what
5 hit the city, but what you can do. We couldn't go there.
6 Actually we have to sneak in the house so the people don't
7 see us.

8 Q In and out of the apartment?

9 A In and out of the apartment, yeah because you
10 don't know who is your next door neighbor, so --

11 Q You didn't want to get in trouble?

12 A Every step, every step you made that you have to
13 be alert. You never know which corner somebody is going
14 to stop you and ask you papers. And when we have our
15 papers one day, next day have a different order, this
16 paper is no good. We went so far, we don't know what to
17 do, so we went up to the city hall, we needed some stamps,
18 every document has a stamp, which is, and three of us, we
19 went up to the city hall and we was approaching the
20 secretary, she has a desk over there and we see some
21 stamps on her desk and we want to steal that, and we have
22 to talk to her, talk to her, until finally we was able to
23 steal the stamps, so we made a book of it and the next
24 day, this document was no good. You have to look for
25 something else. We went that far around the, around,

1 before Christmas, before Christmas, they have the
2 Hungarian national party, the Nazi party and they was
3 asking young people to get (inaudible) in and they going
4 to stand him on the front to defend the country. This
5 time, I don't know, and we went up there because they have
6 the best document you could have.

7 Q So you went up as volunteers?

8 A We went over there and we registered just to
9 have the papers. I was over there, my brother was over
10 there and my cousin and we all went over there. They have
11 --

12 Q You, Zoey and Bundy?

13 A They have two lines, three lines and I remember
14 I talked to one of the officer, my brother was, and I
15 heard asked him what's his name, he said Shandra, says
16 what's your references, says (inaudible). But this guy
17 (inaudible) so anyhow we got the papers, we got the papers
18 and we left to go. The building they have some people who
19 want to put (inaudible). He said, come on, step together,
20 said not us, we need to go (inaudible). He said, no, no,
21 we were not going to say nothing. And these documents was
22 good two weeks. This was the best document we ever had.
23 After two weeks, (inaudible) says all the people
24 registered have to report to certain place, naturally we
25 didn't report but at least two weeks we have excellent

1 document.

2 Q And then you went like you said before this
3 apartment to get your papers everyday you got one at 9:00
4 in the morning?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And then, if you could just remember, then, like
7 you said, you saw your first Russian in the middle of
8 January?

9 A Right.

10 Q In '45?

11 A Okay, this time I been here again, like I told
12 you before, I, after the labor camp, I used to play soccer
13 for this team, the soap factory, and my mother told me
14 that that family who used to work over there told my
15 mother I have to go, why don't you go, too and I could
16 help you. And I -- this time I was very desperate, I had
17 no place to stay, no papers.

18 Q After you escaped?

19 A Yes, around in the end of November or middle of
20 November, and I went to visit him and he was very glad to
21 see me, and I told him, I need some job, I have no safe
22 place. He said, fine, he said he is going to put me on
23 the night shift, at least I have night time work and I was
24 very happy about it because I could work over there, I
25 didn't do much work, nobody did work. We have lots of

1 sleeping but the place I had was safe place in night time.
2 Okay, that's, I coming in and one morning, one morning on
3 way home, this was around end of December, something like
4 that, way we home, I see gendarmin on the corner, with the
5 helmet, he has the chap on his neck and sign, state
6 police, so this was, these people who tried to get these
7 people who escape for the army. Something SS unit, very
8 bad, and he --

9 Q Get people who escaped --

10 A He was the German soldiers, and this was what
11 they call military police, put it this way.

12 Q So he is looking for German soldiers who were
13 AWOL?

14 A AWOL, right, and he still there in the corner by
15 himself.

16 Q That's conspicuous, who's he going to catch like
17 that?

18 A When he see me, he call me. I said oh, my gosh,
19 that's what I need and this time, I was thinking I have no
20 chance because no way I can run, his riflein his hand. In
21 daytime, I have no papers. I said, my gosh, what going
22 off, I really don't know. I said, he's fluent Hungarian.
23 He asked me to help him get some civilian clothes. I said
24 oh, my gosh, no way, the only thing I wanted to get, said,
25 I'm sorry, I'm a poor man, only thing I have what I have

1 on me and I try to get away. Finally I get away from him.

2 Q He's Hungarian?

3 A Well, he was speaking fluent Hungarian and he
4 must be one of the shap (inaudible). He wasn't German,
5 when he say, the situation is hopeless, he was speaking
6 fluently Hungarian, only thing he made civilian clothing,
7 he saved. He's out of the army. But as long he doesn't
8 have the civilian clothes, what he going to do, he has to
9 get one, and he approach me. I said, I'm sorry, I'm a
10 poor man, the only thing I have is on me. He doesn't say
11 anything. He let me go. But I have lots of luck.

12 Okay, here again, this was maybe a couple of days before
13 and (inaudible) morning, I went home for the nightshift,
14 send back for my mother used to live, this place.

15 Q Which place where she used to live, the last
16 place before she went with Rosie's parents?

17 A No, the same place.

18 Q The place where she was staying?

19 A Yes, right. And I see lots of German soldiers
20 all hiding in the doorway, and hiding and hiding and I
21 went home and this time I believe everybody was sitting in
22 the shelter. I don't know why, and this was in January.
23 I can't remember exactly the date, but in January,
24 wintertime, that's not too cold, sunny, and suddenly,
25 around 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning, it's quiet. It was

1 so quiet you could heard a fly. We don't know what
2 happened. We didn't see a single German. Quiet,
3 absolutely still and we don't know. Everybody was looking
4 and my father was looking, and suddenly we heard some, see
5 the people running on the street and we was, heard some
6 strange voices and my father being (inaudible) he
7 understand. He said the Russian and we see the first
8 Russian, was a Russian woman in the front line. She had
9 the flame thrower, she was running on the street as my
10 father was listen, listen, then she say one, two, three,
11 (inaudible) and we know the Russian is here. This was it.

12 Q So they came in and then what happened?

13 A We see the Russian came in because my father
14 told us, come on, let's go back, go back, where they came
15 from because we know it's no Germans over there anymore.
16 So we try to go (inaudible).

17 Q Where were Rosie's parents living, in Buda, in
18 Pest?

19 A Pest. This was, how you call that,
20 K-i-s-h-r-o-d-e, yeah, this was in -- so this was in the
21 center of the city. Little village, yeah, they was
22 stable, they have apartment over there. So that's it,
23 and the Russian come.

24 Q Who was hiding out with them, it was grandma,
25 grandpa, you, Bundy and --

1 A Bundy and Rosie had a sister, her sister, but
2 she was not hiding, there was (inaudible) of them, and she
3 has a boyfriend, who is a gentile boy, and he has kept
4 Darby. He was hiding over there. He was my partner, we
5 used to walk together on the street. He was over there.

6 Q Who else was there besides your immediate
7 family, any cousins?

8 A Yeah, they used to visit us, Ole, and Yuri.

9 Q They didn't stay there?

10 A No, they all stay different places.

11 Q So, now the Russians are in Budapest. What
12 happened to you guys next?

13 A Then we was, feel free, and that's it. And we
14 begin to move around the city, was nothing to eat, no
15 water, and we make all kind of -- live just, was no life
16 yet because they have no electricity -- ^{End Tape 3 Side A} been someplace and
17 you were unable to get home before dark, you stay ^{Begin Tape 3, Side B At this time was customary if you}
18 overnight, was very dangerous because, like I said, it was
19 no police force. The Hungarians have no government, they
20 have no army, they have no army, they have no police
21 force, nothing. And lots of people accuse the Russians,
22 they rob you, and maybe they did, you can't prove it, but
23 we know that later the Hungarian gangsters picked up some
24 Russian uniform and they robbed the Hungarians. That's
25 when you was walking on the street, they hold you up.

1 They don't harm you bodily, but take everything. So you
2 have a chance in wintertime, you can run naked. If you
3 want to really get by you okay. If not, it's too bad, but
4 they clean you out. So this way the people said don't go,
5 stay here, so if you stay somewhere you couldn't make home
6 before dark, you stay over, you slept on the floor or
7 whatever you can. This was customary. Until April, May,
8 suddenly they get organized, they repair the street, the
9 water flowing again, the electricity come back, and
10 suddenly --

11 Q Did you guys stay with Rosie then or you said
12 you moved?

13 A No, here again, was thinking something else.
14 You have to know that when the so-called Jewish
15 l-o-k-a-m-i-n-e and you have a nice apartment or you have
16 a shop or something, since you cannot own anymore a shop,
17 or you were taken the concentration camp, that Hungarians
18 true official, through the city program, they can claim
19 you apartment.

20 Q They can?

21 A Yes, they did.

22 Q By the Jewish laws, of course?

23 A And they moved in. They moved in. They moved
24 in your apartment. You couldn't take nothing, like in the
25 province, in the small towns, they take all that you

1 (inaudible), they take the store over, they claim your
2 store. If you hold them up, they move into your home and,
3 this what they did. So when the war was over, and the
4 Jews come back, and they know they have empty apartment or
5 something or (inaudible) I don't know what but it's not
6 there, they claim this apartment and they got it. So this
7 Yuri's mother get apartment in T-o-k-s-h-i-n, the name of
8 the street, and my mother claimed apartment, also in
9 Tokshin, so we was living together.

10 Q Like neighbors like you're next to each other?

11 A Yes, this was very good apartment. This is the
12 first time I was living apartment they have the toilet
13 inside.

14 Q In the same place?

15 A In the apartment. You don't want have to go
16 outside. Luxury, two bedrooms, a kitchen, two bedrooms
17 and the toilet inside. My parents moved over there, lived
18 over there.

19 Q With Bundy?

20 A No, no Bundy, this time have Rosie. He move in
21 with Rosie, and eventually they get married later on so
22 they left. I was living with my parents over there and
23 naturally you have to do something, right? Was nothing
24 to eat in Hungary, and we traveled, which took us maybe 60
25 kilometers, two days, to travel over there. There was no

1 train. We have to catch a train which was not converted,
2 just a (inaudible) because that's nothing, but we was
3 lucky we could go. We have to -- in daytime was all
4 right, but nighttime was afraid of the German army. So we
5 went down to the town, I don't know how far it is from
6 Budapest, they call D-e-b-e-r-e-t-s-o-n, agricultural
7 city, which the farmers have lots of food but have no
8 clothing. So we exchange socks for this and this and
9 this. So you take the merchandise down and we got the
10 food back.

11 Q So you started trading?

12 A Trading and we could sell in the excess
13 (inaudible) the food for ourself, but we got plenty, so we
14 was able to exchange it for money or (inaudible). So we
15 --

16 Q So, between Budapest and Deberetson you did this
17 trading?

18 A About three, four times we did the trading. And
19 finally the persons were begging to moving -- lots of
20 people (inaudible) come on, come on, but they have the
21 inflation. The inflation is what you could buy today, the
22 same amount money could buy the next day, it's not even
23 half of it. But when you went into the store they ask you
24 how you going to pay, in dollar, gold, or Hungarian money.

25 Q You mean American dollars?

1 A Yes. At the beginning, and later the government
2 said no, it's against the law but the people was making
3 all kind of -- black market was booming, lots of people
4 get caught but the black market was booming. And so then
5 (inaudible) begging to come up, more food, the farmer was
6 begging for work and begging, (inaudible), but the
7 inflation was (inaudible) but later on, I don't know what
8 but they changed the money, they used to call P-a-n-g-e-r,
9 what they called h-o-l-e-n-e, and this why -- I don't know
10 (inaudible).

11 Q They just established some kind of economy?

12 A Yeah. Is not so easy but at least you were
13 free, the movie houses opened up, the theaters opened up,
14 you can go swimming and in general the life came around,
15 you see. It's -- Budapest is big city, you can't kill it,
16 you can't. I kept tell you, you can't kill it, you can't,
17 I can tell you, you can't kill this city, absolutely. But
18 was tough but they come alive, they come alive.

19 Q So what happened to you?

20 A So, what happened to me, okay, let's go back,
21 after the liberation, suddenly, in Hungary, they decide
22 that the soccer season going to start. This team was a
23 little boy was played for it. This was a professional
24 team.

25 Q What was the name of it again?

1 A M-a-m-z-a-t-e. But this team was dissolved
2 because (inaudible) Jews. Now after the war, when the
3 first season started, they claimed it and the soccer
4 league give them the privilege to get them back exactly
5 way they left it. So they started the first series. This
6 time I was 20 years old and when tried to organized the
7 team, they called me, so I (inaudible). I don't know,
8 this was in summertime, and --

9 Q In '45?

10 A '45, right, summertime. Actually it was the
11 rush of championship. We used to play Saturday, Sunday,
12 so make up a schedule. Every second week, we used to
13 play, not every Sunday but every second week, we play
14 Saturday and Sunday. So they pick, keep up a schedule, so
15 I play in the first (inaudible) so that is when suddenly,
16 around end of August, maybe it was September, one team for
17 Austria, for Vienna, a Jewish team, (inaudible) Vienna
18 came to Hungary to play a game, and they was looking for
19 Jewish players and I don't know who they contact, but at
20 this time, was the first-class player in Pest was two
21 guys, myself, my cousin George and one guy who they
22 approach but he didn't want to leave Hungary so they
23 approach us and we left.

24 Q So you went to play for (inaudible) Vienna?

25 A Vienna, yes. This was -- I was 20 years old and

1 I believe when I, around October, when I reach my 21st, I
2 was in Vienna, so this is (inaudible). From Vienna went
3 to Brussels, (inaudible) from there I went --

4 Q You were playing on the team in Vienna, and then
5 you played for a team in (inaudible)?

6 A No, no, I played in Vienna, this time, like I
7 said, I was 20 and very promising, I must be promising
8 because I never know this team in Brussels exist. They
9 sought through some channel, they heard about us and they
10 approached us and they asked me if I wanted to go to
11 Brussels, which was very appealing to me, not because, you
12 know, when somebody come to you about you, it's a good
13 feeling, you know, you're recognized, you're good.

14 Q While you played for the team in Vienna were you
15 living in Vienna?

16 A Yes, certainly, I was and so -- so, I went to
17 Brussels and then to Italy.

18 Q So you played, you, this other team offered you
19 a job and you --

20 A A better contract.

21 Q A better contract, okay. I'll do it in sports
22 terms. Got a better contract in Bratislava so now and --

23 A A better team, a better contract, better
24 condition, everything.

25 Q It wasn't necessarily a Jewish team, though, was

1 it?

2 A This was something, no, no, was not a Jewish
3 team. I was the only Jewish player, but this has nothing
4 to do, from now on has nothing to do with being a Jew.

5 Q It just happened to be that the team in Vienna,
6 Hakowa, was a Jewish team?

7 A Right.

8 Q And they were looking for Jewish players and
9 they picked you up, brought you to Bratslava, couldn't
10 care less what religion you were?

11 A Right. He needed a good player, somebody they
12 know --

13 Q So you played there with them?

14 A Yes.

15 Q All right, so you lived there for awhile?

16 A Oh, yes.

17 Q Then you went to Italy?

18 A Went to Italy.

19 Q Well, Prague?

20 A No, no, she want to get into the connection.

21 Q Well, that will be for another time.

22 A So from there, I went to Italy to play as a
23 professional soccer player.

24 Q Where were you based there, in Milan?

25 A Milan and Nivorno.

1 Q And then you played in France?

2 A I played in France, and in Belgium.

3 Q Where in France, what city was it?

4 A Montpellier. This is about 120 kilometers of
5 Marseilles, this was university city, they have a big
6 university, but is wine country.

7 Q Then you went on tour in Belgium?

8 A Belgium, and from there I came to United States.

9 Q And lived happily ever after?

10 A Yes.

11 VOICE: One thing you left out. While you wait in
12 the country your mother said to buy food, but you bought
13 flour, you bought Cream of Wheat?

14 A No, no, no, is not that one. She was telling
15 from when the Russians come in. We was walking on the
16 street and this was very custom of the Russian soldier had
17 some (inaudible) and we they smart enough to get the
18 Hungarians and they left them to work and they stay over
19 there, so you have no choice. Well, you couldn't do
20 nothing, but when they see you not willing to do that they
21 still, they force you, but when they see you doing, they
22 let you alone, but soon they turn around, you (inaudible)

23 Q Right, well --

24 A Okay, what she's talking about then happened to
25 be George and myself, we was walking on the street, and

1 here again, here again, the Russian, hold up, hey, come
2 here, you have to work for us and they all know that sock
3 and sock heavy sock, you see, he's not stupid, he's not
4 going to carry a heavy sock, maybe was 75 parcel, 80
5 parts, I don't know, parcel, 80 parts, I don't know.
6 But it's not very handy when you was working and he has a
7 whole chuckload he have to store it somewhere and we did,
8 and this was wide, big sock, and we was thinking was flour
9 and we needed it. And he counted, how many you have, ask
10 the guy, he said this the last one, he said this the last
11 one, so he said I don't have to bring it then. So I went
12 outside, and I told the guy I need one more. He put on my
13 shoulder, how this was, he said to go into the -- I'm
14 walking on the street and was (inaudible) and he didn't
15 see that. And when they came home they said we have
16 flour, not flour.

17 Q You thought it was flour?

18 A But it was not flour, it was Cream Of Wheat.
19 They even, they --

20 Q There's one little story you left out, though.
21 After the Russians were occupying Budapest or whatever,
22 and I remembered, wasn't there a time when they gathered
23 together a group of people?

24 A Oh, well, here again, well that's true. That's
25 true. That was customary, they was soliciting people, for

1 the -- but this is a true story, this --

2 Q You told me --

3 A Like I told you, that Rosie's sister have the
4 boyfriend, this was my partner, and after, we always, we
5 was very good friend. We always went together and many
6 times happened the Russian hold us up, he said come here,
7 let have your paper. And we show the Hungarian paper.
8 They couldn't read it.

9 Q Where did you get these papers after the war?

10 A I cannot remember. We have some kind of papers.
11 We went to the Jewish community and they give you papers,
12 Jewish, Russian, Rumanian and all kind and he said no,
13 this (inaudible) is no good, he can't read it, let's go
14 and take yours, well --

15 Q What did he expect, you were going to carry
16 papers --

17 A Yes, but doesn't matter. They collecting
18 people, they looking for the people who was in the army.
19 When you told them you Jewish, and happen to be
20 (inaudible), they let you go. If he's not, he said --

21 Q A Russian Jewish soldiers?

22 A Oh, yes. Many say, you Jewish, we have to talk
23 to you Hebrew, or seen me a pay, and then he know you, he
24 let you go. He said I don't give a dammit who you are,
25 let's go, and they used to concentrate the people in

1 (inaudible) but only thing you could do, the first
2 opportunity, you escaped. We were always able to do that
3 even sometimes we was walking, one mile and a half, some
4 destination, we never know because we always escaped and
5 that famil and me, we always (inaudible).

6 Q So you guys were --

7 A Listen to me.

8 Q So there were several times when the two of you
9 because you went around togethr, you were --

10 A Picked up.

11 Q -- summoned by some Russian soldiers to be taken
12 off somewhere and you always escaped from that?

13 A Yes. One day we went together in the city and
14 again, we -- I'm glad you asked for it because -- and we
15 picked up, both of us.

16 Q You were picked up?

17 A We were picked up. They take him to the house
18 and the Russian officer come around, he has a whip in his
19 hand, huge whip. He was speaking fluently Hungarian. He
20 said, I listen, they know Hungarian, so they always try to
21 run, I listened, I have 50 men over here, he said I have
22 to tell you where there's 50 men, he said not 40, not 51,
23 50. He said you going to march in the middle of the
24 street in line, said front of you a soldier, on you're
25 right side a soldier, on your left side a soldier and one

1 in the back and I'm going to walk on the sidewalk. He
2 said, I warn you, nobody try to escape. See that whip.
3 I'm going to hit (inaudible). I said, oh, my gosh, here
4 we go, and I was on the left side marching and my friend
5 was next to me. And we were --

6 Q Inside then, you were right on the edge?

7 A There were three rows, I was on the -- we was
8 marching forward on the left side, he was on the center
9 next to me. And when we was marching, marching, he said
10 no looking, I said no way, that's it, this time we can't
11 do it and way back, suddenly I see a man who was pulling
12 a, pushing a carriage, and was loaded with furniture and
13 two more members pushing, two women was pushing this.

14 Q So he was telling you --

15 A He was --

16 Q He was on the front --

17 A (Inaudible two men was pushing, they was loaded
18 with furniture and when the man see this transport coming,
19 he dropped everything, he run away. So one of the one
20 woman come to beg him to pull it, so, we were walking the
21 opposite direction and they pass by me, on my left side.
22 Suddenly have a thought. When they pass by me, I make a
23 left turn and grab and begin to push, and then nobody see
24 that. And the woman say, what you doing. I said keep
25 quiet, I'm going to help you, and then I was waiting, when

1 the whip going to hit my back and so only thing I have to
 2 make, make a quick left turn and because they was close by
 3 me, only thing have to wait for, turn and nobody see that.
 4 And two blocks later, I see the transport went into the
 5 house and I didn't see my friend since. He come back from
 6 Russia after five years. That's a true story. Why come
 7 back, because he was in Russia and he's been on the
 8 socialist side, they was educated him, they sent him to
 9 the school and when he come back Hungary, he got excellent
 10 job, but he was spent five years over there. I didn't see
 11 him since.

12 Q Well you were out of Hungary?

13 A Well, naturally, I know he is back there, I
 14 would like to have met him but --

15 Q You haven't seen him since then?

16 A No, not since the time he was standing next to
 17 me.

18 Q Wow. And he is living in Hungary now?

19 A Yeah. That's what I tell you, is pure luck.

20 Q You are a lucky person.

21 A Certainly. I considered myself very, very
 22 lucky. Are you lucky, too? This is true, this is pure
 23 luck. It could be -- okay, I give you example. I give you
 24 example. George and myself, we was working, because many
 25 times we have nothing to eat, just to have a cup of soup,

1 we might have to visit relatives which is the other side
2 of the city, at least three, four of us walk, this was all
3 we have to do. Get some food, stay one hour or two, so we
4 don't have to hang around the street. And one night,
5 George and myself --

6 Q This was after --

7 A No, is during -- before the Russians come in.

8 Q Oh.

9 A We was walking the street, George and myself.

10 Q After you escaped from camp?

11 A Yes.

12 Q In that three months?

13 A Yes, walking the street, nighttime, naturally
14 was black out.

15 Q Wasn't it dangerous for you to be out there?

16 A Well, but you have to go out there. In
17 wintertime, 5:00 is dark over there. We was walking on
18 the street but we couldn't walk on the sidewalk, because
19 was all the damage. The homes get damage, so we was
20 walking in the street and we was walking slowly.
21 Suddenly, about two hundred meters front of us, a big
22 shell, if we walk a little bit faster, you just walk right
23 into that. Pure luck, that's true. I remember was
24 walking so slowly (inaudible). If we would walk faster,
25 he would walk right into the shell. I have friends who

1 survived the whole thing. We were together. And when the
 2 Russians come in, and the guy push his head up, he was
 3 hiding in the doorway, and heard some noise, he push his
 4 head up, he want to know what happened, he got shot.
 5 Right in the head. And he survived everything, he
 6 couldn't survive one more minute. It's pure luck,
 7 absolutely pure luck. Everybody who, (inaudible), Zoey,
 8 Yuri, who else is there, (inaudible) is pure luck, pure
 9 luck. Everybody was alive, that is why we satisfied
 10 because everything we have, bad or good, we alive because
 11 of ourself lucky, absolutely. No question about it. They
 12 have million-million chance they could put away or be
 13 killed, died, they was bombing the city, you could be
 14 shot. You see they have a curfew. After 5:00 you
 15 couldn't go in the street and all the soldiers, if you see
 16 moving something, you shoot. Was dark, they don't know
 17 who's moving, they were shooting each other.

18 Q Another soldier?

19 A So in the morning you wake up, you see a dead
 20 soldier on the street. They don't know who's moving over
 21 there, everything moving, you shoot it. I'm not talking
 22 about Jews, I'm talking about innocent people who was
 23 sitting in the apartment, second, third floor, suddenly
 24 the shell come in, hit them. It was very common you ride
 25 the streetcar and you see the apartment up on the fifth

1 floor, there is a big hole. The whole family has died
 2 from the shell falling in that, and in nighttime, when the
 3 morning, you waked up, you see a whole pile of dead body
 4 lay, German soldiers, Hungarian, Jews, everybody right on
 5 the street. The people, let's say some dead body was
 6 laying on the middle of the street and some soldier,
 7 driving in the car, not even bothered to shovel the body,
 8 just divert over there, nothing take time to push them
 9 aside. Life was worth nothing. You just wake up the next
 10 morning and you see a pile of the dead bodies over there.
 11 You lucky it was wintertime but there was who knows what
 12 sickness could spread around it. After the one Russian
 13 come in, you could see chuckload of dead bodies frozen,
 14 they just take them to the cemetery and clean up the city.
 15 Certainly like you heard horror story about that like they
 16 have the homes like you're talking about, which under the
 17 protection of certain embassies, stand the Hungarian
 18 Nazi's that went into the house.

19 Q Crossman?

20 A Yes.

21 Q How did you say --

22 A Nilush Keris. Arrow cross because they have a
 23 cross.

24 Q Nilush Keris?

25 A Nilush Keris, arrow in a cross. Not, they have

1 not, how you call that -- not swastika. (inaudible) They
 2 have arrow, so, anyhow and they have (inaudible). So
 3 anyhow, they went into the, it's a fact, they went into
 4 the house and asked him, what all of you doing, he said
 5 well, we have the papers, we under the protection of this
 6 and this. He say may I see papers. They collected all
 7 the papers. Now you have no papers. So they take him up
 8 and shoot him. Said now you have no papers, so what they
 9 can do. They have copies but you see, copies not -- and
 10 in the morning you find them all piled up on the sidewalk.
 11 You could see the bullets in the body. But used to
 12 have --

13 Q The Swedes were able to hold --

14 A You see, these houses, outside they have that
 15 emblem, the Swede and they said this house is subject to
 16 protection of the embassy or the Swiss, and everybody who
 17 stay in the house, they have that paper which state they
 18 are subject to be citizen and the first available place
 19 they are going to leave the country so that nobody is
 20 going to bother them. But later they find out they can do
 21 this and they did. But how you used to call that?

22 Q It's probably in that book I've got. Just for
 23 the record you lived on Meshted Usta when you went to
 24 labor camp?

25 A Yes, right.

1 Q There is something you wanted to add?

2 A It's on now?

3 Q Yes.

4 A In the beginning this interview or confession,
5 or whatever you call it, talk about growing up under the
6 circumstances special and tender age, growing a boy, back
7 when I'm a teenager, and all during the years you heard
8 nothing of the first thing to ever able to create the, how
9 bad the Jews are, they call dirty Jews, filthy Jews and
10 rich Jew and whatever they call you and you really willing
11 to believe that's your fault because you are Jew, you're
12 no good and all other peoples' problem is created by you.
13 So, this burden, to carry on your shoulder years and years
14 and years and many times, (inaudible) but if somebody
15 asked you, I would never, ever hide except during the --
16 this time when if you don't hide, it might cost your life
17 or something. So anyhow, after the war, I feel free but I
18 was not completely liberated. When was still staying in
19 Europe in 1954, when I emigrate to United States, if I
20 don't have to tell who I am I didn't, but when I came to
21 United States, suddenly, I experience, I felt say
22 something which I never experienced, I never feel in my
23 whole life. First time when I watch television in United
24 States suddenly see things which was contrary to what you
25 see in Europe. They talking good about Jews. They

1 joking about Jews. And you hear a few Yiddish (inaudible)
2 television which I couldn't believe it. You listen to
3 television so they comic come around, joking about the
4 Jews, was something moved, something good, something like
5 you thirsty and you have a nice cool glass of ice water.
6 So anyhow and suddenly (inaudible) I told the people, I'm
7 Jewish because I didn't want to embarrass them in case
8 they say something and they feel sorry about it. But
9 anyhow, you see movies which is talking good about the
10 Jews and you're talking to the people and they don't call
11 nobody dirty Jew, filthy Jews or whatever is that. But
12 still, took me seven long years 'til one morning I waked
13 up and I was thinking about it, oh, look at me, I don't
14 have that heavy burden which was used to carry all my life
15 on my shoulder. Suddenly I feel like free. I feel like
16 liberated. *End Tape 3, Side B*

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