

HOLOCAUST MEDIA PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH: MOLLY INGSTER

INTERVIEWER:

DATE:*

PLACE:**

TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE PRATT

*1983--38 years from date of 1945, according to interview.

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JOANNE PRATT

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1 A My name is Molly Ingster. I was born M-a-r-k-a
2 P-e-s-k-e-t-s-k-a in V-i-l-n-a, Poland.

3 In 1939 the war broke out, and I gave birth to
4 a little baby. In 1941 the Nazis came in, the Germans,
5 and we had to go to the ghetto, to Vilna ghetto. And it
6 was very, very tragic. I had to go -- they gave us only
7 twenty-four hours. In the evening they told us we had
8 to leave our home and everything, and go to the ghetto.

9 On the following day I had my baby by one hand
10 and my mother by the other hand, and that's when we went
11 in the ghetto. Because the men previously, two months
12 before the ghetto, they took my brother with his wife and
13 children, my husband, my father, and my brother-in-law;
14 they took them out of their beds and they shot them. They
15 killed them all on P-u-n-a-r-i/P-a-n-a-r-i.

16 So, there was nobody left except me and my mother
17 and the baby at my house. We went into the ghetto. It
18 was raining, I remember, like today. It was about quarter
19 to 4:00. And there were a lot of people laying on the
20 streets half dead; some were already dead. Because all the
21 people who lived in that part where they separated, segre-
22 gated, that was the ghetto, they took them previously out
23 and they shot them in Punari. In the rabbi's house of mass -

24 Q Mass grave.

25 A Mass grave. And we came in and knocked on every door,

1 but they were all filled up. And my baby was crying, and
2 I didn't know what to do. Finally, it got pretty dark.
3 I came to a house and they let me in. My mother, me, and
4 my child. There were forty people in one room, and there
5 was not leave even bed to sit. There was just room for
6 standing.

7 And I was standing by the door and in the final
8 little square I put my mother down, and she was holding my
9 child.

10 Q Do you remember some of the feelings that you had?

11 A The feelings.

12 Q Anxiety --

13 A I was in shock. I was twenty-one, not even twenty-one
14 years old.

15 And then starts the horror. We had no food.
16 They were grabbing people from the streets and killing them.
17 Every single day they took out people. You know, they used
18 to make like blocks there, you know. They mad y-u-n-a-r-
19 a-s-h, you know, and Jewish police, you know. There were
20 two ghettos. It was called the big ghetto and the small
21 ghetto across the street, you know.

22 And you need a position, you know, to be able --
23 I mean, you go to work to be leaving the ghetto, you see.
24 So I didn't have a position, so I was hiding with my child
25 and with my mother. And then one morning the Germans came

1 and they took us -- they took me to work, you know, out-
2 side the camp, you know, at T-r-i-t-e. Because we had no
3 bread. My baby was hungry, you know. And when I came
4 back one of the soldiers gave me a piece of bread, so I
5 had for my mother and me. And for the baby, I was trying
6 to get from anybody I could a slice of bread, you know, to
7 feed my child. Because there was so much starvation.

8 The children in the streets were swollen from
9 hunger, you know; and naked and barbarous, you know. And
10 it was terrible.

11 -- stop talking. I can't go on --

12 And I remember we had Yom Kipper, you know, be-
13 fore the Jewish holidays.

14 The police came in and they said, these three
15 blocks, you have to get dressed. It was in the evening,
16 like 7:00 o'clock at night. They have to get people
17 who had -- because they took most of the people out and
18 killed them, so there were a little space, you know, so my
19 mother could lay down, you know, and my baby next to her.
20 And I was still standing. I never had a place where to sit
21 down or lay down.

22 So they said all the people have to get dressed,
23 because they were going to take the people to work from
24 these three buildings, you know. And so when everybody
25 got up and got dressed, I took off my clothes and I laid

1 down, because that's the first time I could lay down, you
2 know.

3 And -- but somehow, I don't know, by miracle,
4 they went around and took the block, the house, before us
5 and behind us, and our house at 12:00 o'clock at night they
6 didn't took.

7 But my sister, my oldest sister, with her four
8 children and with her husband was taken to Punari and shot,
9 before we went into the ghetto. We didn't know then.
10 I mean, half -- four or five thousand Jews at that time,
11 before the ghetto, were already shot in Punari, you know,
12 killed. And you know when you are young as I was young,
13 I still thought maybe they are still alive somewhere, you
14 know; maybe they took them to work. It just wasn't fully
15 -- I mean-- we want to believe still alive, you know, until
16 we face it.

17 But the situation in ghetto was terrible. Yet,
18 with all those horrible circumstances, the Vilna ghetto had
19 the Jewish theater, and poets, and writers, and used to
20 write all the songs. What you have from ghetto comes from
21 Vilna ghetto, you know. And performances -- they used to
22 make a performance, and the next night at 4:00 in the morn-
23 ing the Germans came and took another thousand Jews, an-
24 other two thousand Jews.

25 But there was so much of willpower to leave, the

1 ones who were there wanted to leave, you know. We had
2 a library.

3 And I remember my baby got very sick. She got
4 whooping cough and pneumonia, and I brought her Jewish
5 hospital; and I took her there, and somehow she survived,
6 despite the hunger and everything.

7 And then my father-in-law came in. He was hiding
8 out from where -- by the -- you know, there was a place
9 where -- O-n-t-o-f; they used to call it Ontof. They
10 took some Jews, you know, and they liquidated that, and they
11 came in the ghetto. And this was in night, where the yellow
12 s-h-i-n-e-n*, the yellow o-b-e-t-s, you know, this working
13 papers -- if you didn't have them, you couldn't go out of
14 the ghetto -- because they took up everybody who had the
15 yellow papers to the h-u-m-o-n-g-a-s where they worked.

16 And then they took all the people in ghetto and
17 they took them out to Punari.

18 Well, I was very lucky. And my father-in-law
19 came, because he was hiding out somewhere with farmers, you
20 know, there, Ontof. And that same evening -- he knew some
21 people in this u-n-i-a-t, you know, because he was a prom-
22 inent Jew, you know, before the war. And they gave him that
23 yellow s-h-i-n-e*. And he took me, as his wife, and the
24 baby as his daughter. And I had to hide myself, you know,
25 because I was very young, with an old rug, you know, over

*sign? star?

1 my head, some kind of a scarf, you know, not to show my
2 face. Because, you know, he was my father-in-law. He was
3 in his fifties and I was twenty years old, or twenty-one
4 years old.

5 Previous to that my mother -- one of my sisters,
6 because we were a big family, was in K-i-l-e-e-s; this was
7 a factory for the Germans, they used to make fur for the
8 Germans, you know, sent to Germany. So my sister had, you
9 know, some connections. Anyway, they took her there, you
10 know, my mother.

11 At the end of the war my three sisters with their
12 children, with their husbands, were killed. And my brother.
13 I mean, they all went ahead of them. The men were all
14 killed. And my mother was killed, and my father. And I'm
15 the only one who survived that hell. My baby was killed
16 in Auschwitz, you know.

17 Well, anyway, after the yellow shinen, yellow
18 opets, -- e-i-n-s-i-t-s, you know -- the working papers,
19 the permits, the yellow permits, I went back with my father-
20 in-law, with my baby, you know. I was so hidden so they
21 wouldn't think that he's not my husband, you know. They
22 took us to the e-i-s-a-t-s where he used to work, you know,
23 the German groups. And we stayed there overnight.

24 The next day we came into the ghetto, and there
25 was not a soul. They were all gone. All blood was on the

1 sidewalks, and on the posts, you know; everything. Even
2 the people who were hiding -- was called the m-a-l-e-e-n-
3 a-s, you know; they used to block up little holes and put
4 like a wardrobe or something, you know; people used to hide
5 behind little things. In the vent in there -- excuse me --
6 you know, in the canals from the toilets, you know, up to
7 their neck they were in excrement, you know; and they found
8 them there, too.

9 So we came back to the ghetto and my father-in-
10 law, you know, he used to go to work and bring some bread
11 for the baby, you know, and some food, what you put --
12 o-r-g-a-n-a-t from the Pollacks, you know; because they
13 took his wealth. He was a very wealthy man, you know.
14 So he had one Christian who took from him all what he had,
15 the goodies, and once in awhile he used to give him a piece
16 of bread, a piece of ham, you know, some -- you know, these
17 -- v-o-l-l-i, you know. All of those things. And that's
18 how, you know --

19 And then in 1943, was in August, they closed the
20 ghetto, and we knew that that's it. You know, they are
21 going to kill us all. We have to leave the ghetto. And
22 it came. They put some signs, you know, on the wall saying
23 that some people -- they will pick some people and send
24 them to Riga in the camp, but the mothers will have to be
25 separate from the children. The children would be brought

1 to death.

2 Two weeks previous to that, they took my father-
3 in-law with all the -- with a group of men. See, you couldn't
4 hide, you couldn't escape, because after the ghetto, the
5 Christians wouldn't accept you. You had nowhere to hide.
6 And in the ghetto the police went around and was gathering
7 you up and, you know, every week was another two thousand
8 Jews, another thousand Jews, somewhere.

9 Father was one of them who they took him out
10 and they sent him to Estonia. And when they closed up the
11 ghetto, and they said that mothers would be separate from
12 the children, there was a sign the following morning saying
13 that anybody who has relatives in Estonia can go out on a
14 transport the following day.

15 So naturally I used that, you know; myself and
16 my baby, with my s-c-h-w-a-t-a-s* what I had left over, you
17 know, a pillow, an extra coat, an extra something. And we
18 went. There was a truck you know, a big open truck went
19 to the track that took us somewhere to stay overnight in a
20 hole?/
21 home, and everybody, the women who were with their children
22 said, "Forget it. This time they are going to take us to
23 Punari," you know. We knew they're planning to do that,
24 because they put us in a cattle train; instead going in
25 that other direction, we went to direction of Punari.

And then they changed their mind, and they reversed

* sweaters?

1 the train again, and we went to Estonia.

2 They put a box of bread, you know, and a box of
3 water, and we were about, in that train, about ninety-five
4 in that one wagon with ninety-five children -- about sixty
5 children, about thirty-five grownups. And for ten days and
6 ten nights we were traveling to Estonia. There was no more
7 water, there was no more bread. The children were starving.

8 Q Just one box.

9 A That's right. The children were starving. And, you
10 know, when you are in -- when you suffer so much, you really
11 don't feel any hunger, the grownups. You are too sick to
12 think about food. The only thing what you actually need
13 is some water to survive.

14 And they arrived in a station, was like wilder-
15 ness, like Siberia. There was nothing to see, except we
16 saw a lot of railways and a lot of Germans, you know, Nazis,
17 and military; was like a military observation point, or
18 something.

19 And nobody offers to (go out?) and two or three,
20 they came in. There was the a-u-t-o p-o-l, you know, with
21 the red armbands, Germans, a whole group of them. I remem-
22 ber one with another s-t-r-o-n-t-h-i-m, a very fat, big
23 man. And they give another -- because there was that little
24 window with the wires, you know, and I was standing and
25 looking through that window.

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17 you know, with the red armbands, Germans, a whole group
18 of them. I remember one with another s-t-r-o-n-t-h-i-m, a
19 very fat, big man. And they give another -- because there
20 was that little window with the wires, you know, and I was
21 standing and looking through that window, and we said, "Open
22 the doors," you know, so they opened the doors. And we
23 start jumping, you know, from the -- we came out. They put
24 us on the --ones which were still alive, you know. And
25 they looked at those children, filthy, dirty, you know, and

1 the women; and I guess we weren't material for work, and,
2 you know, it was --

3 So, he looked and looked and then he said, "Back
4 in the trains. Back in the wagons." So we had to go back
5 in the wagons. They closed, you know, the doors. No good.

6 Two hours later they came again and said again,
7 "Open the wagons." So we came out again and they were
8 starting to look for women who had no children, young women,
9 you know. There were a few of them, and a few men. and they

10
11 came over to me and they said to me, "Why are you standing
12 here? Come with me." And I was hiding my baby in my arm,
13 and I said, "No, I can't go without my baby."

14 He said, "Don't give me that story, that's not
15 your baby, you're too young," because I had this s-l-u-f-f,
16 you know, then. I didn't have this hair. You know -- oh,
17 well, anyway -- braids. And I looked very young. And he
18 said, "No," he said, "you leave this child here. It's
19 probably your sister. And you come with me."

20 So I didn't let my baby go and he said, "Well,
21 it's a pity," he said, "that you didn't want to leave the
22 baby here." and he took this women with -- you know, the ones
23 who were, a few women, you know, left their children; a
24 couple of them, and they went, because they knew it's
25 death, you know. They realize it's death. But I didn't

1 leave my baby. I still believe in life, you know. And
2 the (inaudible) in other wagons, you know, the one, they
3 empty it, you know, and they closed the door again.

4 Q Now, it had people in there? There were children in
5 there?

6 A Yeah. Right. And the people started to kiss and
7 hug each other, you know, the mothers with the babies, and
8 they said, "Well, that's it, now we're going to death, :
9 you know, "now they're going to kill us all."

10 And I said to them, "Why should they, why should
11 Hitler have to take us from Vilna ghetto to bring here
12 after ten days and ten nights? After all, he needs the
13 gathering of the -- (with the traces?) of war. "I don't
14 believe it, I said, "we're not going to death. They're
15 probably going to send us to another camp." You know, I
16 didn't want to face the fact, you know.

17 And, anyway -- but we were very thirsty, we had
18 no water, and it was unbearable.

19 Q You don't know what happened to the people they took?

20 A No. I can tell you later what happened to them, be-
21 cause after the war somebody send me from S-u-t-s-k-i-v-a-y,
22 the famous Jewish, from Vilna, poet and writer, and he
23 wrote The Vilna Ghetto, you know, somewhere when he was in
24 Russia or in Poland. So somebody send me a copy to Israel
25 and I still have it.

1 Because they were going C-l-o-g-a-y, Estonia,
2 and before they liberated Clogay, they put them all on the
3 wood -- and, you know, let's see how you say it --

4 Q On the bench?

5 A No. They took, got wood from trees, all right?

6 Q Yes.

7 A Like lumber.

8 Q Yes.

9 A And they put out and there was a row of people on top
10 of the lumber, then they covered them with other lumber,
11 and then again a row of people, and they shot them in the
12 head, you know. And I have the picture, because it's in
13 the book, you know. And they killed them all; all those
14 people who they took, none of them survived.

15 Well, anyway, we stayed in that train, it was
16 like 6:00 in the evening, and I couldn't stand any more.
17 And I said that to the -- there was one woman, she was a
18 rabbi's daughter; she didn't have any children, but she
19 was in our transport, because her husband supposedly was
20 in Estonia. And I said to her -- Lisa was her name -- I
21 said, "Lisa, listen, I'm going to scream through that little
22 window that we want water," you know, "and maybe they will
23 open the door and let us go out to get some water."

24 And sure enough, I started scream, "Water, water,
25 water, water." Finally, a couple of soldiers -- they were

1 Estonian N-a-z-e-r-s-i, you know -- came over. He said,
2 "What do you want?" I said, "We need some water." He said,
3 "Okay, wait a minute." went to open the door. We had some
4 little pots laying from some other people's water, you know,
5 small pots, cooking pots.

6 She took the one, and I took one, and we went to
7 get the water. And there was a b-r-o-o-m -- how do you
8 call them? You know, like -- not a water pump; a well,
9 a water well. Okay?

10 That guard walked with us and I had with me a
11 hidden, a gold watch which I was hiding there, my only
12 memento, you know, and I had some money with me which my
13 father-in-law left me, you know, in case of an emergency.
14 And the girl had an old watch, something worth. So I talked
15 to the guard. It was a farmer, you could see. I don't
16 know if he knew how to read and write.

17 I said, "Listen, if you let me take out my baby
18 from the transport," I said, "I will give you my watch and
19 my money, and she has a watch," you know. But he kept
20 look and not say anything. He didn't see a watch in his
21 life; and the money, you know. Because, you know these were
22 volunteer Nazis, they want to kill the Jews and get some-
23 thing out of them, you know.

24 So he says, "Okay," so we took the water, the
25 pots of water, and we came back toward the train and I

1 said, "Open the door and let my kid come out," you know.
2 So they opened the door and I start to call my baby. But
3 the women, naturally, with other children, when they saw me
4 standing downstairs outside the train and I was calling
5 my child, so they didn't let her come out, and they start
6 to jump from the train, you know. So then about three,
7 four more guards came running and they started to hit every-
8 body over the head, and the train -- back in the train.
9 They closed the door, period. That was the end of the
10 whole story.

11 And everybody start crying, and it was a terrify-
12 ing scene, and it was very dark night. Nothing stirred.
13 And everybody said goodbye to each other, you know, and
14 that's it.

15 But in my heart I said: That dumb Nazi, that
16 dum N-a-z-e-r-c-h-i was a volunteer from Estonia, you know.
17 He will probably not forget the watches and the money, you
18 know. And I said to that woman -- yeah, by the time we
19 were standing and talking, the women laid out, you know
20 with their children; we had no place where to put our heads
21 down; so I was just standing by the door holding my baby,
22 because she was sleepy, you know.

23 And the woman was standing next to me and I said
24 to her, "Lisa, you will see, around midnight if a guard will
25 come by, when I hear steps I'm going to say 'hello,' and if

1 that's the guard who knew, he will say 'hello' too." And
2 that was it.

3 It was after midnight, it was very quiet, and I
4 hear some heavy boots, you know, walking by our wagon, and
5 I said "Hello," and that guard answered "hello," and I
6 said to him, "Are you the guard who was with us," you know,
7 "who went with us taking the water?"

8 He said "yes." I said, "Listen, if you open the
9 door, I'm going to pass through my baby out to you, and
10 then we will jump and then we'll give you our money and the
11 watches." And he said, "Good."

12 And he opened the door and I threw my baby out
13 to him; he was holding my child, and then I jumped out,
14 and the girl jumped out, and, you know, we closed the door.
15 You know, the iron doors they make a --

16 Q Noise?

17 A Noise. Terrible noise. So everybody was waking up
18 and screaming, but I couldn't do nothing for them, so --
19 but I want to save my baby and myself, you know.

20 And we gave him the r-u-b-e-r-b-e, the watches
21 and the money what I had, you know. And he said, "Wait here,
22 I will come back with a couple of my friends and we will
23 take you somewhere where you will be safe. You can run
24 away because there's lots of woods," he said, "and it's
25 open space and it's farmland." It's like so here, but

1 there's nothing here; some far away are good, some far away,
2 not.

3 So I said to that girl, I said, "I don't trust
4 him. He will come back, you know, and he will throw us
5 back in the wagon, because he has the watches and the money,
6 you know." I said, "Let's go right under the train onto
7 the rails," you know. And sure enough, my baby was holding
8 me with her hands, you know, around my neck and we were
9 crawling on all four onto the rails, you know, onto the
10 banks, you know, where the rails -- where the --

11 And we were crawling, crawling, and all of a
12 sudden I see about four pair or six pair of feet coming
13 with lights. They were looking for us, you see, right away.
14 But they were lighting and lighting; they couldn't find
15 us, you know. I was afraid they would see us, but they
16 haven't, because we were deep under the train.

17 And we went to like three, four tracks, you know,
18 and out of sight, and we started to run. We started to
19 run, and, you know, when you're in a strange country and
20 it's pitch dark, you run in circles. You don't know where
21 to run.

22 And we run, run, run, and finally we came to a
23 little woods. We saw some trees and we were hiding in the
24 trees; and the nights were very cold, because that night
25 my eyebrows, everything, turned white with snow; my baby's,

1 my mouth. I was holding her and we were shaking like that
2 all night long.

3 Got light, 6:00 o'clock in the morning. I saw
4 from far away so many Nazis, so many Germans. I said,
5 "Gee, what are we going to do? Where are we going to hide
6 now?"

7 " So I said, "Let's walk. We'll see maybe a farm-
8 house, maybe they will let us, you know, in." So we had
9 the stars on the coat, and everything. Anyway, we went
10 to the farmhouse and the first woman, she saw us, she said,
11 "Get away. We have big dogs. They're gonna -- we have
12 wild dogs. Stay away from us."

13 We walked to another farmhouse, and we were very
14 desperate. Finally, we go to one where there was a woman
15 and another woman sitting by the house, you know, and I came
16 over, said, "Look, I have a little baby. She's starving,"
17 you know, "and I just want a piece of bread for her." So
18 she gave me a slice of bread for the child and she gave
19 us a slice of bread for each of us.

20 And by giving us the bread -- so a man comes in
21 the house then, because she has the fresh bread baked. It
22 smells so beautiful, you know. And the man was wearing
23 a black uniform, and that was her son who was in the S.S.,
24 in the Gestapo. He took a look at us and he said, "You
25 Goddamn Jews," he said, "you filthy, dirty Jews, you run

1 away from the camp." I said, "No, we didn't run away from
2 the camp. We run away from a d-e-p-r-o-n spot.

3 He said, "There's no transport," he says, "you
4 run away from the camp, and if you don't go right back to
5 the camp," he said, "I'm going to take you to Gestapo and
6 that was end of your life."

7 So we were forced to go and look for where the
8 camps is. But by time he -- he was looking; then when we
9 couldn't see him on the road, we went right away again
10 into the trees, you know. We were hiding there. And we
11 saw a barn, you know, with straw, you know, and all those
12 things. And far away we saw some sheep.

13 Well, we went -- we hid in the straw and we
14 were there all night long, you know. We covered ourselves
15 with the straw, that they shouldn't recognize; anybody, those
16 people, you know, because they came in, you know, there
17 with the sheep. This was a big, big barn.

18 And next morning we was hungry, we were all hun-
19 gry, we were starving. And we want water. We want water,
20 the most important, water. We couldn't get no water. And
21 it gets already late, was about 4:00 or 5:00 o'clock. I
22 saw, you know, the sun coming down. I said to her, Lisa --

23 My baby was crying and crying and crying, and she
24 said, "Listen, you can't stay with the baby because my life
25 is in jeopardy."

1 I said, "Okay, I'm going to leave with the baby,"
2 So she stayed there and I left the barn. I was walking on
3 the road where the Nazi told me the day before there were
4 camps, you know.

5 So finally we walked about a mile or two miles.
6 We were falling apart. And I saw a group of people stand-
7 ing there, you know, and digging holes in the ground, you
8 know. And I realized that there were some German guards,
9 you know. And I was hiding by the woods.

10 And I said, "Listen," -- came over to woman and
11 I said, "I escaped from the transport from V-i-v-a-r-a,"
12 you know; that was the name of that camp, that station.
13 I said, "And I would like very much to get into the camp,
14 because the stranger doesn't accept me. They don't --"
15 I wanted even to give her my baby if they would keep her,
16 you know, but they said no.

17 So they said, "Okay, we'll try to smuggle you in
18 the camp. Because," they said, they said they are counted,
19 "they count us, you know, every five in a row." And they're
20 counted. So by 6:30 when we finished working, one woman
21 had a big shawl, so she covered my child, you know, like
22 holding a pack, and I was in between them. Somehow, we
23 went from there to the camp.

24 It was called V-y-d-a-c-o-n-i-a, that camp, and
25 the Nazis count, but they haven't seen us, you know. The

1 next morning this camp was --

2 Q (Inaudible.)

3 A -- until another -- the first and the (second?) group.

4 But a different one, you know. Next morning came the Ges-
5 tapo and another o-b-e-r-s-c-h-a-f-u-e-h-r-e-r; other one
6 was S-c-h-n-o-b-e-l. I went to witness against him after
7 the war, you know, took over the camp.

8 And we had barracks, you know, like m-i-s-s-e-n-
9 h-i-t-t-y. Know what missenhitty is? It's like this front,
10 it's like not a metal; it's like a plastic, you know, round
11 plastics, you know, like this round here. Can you see?

12 Q Yeah.

13 A That's how it looked. There was nothing there but air,
14 you know, and the whole camp -- all the camps in Estonia
15 are in swamps, you know.

16 -- Oh, gee, I can't talk. I get sick --

17 So around that camp were big ravines, you know,
18 they dig big holes, you know, like. And they were so the
19 water should be able to run down from the ground in this,
20 like brooks they made, you know. And we came to that --
21 since that new commandant took over, so he didn't know that
22 we were escapees from a transport, you know, and they count-
23 ed us in.

24 And we have to take some all kind of gravel and
25 everything, to put on the ground. Otherwise, you know,

1 you couldn't -- it's all wet, you know.

2 Q (Inaudible.) --

3 CHANGING TO SIDE 2 ON TAPE.

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1 A There was not enough food. There was not -- they
2 used to give us soup like brown water, you know. They
3 have a little primitive kitchen. There was nothing
4 there. And we used to get bread made of kind of grass.
5 They used to bake it, you know, with glue, whatever it
6 was.

7 Anyway, we were -- everybody was in a state of
8 shock, you know what I mean, and people really were -- we
9 didn't know what was going to happen to us, but at the
10 present, we were alive. You know. That's what counted;
11 you know, to be alive.

12 Q Amazing that your baby --

13 A My baby survived until they took her in the gas cham-
14 bers, you know. Be telling me a story that she goes to
15 a family camp. What she went through.

16 And there she had typhoid, you know, in Estonia,
17 and then I had typhoid.

18 In ten days we went from Estonia to Auschwitz,
19 and she was still alive. And so many were dying in the
20 trains, and I kept her alive. And then they tell me a
21 story about the family camp in Auschwitz.

22 Q M-m-m-m.

23 A They took the rest of the people -- only me and two
24 people came out, of the whole (class?) of us.

25 So, we were in Estonia and was a barrack for the

1 children separate, and they made me to take care of the
2 children. But the mothers were taken to work to dig, you
3 know. The work what they did there was just a waste, be-
4 cause there was actually nothing to work. But this assessed
5 the Gestapo. They didn't want to go to the front, so they
6 made us all those camps in Estonia, to torture us, and
7 they should be the big bosses, have everything, and they
8 didn't have to go to the front to fight a war, you see.
9 That's why they hold ~~(us?)~~, because the camps didn't ac-
10 complish nothing there.

11 They just digging holes, building bunkers, and
12 they would take it apart, build it again. You know. In
13 the meantime, they had people to torture. So --

14 And that Commandant, that Helmut Schnobel, for
15 whom I was twice a witness, my God, he will never go out
16 alive, because the second time when I went -- the first
17 time, they let him out after four years. The second time
18 when I went, they gave him three times l-i-v-s-g-i-f-i-n-g-
19 e-n-e-s-h, you know; that means for life --

20 Q Three times life.

21 A Three times life. So he wouldn't go out. Well, the
22 point what I want to say is that he was a terrible sadist.
23 He, and he had another Nazi -- they used to, you know, this
24 big d-a-g-r-a-m-b, they were called, you know. You know,
25 when you dig --

1 Gee, when I start talking English I forget the --
2 otherwise, I can talk fluently; but when I get so upset,
3 I forget the expression.

4 Anyway, they dig this long like --

5 Q Ditch?

6 A -- canals. Okay, the canals, the ditches, and the
7 water, you know, the black water from this sludge --

8 Q Yes.

9 A So every day they used to take ~~two~~ ^{three four} ~~three~~ men and bring
10 them -- and they didn't know that I watched them, because
11 it was like, you know, nobody could see that. All the
12 people went out to work, and only me and the people who
13 worked in the kitchen, and the people who cleaned the bar-
14 racks, took care, you know, around the camp; and they stayed,
15 and the Gestapo. So I used to help to clean them, you
16 know, the barracks.

17 And they used to do it by the end of the other
18 side of the camp. So they used to take, every day, two,
19 three men, four men--young men, but some of them didn't
20 feel good, so sick when brought to shovel the hard earth,
21 you know -- told them to undress naked. They used to un-
22 dress naked. They told them to jump into it, into those
23 ditches, you know, and then they would (take ?) with
24 the big long sticks, you know, and hit them, hit the men,
25 hit them until they bend down over, constantly, like the

1 bull, you know, and start to bleed, and they would bleed
2 and bleed until they would die, drowned in the swamps.

3 Every single day that was their torture to the men.

4 And on that P-e-r-l in the evening, if you said
5 something, or, you know, he didn't like the way you looked,
6 or the way you stand, he would shoot you like a rat, you
7 know, without any excuse for what and for why.

8 And the people whom they used to kill in the
9 swamps, you know, they used to tell the other men to come
10 over and pull them out, you know, and then there was no-
11 where to bury them, because was swampy area. So by the end
12 of the camp they used to get us trees, you know, the fir
13 trees or whatever, make a fire and that's how they used to
14 burn them then, you know.

15 We were several -- I want to stop.

16 We were about several months in the V-i-v-i-c-o-
17 n-i, then we liquidated because that winter, you know, and
18 they took us to V-i-v-a-r-a, to that camp, that station
19 from which I run away. It was a larger camp, a bigger one.
20 And they had wooden barracks there, you see. And they sep-
21 arate right away the kids in one barrack, you know.

22 But me, maybe I was very courageous, I don't
23 know. Every morning I used to run, escape, you know, to the
24 barracks and go to be with my child, you know. And I was
25 reported several times, but somehow I'll always find a way

1 to be with my baby.

2 And then the snow started coming and we used to
3 stand with a pail, was dipping snow, and the big, tall,
4 husky, healthy young men start falling like flies; they
5 all got typhoid. And the heavy, the good-looking, strong
6 men were very susceptible, faster than the skinny ones,
7 to typhus. And they would stand up in line, some would
8 drop dead there in the snow, the other drop dead there in
9 the snow, you know?

10 And finally the typhoid became such an epidemic
11 that first it hit the babies, the children. And my child
12 was about three, four weeks with typhoid fever, and I came
13 every day and she -- (CRYING) -- she was unconscious, you
14 know. So I took a little water, what I could get, I organ-
15 ized, I had tea or something, to open her mouth and, you
16 know, put water in her mouth. She was four years old then.
17 And she was laying like that, of course, and I was very
18 tired because they wouldn't let me stay, and everybody --
19 the head of the s-c-h-t-h-b-r-o-v-e-r they used to call
20 them d-r-o-c-o-v-i-s, you know. And there were some other
21 children, and they didn't want to make an exception. Why
22 should I be the one privileged, you know, to be with my
23 dying baby?

24 But somehow I always managed, you know, and at
25 night I had to go back, because that P-e-r-l. And when

1 she came out of it, you know, after two, three weeks she
2 got better, and then I got it. Because typhoid fever is
3 very contagious. And they took us in a barrack where there
4 were all people who were very sick, you know, and the
5 n-a-r-r-o-w-s would go on the wooden -- plain wood, you
6 know. And we had no pillows, we had nothing, you know.

7 And I was fourteen days unconscious, would you
8 believe? The head of the German authorities came to look
9 at me. They couldn't believe that I'm alive, fourteen
10 days unconscious, without -- without -- we didn't have an
11 aspirin, we didn't have bread, we didn't have food, we
12 had nothing. We were all in excrement, you know, because
13 we were unconscious, you know. And after fourteen days
14 I started to get better, temperature was going down, and --

15 Q Did anybody bring you food?

16 A No, there was no food.

17 Q So you didn't eat?

18 A No. Well, you couldn't eat, anyway; you couldn't
19 eat because the typhus, you know --

20 Q What about water, fluids? Did somebody --

21 A Fluids, we had no -- I don't think I had. We should
22 have had water, but I don't think we had any water.

23 And then my father-in-law, you know, found out that
24 I was there, you know, and when I got better he got some
25 people to bring me -- because he worked for the s-c-h-t-u-

1 m-a-r-a-t-e-r-s, for the people, you know, he used to help
2 them with sewing or doing anything for them. And he was man
3 who had influences, you know, from ()
4 or something. Anyway, so he had to get somebody to bring me
5 bread, to bring some water; anything he could get, you know,
6 and -- because I couldn't walk, I wasn't capable of stand-
7 ing on my feet, you know.

8 And I got better and I came to my baby. She was
9 all right. And right away, two weeks, later, they liqui-
10 dated that camp, too, and they took us to another camp called
11 V-e-e-v-a-r-a-d-a. That was the last camp in Estonia be-
12 fore they send us to Auschwitz.

13 I can't tell you everything, because it's, you
14 know, too gruesome.

15 Anyway, they send us there to A-r-a-d-e-y. They
16 separated the children with the sick people about a kilo-
17 meter, about a mile, away from the camp where we were, and
18 I came over to that Schnobel, Helmut Schnobel, and I said to
19 him, "Can I be here with the healthy people?" He said,
20 "Sure." But my baby was down there. So finally I did the
21 same thing. There were two guards standing by the baby
22 camp with the sick people, and every evening I used to go
23 somehow through to my child, you know.

24 And then she got sick, because it was cold and
25 they had no food and nothing. So I took my baby, I stole

1 my baby out of the barrack and I wrapped her around and
2 I brought her where we were in the upper, the upper camp.
3 And there were about eight to ten women in that room, in
4 that little barrack. And I told them and they said, "Okay,
5 we'll keep her hidden," you know, "nobody will find out."

6 And everybody contributed. The ones who used to
7 go out to work bring her the piece of bread, you know, or a
8 piece of potato or little soup where they could get from
9 some out of work there. And everything was going nice; with
10 food, she was getting better, her temperature was going
11 down, and then they came one night and said, "Mother, you
12 know tomorrow morning they are liquidating the whold child-
13 ren's camp and the sick people; they are sending them out
14 of here."

15 I said, "Oh, my God, I hope to God that, you know,
16 that my baby's going to be safe." But somebody went and
17 told this ~~liar~~ ~~Commandant~~ Commandant that I had a baby here. It
18 was 12:00 o'clock midnight and I was with my baby in one
19 of this -- you know, we were sleeping on the floor. And
20 he came in with a whole entourage of SS men and he said to
21 me -- he said to them, to all, ~~()~~ of us, ~~he said~~, "There
22 is a baby hidden here." Well, I didn't want anybody to suffer
23 because of me. I said, "Yes, I have the baby, my baby; my
24 baby is ill."

25 He said, "Where is she ill?" I said, "Well, she

1 has temperature." He said, "It's too bad. She has to go
2 with the other children to the k-i-s-e-r v-e-l-t, to a
3 camp. I said to him, o-b-e-r-s-c-h-t-r-m-f-i-l, you know,
4 I made him a look. "Please," I said, "don't take my baby."
5 Didn't help a thing. I said, "I can't live ~~like this~~ ^{like this}.
6 He said, "There's no exceptions."

7 I went on the floor and I kissed his foot, you
8 know, and begged him. It didn't do a thing. I said, "Well" --
9 'til 5:00 o'clock in the morning I was begging, everybody
10 was crying; it didn't do a thing. I said, "Will you let me
11 go with my child?" He says "No." I said, "Please let me
12 go with my child." ^{well,} Finally, he did me the favor and agreed
13 I can go with my child.

14 So 6:00 o'clock in the morning when we got dressed
15 took us again in this, you know, in this cattle wagon. Was
16 about two hundred children. That's the ~~(first)~~ ^(first) children
17 from Estonia, that's the (inaudible), and were about
18 eight hundred people who were, you know, weak from ~~the~~
19 typhoid fever, ^{you know} not feeling well. Went on the transport
20 and it's the same story. We were ninety ~~three~~ people in that
21 wagon, were about sixty children, and from sitting, you
22 know, without food -- because they put some food and water
23 on -- but the children was very cold, you know, and they
24 were sitting next to the other and they got frozen to each
25 other. They couldn't -- there was no way for them to go

1 down and make excrement, so they were all covered with
2 excrement, they were frozen to each other. And they were
3 scratching from the iron walls the ice for their lips, you
4 know.

5 And there were two mothers with me and I was the
6 third one, and I stood by the little window, you know,
7 and I had with me a bottle of water, you know, a little bot-
8 tle with water I took with me. So I used to give my baby
9 like five drops a day, you know. She didn't complain.
10 She took every day five drops of what I had. I had to give
11 children next to me, what were sitting, you know. The rest
12 of them were by the v-u-l-g-n-a.

13 We came to C-a-r-a-n-a-w-a-l-d and we took other
14 barracks, you know. But they didn't let us, the people
15 who were still alive, were left, you know. And took us
16 again ten days and ten nights, and we came one night to a
17 camp which was -- all the lights, you know, and a railroad;
18 beautiful lights, you know. Clean. And I looked through
19 the window and I said, "Gee, we are coming to a camp.
20 It looks so clean," I said. I didn't know nothing about
21 Auschwitz then, you see."

22 I knew about hunger, starvation, sickness, dis-
23 eases, everything, but I didn't know about () was
24 in the (), you know.

25 And they opened -- by the way, it was midnight --

1 the doors, you know, and I saw a group of men dressed in
2 striped uniforms, you know, from camp; clean; but every-
3 body's face was very sad, you know. And we jump out, you
4 know, bring with me my baby. I'm so happy with my baby,
5 you know, and I said, "Why are you so sad? I'm so happy
6 that I came here, so nice and clean."

7 So they said to me, "Didn't you ever hear of
8 Auschwitz?" I said, "No, what's Auschwitz? A camp like
9 any other camp." They didn't say. They stood around.
10 I don't know a thing, and they didn't say anything. They
11 took us on the trucks and we went straight to the gas cham-
12 bers. They didn't know it. And there was a big long room
13 like a hall, you know, all -- very long, about, I think
14 about a couple of thousand people could bring in.

15 In the back of the room was a little separation
16 like here with glass, you know? And they said to us, "Go
17 get undressed. Here are the towels," you know. "Put your
18 numbers on." They make the whole s-c-h-m-e-e-r-i-n. Well,
19 we didn't know. You see, the people who come from outside,
20 we didn't have the () to make ()to, but
21 when you were there, then you didn't have nothing to cover,
22 by getting undressed.

23 Yet, before we got undressed, there were two, three
24 men, you know, who were working there, you know; also, you
25 know, inmates, but, you know, who were there as ().

1 And they come over to me and they said, "What are you doing
2 in this transport?" Because when I came in, I washed my
3 face. I found some water there, you know. I cleaned myself
4 up, you know.

5 I said, "What do you mean, what do I do here?
6 I have my child here." He said to me, "Were you made to
7 come here?" I said, "No, I came voluntarily, because I
8 didn't want to leave my baby." So he said, "It's a pity.
9 You came voluntarily to death." I said, "Listen, don't
10 frighten me. I know about hunger and starvation." He
11 didn't say nothing. Three times he came over and asked me
12 the same question.

13 So finally, before we start undressing, came in
14 that was Mengele, and that's a good-looking man and a Ges-
15 tapo man, white gloves, you know, and I hear them talking,
16 you know, to hear. And he came over to me, he said, "Du,"
17 and "du," and "du," you know, to the Gestapo people.

18 They put us on the side. And they took us out
19 and they put us right in that, behind that little, that
20 tiny little room with the windows, you know, in the hall.
21 And I said to that man, "Why are you putting us there?"
22 My baby started to cry. He said, "Ssh, don't say nothing.
23 Let them go away. They might be give you the baby and let
24 you alone," you know? And I still didn't know nothing,
25 I'm still dumb.

1 And the people didn't know.

2 I said, "Why do you separate us?" He said, "Look,
3 this -- your child and all the children with the people who
4 are not feeling good are going to the family camp in
5 Auschwitz, which you can buy bread," he said, "and milk,
6 and have a good diet, and you are still young, you go to the
7 working camp." I said to him, "But listen, I can do the
8 hardest work in the world. Let me be with my baby." He
9 said, "Listen, you have plenty of time. I will let you see
10 your baby once a week," he tells me.

11 And then came a couple of men, he introduced me.
12 There is the chef, you know, from the children's camp,
13 and this guy he's the driver, he will drive me over to
14 see my child. And I, being naive, not knowing, I believed
15 him. And that took us for two nights and two days, you
16 know, but they always let me keep my child, you know, and
17 then when they knew that the assessment is coming in, they
18 took the child and put her outside. You know.

19 On the third day, and early in the morning, he
20 said, "Well, now you will have to go to take your -- an anti-
21 lousing," you know. "You go first and bathe," he said,
22 "then you come back here, they will go to bathe." And I
23 had that little purse with a little bottle, you know,
24 with the little, you know, a little pillow, I had change
25 clean clothes. I said to my baby, "Please, my darling,"

1 I said to her, "keep this and hold this, I said, "and I'm
2 going to bathe." And she started to cry, "Mommy, mommy,
3 please don't leave me," (CRYING) and I said, "I'm coming
4 right back, I'm just going to take a shower," I said.

5 I left all those things with her and I went out,
6 and I haven't -- and that was it. Period.

7 And they took us to the camp and I still didn't
8 know. And then, you know, they made us undress, you know,
9 we had (pump?) water, then they shaved us completely off,
10 you know, like my arm; everything was shaved off and then
11 they made my number.

12 And I started to ask the people, I said, "Listen,
13 I want to see my baby. Where's the family camp?" He
14 said, "Your family camp is here. In the sky."

15 And then started the horror. They took us to a
16 barrack there that was called the -- a-h-h, gee, I can't con-
17 centrate any more.

18 And the next day they put us on the pier, you know,
19 where you have to stand and wait to be counted. And right
20 away I saw the big chimneys like three stories high, you
21 know, and the black smoke, and the big fire, the tremendous
22 fire always came, black smoke, you could smell the t-o-t,
23 you know, from the human bodies.

24 And the people who were in charge of us, the
25 women, Germans, prosecute to her were wearing the black

1 (hips?), you know. They were taunting us and beating us
2 and doing anything they could. And I said, I came over to
3 one and I said, "Listen, where is the family camp here?
4 Where is the f-a-m-i-l-a l-i-g-e-r?" She said, "Why do you
5 ask?" I said, "Well, I have my baby there," you know?
6 She didn't say a word.

7 Then came over another, another ()
8 And I said to her -- she says, "Your baby?" she says, "Here.
9 Here is all the transport (), you know," on the
10 fire." I still couldn't believe her, you know. Seeing
11 the fire, smelling the smoke, you know, and everything.

12 But for days I was escaping, you know, from the
13 blocks where they used to hide us; asking, you know, any-
14 body. And they laughed at me. And then I realized, be-
15 cause now when I saw the transport, because my block was
16 26, (), you know, in the
17 gas chambers.

18 And when we were staying in that field you could
19 see the transports, and the women with children with um-
20 brellas look at us and holding the little children and they
21 went in, in the gas chambers, and the only thing what you
22 saw from the crematorium was the smoke.

23 And then I know my tragedy and I wanted to kill
24 myself. I was going first to the electric wires, you know,
25 and also ravine, ditches made that you can't reach them.

1 But the guards were there and they said to me, "Get away
2 from the wires," you know.

3 But yet, there were quite a few men who reached
4 the wires, you know, and they got electrocuted. They were
5 standing starched, straight like that, because holding
6 onto the wire, and they were standing like ().

7 And I started to cry. This was the quarantine,
8 was the first six weeks at camp. I was sitting crying so,
9 being night, that my eyes were completely swollen. I couldn't
10 see through them; completely swollen from crying. Then came
11 a group, you know, from -- Dutch, from Holland, who were
12 married to Jewish men. Good-looking, nice women. They
13 came in and they saw me like that, sitting, you know, and
14 crying and crying, and I couldn't see anything. And they
15 asked the women around there, "Who is she? Why is she so
16 crying?" They said, "You know, because they took her baby
17 away."

18 And they said, "Oh, we will ()
19 and they started to sing all those hymns, their songs, and
20 () an attack of dysentery, and they have
21 to eat their own excre -- they made them eat their excre-
22 ment, you know, because they couldn't hold it until they
23 took them to the toilets there. They only took them once
24 a day, and they had diarrhea, you know. So we took them
25 over to the (washroom?) with us.

1 were close to the crematoriums () at night.
2 I would try to hang on, because we were sleeping like six
3 women on a little cot, one on top of the other. We had no
4 clothing. Every two, three weeks they used to ()
5 take off our clothes, you know. So used to go -- they give
6 you one high-heel boot, one low-heel shoes, a red stocking
7 stripes, or blue stocking; something. And they put you the
8 coat on, they put, you know, the red clothes they made
9 with paint, you know. Everything you put on was red, brushed
10 with paint, you know. And so we looked like --

11 I was a m-u-z-z-e-l-m-a-n. A muzzelman meant
12 in Auschwitz that you couldn't organize any food, you know;
13 you had no connections. You had to live on the rations
14 what they gave you. And it didn't matter to me any more,
15 because I actually didn't want to live any more. The only
16 thing that bothered me is that they killed my child without
17 me, you know; that's what bothered me.

18 But there was never any hope, any chance, that we
19 will ever go out of Auschwitz. There was -- there wasn't
20 such a thing. And the health -- they took friends of mine
21 for experiments; we never saw them again. And every week
22 or so they used to make selections, you know what it meant.
23 They used to take up people out from the barrack, you know,
24 say "Du, du, du, du, this one goes," they they took them on
25 the open tracks to the gas chambers, you know?

1 And they reviewed the ()
2 every day. If somebody came with a rotten finger or some-
3 thing, you know, they right away took them to the gas cham-
4 bers. The constant selection, the gas chambers, and the
5 constant beatings from the c-a-p-e-l-s; they used to beat
6 us to death, you know. We used to sit in the morning, they
7 used to use the most vul-- their language was absolutely
8 that (sounds like: " mist ti ki zalum"), they used to say,
9 you -- they had the rottenest words they used to call.
10 We didn't even know what the expressions meant, you know.

11 And then, by November, the center commander, you
12 know, who used to burn the corpses in the gas chambers --
13 you know, they used to, every three months they used to
14 liquidate them, make new center commanders. The center
15 commanders, they looked like death heads, you know, because
16 they saw the horror with their own eyes.

17 So the last center commander rebelled. I don't
18 know if he got dynamite, what he got; I don't know what he
19 got. Dynamite, probably. And they exploded one gas cham-
20 ber, and one crematorium. And they were starting to run
21 after; he had some connections, to cut the wire with a special, --
22 you know, the electric wires. And they got caught. And they
23 got all liquidated.

24 And then they started to hear the airwaves. The
25 Russians were pushing, you know, toward Auschwitz. So by

1 the same () but the Allies were
2 coming, and when the Allies would come, all the Nazis who
3 were such big heroes, to kill the innocent people, were
4 suddenly nowhere. They were hiding, going in the bunkers,
5 you know.

6 And then the women used to jump, and we used to
7 applaud, and we were praying, "Please, God, throw a bomb
8 on us, please." And they didn't throw the bomb on us, they
9 throw it all around the camp, but they didn't throw it in
10 Auschwitz.

11 But for us, the hour was the air raid, the
12 () when we had that peace, you know,
13 the feeling that they are not watching us, you know, that
14 they're not torturing us. And we were hoping maybe, maybe
15 they would throw a bomb, you know, maybe they're going to
16 finish. But they didn't.

17 Then by January -- three times they took me to the
18 gas chambers. The second time when they took me I recog-
19 nized that man who made -- well, because of him, you know,
20 I was alive, you know. And I came over to him. He was a
21 Spanish Jew, you know, he was an inmate. I said to him,
22 "Tell, me, why did you save my life?" I asked him that
23 question.

24 He said, "You know why? Because I saw my family
25 going into the gas chambers when I came. And I know if

1 I would interfere," he said, "they would take me and put me
2 in the gas chambers. And I said, 'I want to live, I want
3 to see,'" he said, "my enemy dead. I want to have the re-
4 venge of seeing him done dead. So I couldn't -- I just did-
5 n't want to go," he said. "I wanted ()
6 And when I saw you," he said, "you were so young and vul-
7 nerable, you didn't know a thing," he said "which was
8 very (). I said to myself, 'I'm going to save
9 you.' And that's why," he said, "I took the children with
10 you and I got Mengele in."

11 () Commandant, and the
12 last one was a farmer, he was sent from Bergen-Belsen(?)
13 he came with (us?) to Bergen-Belsen, ()
14 was hanged by the British.

15 It's too long I'm talking now.

16 Well, anyway, by the end of December they liqui-
17 dated B-u-r-k-e-n-a-h (Buchenwald?), and they pushed
18 () because of the air raids, you know.
19 they were very jumpy, the S.S. and the Gestapo. And in
20 January they start to make () transports,
21 you know. I was in the last transport, January 28th, 1945,
22 out Bergen. Auschwitz was liquidated, you see.

23 And we walked for five days and five nights, and
24 I had no shoes, I had only rags on my feet. So my feet
25 got very swollen. And there were only old men and young,

1 sixteen-, seventeen-year-old boys with us, with the (),
2 and -- with the big rifles, you know. And everybody was
3 staying off it good. You know the snow on the frozen
4 ground? They were shooting; you see on the side laying
5 woman without head, you know, without hands, without the
6 stomach. You know, they used to kill everybody.

7 On the fourth day it was, my legs couldn't move
8 any more. It was like late in the afternoon and I sat
9 down in the snow. And I had a friend with me, V-a-s-s-a
10 was her name. And I said, "Vassa, you go on. I can't."
11 She said, "Molly, but look what goes on."

12 I said, "Vassa, I can't move." An old soldier,
13 maybe he was fifty-five or sixty or so, that man, who was,
14 you know, one of the guards, he came over to me and he said,
15 you know, "Don't sit, because could happen to you what
16 happened to the old ()." I said, "But I
17 can't move." He said, "You have to force yourself," he
18 said, "because maybe you will have a chance and you will
19 be liberated."

20 Well, I don't know how I made it, but my girl-
21 friend helped me to walk, and I was, you know, moving
22 faster, because if you were the last in the transport, you
23 were shot, you see; you had to be in the middle and not --

24 And we came somewhere, it was pitch dark, and we
25 came somewhere to barns, you know. There was nobody there.

1 It was like you were walking in Siberia. It was nothing there.
2 We were sit in that barn, my girlfriend, overnight.

3 And the next day they took us to a station where
4 they had the coal, w-e-th-e-r-s-l-a-s-h-e-n, whatever, I
5 don't know. The little, all the little coal wagons, you
6 know. The tiny little ones. And we all went into one.
7 This was five days and five nights we walked, and the sixth
8 day they put us in little coal wagon, you know.

9 Q Did they give you food when you walked?

10 A No. We had no food, nothing. When we started to
11 walk they gave you, each one a loaf of bread. But who
12 could eat the bread when you have no -- I used to scratch
13 from the ground, the frozen ground, the filthy snow and
14 put on my lips. Then my tongue got swollen, and I couldn't
15 move my tongue in my mouth.

16 So -- when we were in this wagon for five days
17 and five nights, we were all black from the coal dust,
18 you know, and we came into Bergen-Belsen. We came into
19 Bergen-Belsen, we went in a barrack. We were about eight
20 hundred people in that barrack, imagine that. We couldn't
21 sit, we couldn't -- we went on top of the other, and there
22 was no food.

23 In the beginning, they used to bake some bread,
24 but there were (the Ukranian women?) When we used to --
25 they wanted to give our bread, they used to drive bac k

1 the swine and take a little bread away. And the water was
2 poisoned, so we had no water, no bread. And that was Bergen-
3 Belsen. And the mountains of the dirt were laying, being
4 higher and higher and higher and higher, but a lot of the
5 filth became mountains. We caught lot of epidemics, you
6 know? We got cholera, typhoid fever; I didn't get it,
7 because I had been through with this in Estonia, so I was
8 immune already to the two fevers.

9 Make it very short now, (because I can't go on
10 any more.

11 Came to Bergen-Belsen, we were liberated April
12 15, 1945. From the eight hundred to a thousand people from
13 the barrack, there were only about forty-eight people alive,
14 And they couldn't walk () and we were crawl-
15 ing on all fours, that what was left from our people, from
16 the whole.

17 And I was liberated by the British in 1950 ().
18 And when the British came in they told us that a ()
19 came in and they saw those months that we turned into skele-
20 tons and they were () They got par-
21 alyzed. The young men, they couldn't believe what their
22 eyes have seen. And then they started to write letters,
23 you know, took pictures, to their family in Britain and
24 (TAPE #1 ENDS).
25

1 (SECOND TAPE.)

2 People couldn't take any more. And then half of
3 the people were in very bad diseases. They were laying
4 out, you know, with typhoid fever, and tuberculosis, you
5 know, and dysentery, you know, and they just couldn't get
6 well any more. Too much. So they died. And there was mass
7 graves in Bergen-Belsen somewhere.

8 We don't know where they buried. Because my
9 girlfriend Vassa, she -- I was holding her in my hand, you
10 know. I wanted her so much to live. She go so thin, you
11 know, like a skeleton.

12 I got diarrhea, I got dysentery, but somehow
13 my system, you know, well, I survived. But she just --
14 she used to go blank, and I used to clean her blood, and all
15 of a sudden -- and I ran to the British soldier there, was
16 a () Hartman, I think was his name, who was in
17 charge; like a major or whatever. I said, "Please save
18 her," you know? I said, "There must be somewheres hospitals
19 around there," you know, in Germany. And so they took her.

20 And in years -- and after the war the British found
21 some buried watches, you know. The assess used to be golden
22 watches. Anyway, so one of (us/them) give me a watch, so
23 I gave it to her. And her hand was so skinny that the watch
24 went up to her arm. And I said to her, "Vassinka, please
25 take care of yourself." And they took her in this ambulance,

1 you know. And that was it. That was the end.

2 And then I was running around asking. They said,
3 "Honey, we have so many thousands of dead people, they didn't
4 mark down nobody. We just put them in mass graves." You
5 know.

6 And that Krammer, the last one who came with us
7 from Auschwitz, they hanged him right after the war.

8 And I was very ill, because I got jaundice, and I
9 got an ulcer. You know, I was eating my heart out. And
10 I started to work for the British government; an honor team,
11 you know; was working as interpreter, being I knew some
12 languages, you know, a little bit of English.

13 And later on I married, you know. I have a
14 daughter, God bless her. And I have, you know, I have some
15 relatives in United States, and I came to United States.
16 And that's everything.

17 Q Um-hm.

18 A But if I would have to tell you everything, I have to
19 write a dozen books. I mean, it's not just what I -- you
20 can't tell six years of your life in an hour, you know, it's
21 impossible.

22 Q You know it so good, it's so in front of your mind.
23 How can you go from day to day without talking about it, or
24 -- I mean, how do you live with it?

25 A How do I live? In the beginning was very hard to live.

1 That's why I had so many diseases. But you know, when I
2 got married, and five years later, you know -- my husband
3 didn't want no children, because he had been through hell.
4 And he says, "We're going to United States. How would we
5 (provide for it?), how we going to live?"

6 But when I got pregnant, I had my baby, you know
7 what? When I had my little child, everying went away from
8 me. I was so happy, you know, that I had somebody with
9 me, that nothing even mattered. (CRYING) It wasn't -- ev-
10 erything went away, you know. Like -- like it left me,
11 you know what I mean? Like all my wants disappeared, you
12 know. Because my whole life was my little baby, you know.
13 And I got blessed, because she's grown up, she's married,
14 she has her own child.

15 And I'm alone and get very lonely, you know.
16 And when you're alone, when you get old, it comes back to
17 you more often, you see.

18 Q Yes, I see.

19 A And that's the sad thing. I have these nightmares.
20 For twenty-five years, every night I used to wake up in
21 sweat, putting on the light, because the Nazis were choking
22 me. Fire was burning -- we were on top of a house, and the
23 fire burning, the Nazis are running up to me in the side
24 streets. Constantly I have nightmares. I went to a psy-
25 chiatrist, I went to doctors, and nobody could help me.

1 Was constantly on dope, on pills, because they didn't know
2 what to do with me.

3 But as I said, when I had my baby, I got some-
4 body to love for myself, and I gave it all my love. And
5 the Jewish S-h-e-r-a-l-e-g-a said, you know, "When you have
6 a child you are not supposed to mourn your dead," you know
7 what I mean? So I didn't think about my child, about my
8 family. I mean, I thought, I had them in my mind, but I
9 couldn't mourn because I was so grateful to God that I have
10 my own child.

11 And now when I'm back alone, I mourn again, you
12 know? Now when I'm alone by myself and I (),
13 you know. And when you're alone, all your past comes back
14 to you, back and forth.

15 Q Yes.

16 A And this is a very, very sad thing.

17 But I wanted to tell you some of it, because,
18 see, when I'm not going to be here, at least it will be some-
19 body have book to read, or something, you know. Because
20 I know after that what I'm talking, I will be very sick for
21 a couple of weeks, you know; the emotion, you see. Can't
22 sleep, I can't think nothing.

23 Q It will clean you out a little bit; maybe it won't
24 make you sick, hopefully. You know, you carry it in your
25 heart; this comes out, the heart will be lighter.

1 A I hope so. But I just want this to have some memory
2 of me, you know, when I wouldn't be here, and this will
3 come to be in a book or an archive; at least somebody maybe
4 twenty years from now, thirty years from now, will look and
5 say, "Gee, that woman was there," you know?

6 Q Yes. Yes.

7 A And I think that it has to give -- people have to
8 realize that you can't go on living with hate, and we have
9 to find a way that people should start loving each other and
10 stop hatred and the wars and the killings. Because killing
11 doesn't help, you know what I mean?

12 I hope to God that Israel, the state of Israel,
13 should at least exist another ten thousand years, that
14 the Jewish should always have a home, you know.

15 And I don't know how they will ever eradicate it,
16 anti-Semitism, it is such a terrible poison, you know. I
17 really don't know what everybody -- Imagine, it's thirty-
18 eight years after my liberation, and took so long to finally
19 start to do something. Where were they twenty years ago?
20 How come they didn't -- how come that I was -- I said that
21 the whole world had a hand in our annihilation, because when
22 Hitler started to kill off the Jews, if all the nations,
23 you know, like United States and Britain, etcetera, would
24 say, "You can't do it," you know. If they would stand up
25 for us, he wouldn't have done it. At least half of the

1 Jews would have been saved.

2 But nobody really gave a (). They
3 wanted to kill us, because nobody really loved the Jew.

4 (Extraneous conversation by passer-by.)

5 It would take me years to write it. I worked
6 for the American-Jewish Congress, you know, when I came
7 to the States, for five years, before my child was born.

8 (Further extraneous discussion.)

9 So, my superior was Jacob Washington. I don't
10 know if you heard about him, a distinguished person, you know.
11 I could do -- sing all these songs, you know, these things.
12 And he was begging me, he says, "Molly, I will come every
13 day and take notes. I want you to write a book." I said,
14 "I can't, because I start talking and blood comes out of
15 me." He said to me, "But you will forget so much." I
16 said, "But I can't. I can't talk about it."

17 This was twenty years, twenty-five years ago he
18 wanted me to write a book you know, about my life.

19 Q You didn't forget.

20 A Well, I forgot a lot. I mean, details, the little
21 details. It's in back of my mind, but I just can't talk
22 about it, you know, what is happening. What a human being
23 can endure, you wouldn't believe. I mean, what I went
24 through. And yet, you can just die in a second, or you get
25 a stack of gold, money or gold. I mean, they say in Yiddish

1 -- I don't know if you know Yiddish; do you know a little
2 Jewish? "A mensch (),
3 that's what it is.

4 And I want -- I don't know, what are they going --
5 are you going to put this in an article? What's going to
6 be with this?

7 Q It will go into an archive. The archives will be in
8 San Francisco.

9 A Uh-huh.

10 Q It () here. And there's going to be a
11 book.

12 A Oh.

13 Q They may also use some of what you've said in a radio
14 program, also.

15 A Oh.

16 Q Pick it out --

17 A Some parts, yeah.

18 Q Right.

19 A -- oh, well --

20 - - -

21 END OF TAPE.

22

23

24

25