

INTERVIEW WITH: CERKA KIRTZ

INTERVIEWER:

DATE:

PLACE:

TRANSCRIBER: RUTH S. PRUSHAN

Q You are?

A Cerka Kirtz.

Q And you're from originally?

A I was born in Auschwitz, Germany; in Auschwitz, in a concentration camp in Auschwitz at the very end, and my parents are from Lodz, Poland.

Q They were sent to probably a number of camps.

A My parents left home at a very young age. My father was from a family of a lot of children, nine brothers and sisters, and he left home at the age of fourteen, and within the ghetto in Poland.

Q Do you know what ghetto?

A The Lodz ghetto. And then he never saw his family again after it started and then was put in the concentration camp.

I don't know a whole lot. I know the camps, some of the camps that he was in, but my parents never spoke about it a great deal. My mother died in a mental institution three years ago. She was catatonic. She wasn't a depressed person, but one day we

came home and she was just sitting at the kitchen table and she just wouldn't say anything, you know. So they thought it would be better if she was institutionalized and she died there three years ago.

And I came here to see if I could find some of my identity --

Q. Yes.

A. -- and help my father speak about it and also find relatives.

My father was also in Dachau. My mother was in Bergen-Belsen and Buchenwald. And I was in a D.P. camp in Germany after the war.

Q. You can't remember much of the war.

A. I remember the D.P. camp. I remember the voyage over here very vividly, you know. It's because I came by myself at a very young age. My parents weren't allowed to leave for some reason. They came later.

So I came. A joint organization sponsored me and my family. My father wanted to come to a small town in the United States because he was -- originally he was born in a small town in Poland, but then at the age of five or six or whatever, he moved to Lodz and Lodz is a very big city, and so I think he wanted to move to a smaller area, also an area where they were into a lot of immigrants that he would have to talk

about it.

My father is a third-generation tailor and he had a very small tailor shop in our town. We're probably the only European Jews you know there. He carries a very heavy burden for what happened to him, you know, as far as I can tell. He doesn't talk about it at all hardly. He's only talked about it actually once. And he thinks of my mother a great deal, you know.

Q When were they married? During the war?

A During the war.

Q During the war.

A During the war. Right before or during. And I don't know how -- I don't know any of the circumstances behind, you know. I would hope the future will bring -- I'll be able to have my father talk to me about it more.

It was very hard when we first came here to see people embracing each other, because I've never had that family-type of environment. I've never had any cousins or aunts or uncles or grandparents, and it's not easy really.

Q Have you been looking? You don't know what to look for, though, do you?

A As far as my relatives are concerned?

Q Yes.

A. Well, I pulled that out of my father before I came, the names of his brothers and sisters, how old they were, where they were born, you know, and when he saw them last. And I have one possible match. I just pray, you know. It's an American first name, though, you know, so I'm not really sure, you know. She was born the same year, you know, as my father's sister in Lodz, so I will call her when I get home on behalf of my father.

My father is very European, you know. He doesn't read or write English. He doesn't like to ride in cars. I just taught him how to use a telephone. It's like he just stepped off the boat. You know what I mean? His English is very broken. Like he can speak, but it's broken. He lives, unfortunately, in a very insecure kind of environment.

And for myself, it's like the second-generation workshop helped me a lot, because everything they said was very true in the second-generation workshop. They said like roles are switched. Children become the parents and that's -- I spent my whole life in this country parenting my parents, so it's --

A. Taking care of them.

Q. -- and like my community doesn't understand that. They want to know how come I'm so old and I'm not married

and I don't have a big degree, you know, and what happened to me, you know, and I felt bad about that, you know, thinking about the failure of who I am, but this makes me realize that, you know, I have my whole life and things happen for a reason.

You know, and I'm not sorry I devoted myself to my parents at all.

Q. Are there any other children?

A. I'm the only one.

Q. So it's all on you then.

A. It's -- well, either I have -- we all have choices. You know, I realized that much further down the line. I myself was in a mental institution when I was young, when I was sixteen. And --

Q. Depression or what?

A. A buildup of things, you know, not being able to adapt to this country. Like I didn't speak English for a long time. I got pushed right through school. And the reason I didn't want to was because I used to get beat up and picked on a lot, you know, because I was Jewish, because I was an immigrant, I didn't speak English and because I was a big child, it was all attributed to the things.

And it's hard to understand. And I was living with a family that ironically was not Jewish

and it was hard. You know, it was just not an easy thing. And like you store away all these things and you store away all these things. Just as my parents have stored away their experience, I have stored away mine and in hopes that they will all be straightened out, but you really need to talk about it to get it straightened out.

And my experience of institutionalization was a total waste. It just, you know, didn't do anything because they didn't talk about my culture, my background, my parents, you know. They wanted to know why I couldn't adapt to this country primarily, which I had a hard time doing.

Q Well, if your parents didn't adapt --

A I know.

Q -- (Inaudible) -- and you came here alone --

A And no family here, you know, of course, and no friends here. We came, you know, strictly by ourselves. There was a shul, but they didn't -- you know, they were nice, but they didn't know what to do, you know. It was hard.

In the institution that I was in -- I was in like three institutions in a year's span. And they didn't even diagnose you before they started giving you the treatment, you know. And I'm really lucky I'm a survivor because I received a hundred electrotherapies,

you know.

Q Your mother never told you about anything?

A No. She once spoke to me just briefly about a friend of hers who had a child like exterminated in the camps, you know, but --

Q But not how she held on to you.

A No.

Q It's amazing that she would be able --

A No.

Q -- to hold on to you.

A No. The theory was it was like towards the end when the liberation was coming that she had me, and that possibly she became pregnant in the camp, you know.

I don't know and my father doesn't even want to talk about it at all. So --

Q I don't know if this would be a suggestion you can take or not, but I've been interviewing people all week -- and when was it? -- this morning -- but what I wanted to suggest is that maybe you want to bring this tape home to your father and have him listen ot it.

This man hasn't been able to talk for twenty-five years, and now he feels free -- feels freer.

A To talk about it.

Q It's always a burden. It's something they covered

up. They couldn't think.

A. They never been around people -- my father has never been around people who, you know, are open and you know, like -- this is after the war, my father, my mother, you know, the group from, you know, that survived.

Q. Oh, this is your mother?

A. This was my mother here.

Q. Oh, that's your mother.

A. This is my father.

Q. (Inaudible) You look like your mother. And are these all survivors?

A. Uh-huh.

Q. This is taken where?

A. In Poland.

Q. Oh, Poland. This is before --

A. Well, no. I guess this was taken in Germany. It must have been taken in Germany because my parents went to Germany after the war.

Q. You were in American already.

A. No. This was in -- oh, I was, yes. Yes, I was. Yes.

Q. Oh. You look like one of those little European kids that --

A. I was. I was a very -- my father used to -- all European people used to say here "Well, don't discredit



that part." It's like he just stepped off the boat, you know, and it's so hard for me. You know, like he, you know, is so insecure about things still, and it was hard.

When my mother died he had a lot of guilt that -- you know, in a lot of ways. He wasn't able to communicate to her, and he didn't want to go anyplace. My mother was more -- she wanted to if my father would have gone with her and not by herself, but he didn't want to, you know.

She was afraid to, but she was more willing to take a chance, you know, than my father. She learned how to read and write English. And my father just, you know, sat in his tailor shop and worked every day, you know.

Q He made a living.

A He made a living. Right, a good living. I don't discount my parents at all. I love them dearly. It's just that it's been very hard, you know, to be, you know. At the second generation they were talking about the second generation carries on, you know, they're doctors and lawyers, you know, and nobody at the second-generation meeting, the one I went to one meeting, talked about the pain of it all, you know, the pain of the second generation, and there's a lot, you know, really --

Q Well, I --

A. -- depending on the circumstances.

Q. There werent' two sisters there, were there? Two Polish sisters, who were born in Poland. They were thirty and twenty-six, and they came here for that reason, because the thing they said was that they were the parents all their life. And they were the caretakers and they were responsible. And the oldest one said that all her life she had to feel that she had to make her mother happy. Their household wasn't happy and they felt that it was their fault, so they had to make their parents happy, to do nothing to upset their parents, and they said that the hardest part was getting married because then things -- they had terrible guilt about it.

A. Right.

Q. Again depriving their parents of a family, you know, taking the family away from them. So they came down here to deal with some of that stuff.

A. The second-generation meetings have definitely helped me psychologically and inspired me. I haven't shared a whole lot with a lot of people here, you know, because I don't know how to, you know, really.

When I mentioned where I was born, they said, "How could that be?"

I would say, "I don't know." You know, it just happened. I don't know how, you know. You

know, I wish I could tell you how. You know, I wish I could tell you all the circumstances behind that but, unfortunately, I can't, you know.

Q. Yes.

A. I don't know if my life would have been better if I would have lived in an all-Jewish community, you know. I don't know. As it is, I'm a very flexible person. I'm a very passive, peaceful person. I'm very thankful for that, you know; and for all the things that I've experienced, I could be many other things, but G-d always watches over me. You know, He's watched over me at this convention. You know, I didn't have tickets to the concert and I needed it.

And I was standing here in the lobby crying and thinking about my mother one day because they were dancing and singing (inaudible). And this lady came up to me and she said, "I've got this extra ticket. Do you want to go to the concert?" I said yes and it was very uplifting, you know, spiritually, very uplifting.

And I could think of my mother in a more joyous sense because she would have enjoyed that. She really in her heart wanted to go to Isreal, and she didn't want to leave my father. My father, he didn't want to go, you know. So I'm going to keep talking to my father. All I can do is, you know, not fight with him,

but talk to him in a kind way and try to persuade him really to come to Isreal.

Because in Isreal there's so many people that have experienced --

Q. Yes.

A. -- and there's a true unitedness there. Here it's very hard. You know, if you don't know someone real well, you're not -- you know, they don't hug you, they don't shake your hand, they don't even say hello to you. That's very hard, you know. It's not easy. It was nice to see -- at first it was difficult, but then it was a very warm feeling to see people doing that, you know, caring about one another.

Q. So your father still doesn't speak English.

A. Brokenly. Yes, he does, it's broken. He doesn't read or write English.

Q. (Inaudible)

A. If they were simply structured, yes. Like I brought him a couple of books, Yiddishe books. They have to be simple, because, you know, the education is very limited.

Q. You're talking books and I'm talking can he listen.

A. Sure.

Q. (Inaudible) Because one man came up to me and said -- was interviewed yesterday and said, I want to add

something."

And when we sat down, he couldn't speak. Fine. We put the tape on; we took the tape off. Finally by the end of the tape he was relaxed. He could work it through.

A. Yes.

Q. But your father might respond to somebody -- uh-huh -- you know, that kind of sound, crying, crying.

A. Well, up until about three years ago my father was not able to sleep, you know. When they spoke about that at the meetings, it's true. He would wake up reliving his experience of being captured, you know.

Q. Yes.

A. I think the earlier stages were quite vivid in his mind and then the camps, of course, but the beginning, you know, the transition, you know, and he would wake up sweating and yelling. And I remember that for many a years. My mother not so much, but my father very much so.

Q. Well, is he hypersensitive to (inaudible).

A. Yes. I think so. My mother was a very nervous type of individual. I picked up a lot of her, you know, stress factors, you know. My health problems are attributed a lot to stress, you know. You know, I live a pretty healthy life, but the stress factor is incredible

to the physical body. I have arthritis now, you know.

Q. You still live at home with your father.

A. Yes. He lives in the same apartment building I do. You know, he lived with me after mother died and now I just said we have to have separate apartments, so he lives in the apartment building with me, you know.

Q. Where do you work?

A. I'm unemployed right now. Since I've been ill for a year and plus employment is very hard in Michigan, really hard. But, you know, I have some savings that I, you know, can live on for a while, but --

Q. You don't know how to sew?

A. No, I didn't think of being my father's trade, you know. He -- his parents lived very humbly, you know, and when we first came to this country one of the things I remember is my father in establishing the tailor shop would often barter, you know, like they did in Europe.

My mother, who wanted to be more American, said you can't -- "Don't do that," you know. And he would bring a goose home or he would -- you know, it's really -- gets funny. And it would -- you know, my mother was really -- she didn't want to be super-American but she wanted to blend in more than my father did. And his shop was just one room, you know, very

European.

Q. Yes.

A. And he brought his sewing machine and my mother brought her pots and pans.

Q. Right, the important things.

A. That's right, the important things. So -- but for the future I just hope that I can start living life. You know what I mean.

Q. You're -- (inaudible).

A. Yes. And it's not easy, you know, because I pick up so much of my parents' anxieties and fears, and, you know, I look at the world and I think there's a whole opportunity out there, but then I look at the world as a very threatening world, too, at the same time.

I picked up a lot of good characteristics from my parents, as well. Like my father, he talks to anybody in the street and he likes -- you know, he doesn't say very much but he'll say -- he will, you know, talk to them.

He walks a lot because he was transported from one camp to another a lot by foot. He did speak one time about being transported from Buchenwalk to Dachau, which was a two hundred mile walk, and it was in the winter with only a striped uniform and boots, and weighed ninety pounds at that time.

And he spoke about that experience, but other than that -- that was a very hard experience for him. So he walks a lot now. He doesn't like, you know, other modes of transportation.

Q. Well, did he have (inaudible) too?

A. Well, his family -- and his family was (inaudible) too. Of course, he left home so young and everything that it was hard. And we lived an Orthodox existence for a long time by ourselves because the shul was not Orthodox.

And I decided about the age of twenty-six that I live amongst all these Christians, you know, and these people, I have to find out about them. I have to find out how they live their lives and why and not be so anxious because -- I'm still anxious but it's better now, you know.

So when I did, my parents were very upset over that, you know. I mean, they didn't want me to. And then I stopped Orthodox tradition. My father is not Orthodox now. So I'm glad I did that. I really am. I think it strengthened, you know, my spiritualism --

Q. Yes.

A. -- as opposed to weaken it in any way. My parents were afraid that it would weaken it, you know, but, you know, it strengthened it, you know. And I like



attended a lot of churches and I was exploring and seeing what, you know -- because there are so many conceptions about, you know, things. You know, I had a lot of misconceptions of people. I had misconceptions about the Jews, you know, about what they believe and who they are.

On the plane over here I was very nervous. The man next to me asked me where I was going and I told him to a gathering of the Holocaust, and he had never heard that word, holocaust, before, if you can imagine that.

And I explained it to him and he was astounded, you know. It astounded me that, you know, imagine people have never met a Jew before. You can't imagine that, but .... (pause).

Q. This was your first plane trip?

A. Yes, first time away from home.

Q. Do you mind flying?

A. It's nervous.

Q. Yes, it is, seeing that power.

A. It's nerving, you know, but I'm very glad I came, you know. It's been draining in a lot of ways, but it's been inspirational, you know, really a whole lot, to hear people speak Yiddish and to see the old Yiddishe ways, you know. You know, it's nice. And they were dancing the

hora singing at the Washington Monument last night -- and that was just real touching -- as they were waiting for the buses.

And everywhere you went people were like joyous, you know. It was a joyous occasion, and I was glad because I thought in some way it would be a powerful occasion in a lot of ways, but it has been but overall, I think, the spirit has been very overwhelming, very overwhelming.

Everyone has such a good story and, you know, the culture is so --

Q It's so strong.

A So strong, that's right, and the tradition is so strong, it's just really incredible.

Q I mean, we have to be a superior people because we didn't die of typhus, we didn't --

A Right.

Q -- die of (inaudible), the cold or starve so they had to be really strong and clever.

A I remember the voyage was like twelve days over here. I don't know how I remember this because I was very young but it was up and down, up and down all twelve days and everyone was so sick and it was a very crowded condition.

Q Was it all kids?

A. Oh, no, mostly adults. I was -- you know, some people were watching over me and I remember when we got into the harbor in New York, everyone ran to the side of the boat to look out at the Statue of Liberty, you know. And then the pushing and the large crowds reminded me of Ellis Island so much because there was so much pushing and shoving, and I was this little kid.

Q. All by yourself.

A. Well, there was like a couple that was helping me, you know. And then the UJA met me once I got off Ellis Island to direct me. They had somebody take me to Kalamazoo, but there were lines and lines of people, you know, on Ellis Island.

And I cried -- I remember doing a lot of crying and the people that were with me said, "Okay, cry, but don't cough and don't sneeze and don't act sick, because if you do, you will have to stay here. You won't be permitted to go, you know." And they did a lot of thorough examining of everyone there, and if you had the least inclination to be not well, they would put you to one side, you know, and you could be there for a while.

Q. Do you know what that is? (Inaudible) In Germany were you sick? Did you have any kinds of weakness?

A. And then the language barrier was a problem on Ellis Island, you know. They didn't always have enough

people that spoke the languages of the people, you know, that were there. And it was a very confusing time really. A lot of this reminded me of that, because people didn't know what direction to go and where to go and that's just the way it was on Ellis Island, you know, really.

And the train was really huge, you know. I took the train from New York to Kalamazoo.

Q. Grand Central Station probably.

A. Yes. It was all, you know (unintelligible). It did. I remember a Red Cross lady giving me a doll at the station in New York. And I kept that doll. I still have that doll. And I clutched her; I remember that. I was very young and I don't know how I remember all of this but I do, you know.

Q. (Inaudible) anticipation.

A. Well, I had great anticipation; you know what I mean. A lot of them kissed the ground when they got off the boat, you know. You know, this country has been good; really it has been, tremendously good.

Most families are doing fairly well here and their children are doing well. I'm doing well, too. It's just -- you know, I'm not hungry and I have a place to live and I, you know, have basically good health so I'm lucky, you know, really.

And, you know, my mother, she lived a good life, it's just that she kept things so much, you know. And I tell my father you can't -- you know, don't -- he feels responsible somewhat, you know, that he didn't -- he couldn't do what my mother wanted to do, you know. He didn't want to go to Isreal. He didn't want to do this and -- he feels that really heavily in his heart.

But he was afraid and he still is, yes. And then the Jewish community, you know, is not supportive of that, you know, where we live, unfortunately, and at this point it might be better -- I'm sure it would be better if he moved into another community.

Q Well, he has his customers, right?

A Well, he's retired, see?

Q Oh, he is.

A But he sews at home still for people that he likes, you know, but as far as the business is concerned, he doesn't have it any longer.

Q Going back to this place, I think it's a real important (inaudible) that this Ellis Island, because (inaudible) in the beginning and that was in the beginning.

A That's right.

Q You know, you can purge some of those fears you had coming to Ellis Island coming here because (inaudible).

A. That's right. It's definitely a great big thing for me to come here, you know, really. And it was a last minute thing. A Christian lady called me, a friend of mine, and she says, you know, "You have to go."

And I said, "Oh, you know, Mary, I just" -- and I hadn't even gotten ticket, you know. And Saturday our bank is only open till noon and she called me like at ten o'clock.

I said all right and I went down and I ran down and I got my ticket.

Q. How did she know about --

A. It was in the paper and then my father --

Q. (Inaudible)

A. Yes. And then my father got the forms and he just never told me about it. You know, he didn't say anything. And I called him and I asked him about it and he said he wasn't going to go. You know he wanted me to go, but, you know, he wasn't sure. And so I said, "Well, I'm going." He was happy, you know, but he didn't really push, push, push me to go, but since I made the decision to go he said, "Okay, go," you know. So she helped.

Q. (Inaudible)

A. Yes.

Q. Did you bring him posters and stuff?

A. I brought him a few things. I bought him two

Yiddishe books to read and I bought a rabbinical statue (inaudible). But everybody was pushing and shoving so. I had to borrow money kind of, you know, to come here, and so I brought this rabbinical statue for the people that I'm staying with because they've been so good. And it was like the biggest investment I made here, but I hope whoever finds it enjoys it because it was nice.

And the pushing and shoving gave me the greatest of anxiety, you know, and reminded me, like I said, a lot. And people were very fearful of getting separated from their friends and their relatives here. That reminded me a lot, too, because, you know, they were just like panicked if everybody didn't get on the same bus. You know, and even though they were going to the same locale --

Q. Right.

A. -- even though, you know, when you get off a bus you could wait and see all the buses get off and you can see your loved one get off that bus, it was not like they were going to go to another area.

Q. Right.

A. But like they were panicked, and they just really, you know --

Q. All the same things.

A. That's right. The older Yiddishe -- real older

people especially, and very outspoken in a lot of ways, too. I noticed, you know, many a bus driver, they're more (unintelligible) with the people here. They were very good about it. Everybody was so good about it, you know. I didn't see any tremendous arguments amongst people even though there could have been some gigantic ones, honestly.

Q Well, I was interviewing a couple, a man and his wife, the man was talking -- he was so nervous -- mike, mike.

A You know, last night on the way back the bus ride, depending on the bus drivers we had, like some of them dropped people off at undesignated spots because it was on the way. They were nice enough to do that.

And one lady yesterday was dropped off at an undesignated spot. And she got on the bus last night and she told the bus driver (unintelligible) "is one of my stops." And she said, "Well, you're taking me there, because the bus driver took me there last night."

And he says, "I'm not taking you there."

They weren't really fighting. He was trying to be polite, but he worked for a different company and they wouldn't allow him to do that. And so a worker took her, you know, to where she had to go. But I



thought, "Oh, you know."

But we -- you know, it was -- overall, you know, it was -- there was one man. He was like -- he had a beautiful cantor's voice and he sang to us on the bus. You know, when I hear Yiddishe songs -- I cried because my mother -- you know, I didn't think I would remember those songs, but I do. I remember all the songs that she sang when I was very young. That's because her mother sang them to her and they just are passed on, you know.

Even though I don't know Hebrew, even though I know Yiddish brokenly, you know -- I knew it quite well at one time but we don't speak it that much. I'm trying to speak English to my father more now. It's as though I know it very well, you know, really. It doesn't escape you.

Q. And then when you hear it, it starts to come back.

A. I didn't have an opportunity to talk to a lot of second generation here. I talked to survivors. Maybe that's because I don't know -- I was insecure about talking to them. I don't know why. I think because --

Q. Maybe you want to talk to survivors to understand your mother a little more.

A. Yes, my parents and their relationship to their parents, you know. Yes, I --

Q One man said his eyes had been burning from looking at people. I mean he looked for his relatives and didn't find them.

A My eyes -- I kept going to that computer and going. Today I went to it and I was just shocked to see my name up there on the wall there. I said, "I just can't believe this," you know. Because I had been going, you know, to look and I haven't seen anything, and today, you know, they have my name up there and I was just --

Q Oh, boy.

A -- frantic about it. So now, who knows, you know, this lady lives in Florida, you know, and she's the same age as my father's sister and came from Lodz, so it's a possibility really she changed her first name.

Q Well, how did they find her on the computer?

A Right.

Q By putting in your information.

A Right.

Q And you were looking for a number of relatives.

A Right. I put ten people in and, you know, you have to fill out these separate sheets and tell where they were last seen, where they were born, their birth dates and their names. You know, they find them for you -- try to.

There were twins united. There was a

couple that had been married -- you probably heard the story -- for forty years, both of them, and were remarried here. Each had families who were married, you know. There are tremendous reunions here.

Q We were busy up here taping individually, so we didn't get down on the floor much. That must have been (inaudible).

A Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Q They had been previously married --

A Right.

Q -- and thought each were dead.

A Right.

Q And they had gotten remarried to others.

A It was kind of awkward, yes. I wasn't there, but people were talking about it all over, you know, when they came into the hall here, all about it.

A lot of friends found each other here in the convention, which was nice.

Q I talked with one woman who recognized her childhood friends. They didn't recognize her, but she said she had a good eye for that stuff.

A Well, my father gave me those pictures. Of course, you know, pictures are hard. I'm going to send a lot of these pictures I have of my father's family to -- and anything I can collect from my father to Yom Ha-Shoa

in Isreal, because -- and also I'm going to write my experience for the Holocaust Memorial.

Q Yes. Okay, is there anything else you want to say?

A Just that I'm glad that I am who I am. I wasn't certain of that before I came here --

Q Oh.

A -- completely, you know, because I had a lot of doubts, a lot of, you know, a lot of doubts about my identity and was -- am I responsible for what I'm not, or where does it all lie, you know. Overall I'm grateful that I'm alive. It's a miracle and I appreciate every day, you know. But I'm very glad I am who I am and that, you know, being married and having those things come whenever in life and then I don't have to feel guilty about what I'm not, be happy about what I am.

Q Right.

A And I'm glad I've been able to help as much as I could with my parents. It hasn't been an easy role, you know. It's just one that I, you know, accepted. No one forced it upon me in essence, but, you know, it was expected kind of, but I made the choice and I realize I would like to get around more, you know, Jewish cultural things and experience more of that. I think that would help me. But I'm very glad I came. Learned a lot,

you know, a whole lot. It was good -- heartaches, but --

Q (Inaudible) you've been carrying.

A Yes.

Q And he didn't understand.

A Yes. He understands. It takes a risking --

Q That's right.

A To do that, and that I'm going to remember. It takes a risking, you know, and try to do a little more of that in life.

Q I'm very glad to hear that.

A Because my father, he -- I cannot, I realize now I cannot accept the whole responsibility, you know, and, you know, I can't and I don't think I'm going to, you know. He's going to try and have to understand that. Because he's surviving without me now and I'm here, you know.

I don't think I've every been away for a whole week.

Q It was a very brave step of yours -- not to have ever flown before or ever been out of Kalamazoo?

A Not really, just to surrounding towns, you know.

Q There's a big world out here.

A It's a big world out here. It really is a big world really, and -- but, you know, it's a good world.

Q It sure is.

A. It's a real good world.