

1 ZOPHIA SHULMAN - Holocaust Media Project

2 SHULMAN: I was a child.

3 INTERVIEWER: How old were you?

4 SHULMAN: The war broke out when I was in fourth
5 grade. I was nine years old in a small town outside of
6 Warsaw, roughly about 20 miles, 28 kilometers west of Warsaw.
7 I was one of three children. My father worked. He was a
8 shoe maker and a boot maker, and we had our own business,
9 our own workshop, work place and business.

10 We had a very -- fairly good life, and the good
11 was that we had a family. It meant everything. The war
12 broke out in September 1st, 1939, on a Friday, and the bombs
13 started to fall right where we lived.

14 On the first afternoon of the war, we received
15 the first bombs dropped by the German air force. And there
16 were immediately casualties.

17 I remember I came into the kitchen and my mother
18 was preparing the Sabbath. It was Friday afternoon, and she
19 was cutting on her cutting board. She was cutting up noodles
20 for the chicken soup. And as the bombs started flying, we
21 heard explosions. We ran into -- we didn't, we didn't know
22 where to run.

23 My father had, was absent from the house. He was
24 out in Warsaw on business but managed to come back and
25 gathered us up, and we kind of said this is it. We knew the

1 war was on. And we evacuated into Warsaw, into the inner
2 city of Warsaw, hoping that we would be spared because --

3 INTERVIEWER: Into the ghetto?

4 SHULMAN: Not the ghetto. There was no ghetto
5 yet, but we were hoping that the city would defend itself.
6 Because the Germans were marching very rapidly into the,
7 into Poland, and they were, within a week they were at the
8 outskirts of Warsaw. Warsaw defended itself for four weeks.

9 And then we were going back to our small town.
10 We found our apartment intact. But my dad was arrested by
11 the Germans a few weeks after occupation, and he was taken
12 into a concentration camp. And we didn't know why he was
13 arrested. When we went to inquire in German, one of the
14 officers told us, called him the Otercop du Communist (?).
15 And the Otercop du Communist implies that his red hair -- he
16 was known by his red hair, because he was also professional
17 soccer player. And he was known on the field as "Red".

18 INTERVIEWER: Oh, no.

19 SHULMAN: And he was interred for the first -- he
20 was interred six weeks. Remember, I was nine years old.

21 INTERVIEWER: God, I was going to ask you how
22 old you were.

23 SHULMAN: And we didn't know whether we would
24 ever see him alive or, or even dead, because no one ever knew
25 where they were taken to. And then we heard he was in a

1 concentration camp.

2 INTERVIEWER: (Inaudible)

3 SHULMAN: Yes, he came back.

4 INTERVIEWER: He came back?

5 SHULMAN: He was freed after six weeks, but it
6 was one of, one of the first horrors that we experienced
7 because he, for weeks he couldn't talk from the beating and
8 the, and the terror that he endured under this imprisonment
9 while imprisoned.

10 Personally, it immediately dawned on me that
11 we're in for a very hard time. I was very alert and very
12 astute to what was going -- we were always, we immediately
13 had to start wearing the yellow star --

14 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, (inaudible)

15 SHULMAN: -- saying that we're Jews. And shortly
16 thereafter, although my dad started to work again, although
17 it was hard -- materials were hard to come by, food was hard
18 to come by, because the Germans started to rob about, you
19 know, everything.

20 We were then, we were then shipped into the
21 Warsaw ghetto. We were ordered to gather everything that,
22 as much as possible of our belongings, and then we were taken
23 into the Warsaw ghetto. I was in the Warsaw ghetto for a
24 while. And then I jumped over with an aunt of mine and her
25 child. I jumped over the wall. Remember, the Warsaw ghetto

1 was walled.

2 INTERVIEWER: Right; right. Yes.

3 SHULMAN: And we ran away into the east of
4 Poland where my dad was born originally. And we, we were
5 under the illusion that they wouldn't bother us there.
6 Unfortunately, it wasn't true. But aside from that, we were
7 subjected already to hunger and many diseases that go along
8 with this kind of deprivation. We were malnourished and we
9 were full of lice. And so we -- it was inevitable that we
10 would also contact typhoid and scabies, and other similar
11 diseases that go along with this kind of deprivation.

12 The threat of, of being caught and shot was
13 everywhere. It was just, it dawned on us very soon that
14 there -- this is the inevitability of our destiny, that we
15 are being singled out to die just because we were Jewish.
16 Now, can you imagine being nine years old or ten, eleven
17 and having to be, wondering what is going on in this world
18 that we are being --

19 INTERVIEWER: Especially at that age, yeah.

20 SHULMAN: -- we are meant to die, just because
21 we were born Jewish? It's true, many times I cursed myself,
22 my birth, why was I born Jewish. I kept on asking my mother
23 why was I born Jewish. Which is of course a child --

24 INTERVIEWER: Why me.

25 SHULMAN: -- child question. However, there

1 wasn't too much time for this kind of contemplation because
2 you had to run for your life most of the time.

3 And I started -- I left my -- we were then
4 ordered to, to join transports that were going to exter-
5 mination camps closer and closer. And this particular region
6 of Poland, you had those famous extermination camps of
7 Treblinka and Majdanek.

8 INTERVIEWER: Right.

9 SHULMAN: And my aunt, my father's next-to-
10 youngest sister, and her child, her four-year-old, my youngest
11 sister who was at the time about three and a half, and my
12 mom were all hiding from being taken away. We were like
13 buried alive. And I was the one who ran constantly to find
14 something to eat. So I used to be the main --

15 INTERVIEWER: You were strong?

16 SHULMAN: -- provider. I was very strong --

17 INTERVIEWER: Strong then?

18 SHULMAN: Yes, I was. Yes, I was. Whatever
19 I could, I would sell for bread and for any kind of provision.

20 INTERVIEWER: What other kind of food did you
21 find besides bread?

22 SHULMAN: We had very little access to anything
23 because the Polish, a lot of the Polish people took advantage
24 of us. They would take away -- let's say if I had a piece of
25 jewelry and I offered to them for some meat or, or cheese or

1 butter, sometimes they took advantage, they would take it
2 away, not give me anything.

3 But I really learned to spot people who were
4 honest and would not take advantage of us. So I was -- what
5 other food? Remember, my mom was also concerned about eating
6 kosher, ironically.

7 INTERVIEWER: Even under those circumstances?

8 SHULMAN: Although she was a very liberated
9 person, she was still concerned. But something when you ask
10 about women, it -- my mom had a very peculiar reaction to this
11 whole situation. When I remember her as a little, when I was
12 a little girl, she was the pillar of strength. In the
13 community she was active, she was a lady who knew about working
14 or what needy people who needed charity. She was -- but under
15 the circumstances, she really lost all her capacity for, for
16 living, actually. And I was the one, being able to speak
17 fluent Polish, I was able, when -- she was Yiddish speaking,
18 but she knew sufficient Polish -- but I was the one that
19 became a complete -- I was a scavenger. Wherever I could
20 get some food, I would just beg and, and connive and contrive
21 and just to bring some food into the mouths of the others that
22 were with us, under my tutelage. I was the one to see that
23 they ate.

24 But we were eventually -- there was no escape.
25 We were picked up.

1 INTERVIEWER: And then --

2 SHULMAN: And I ran away. I left them behind.
3 I just managed to escape. I had some jewelry for which I
4 bought myself out, and a Polish family took care of me. They,
5 they hid me for a while, and then my father was still alive
6 in Warsaw. So was my brother. And I made it back to them.

7 INTERVIEWER: And they were in the ghetto?

8 SHULMAN: They were outside the ghetto working
9 for a German outfit. It was forced labor. And I ran there.
10 Unfortunately, my dad could not contain me, so I had to go
11 back into the Warsaw ghetto. And there I was with some
12 strangers, although we knew who they were. But most of the
13 time, the ghetto was subjected to what were called actions
14 or razzias, if you will. I don't know if that word rings a
15 bell. It's spelled r-a-z-z-i-a, a German -- it was like a,
16 a roundup of Jewish people to be brought to the camps, to the
17 extermination camps.

18 So in the ghetto, it was a constant threat of
19 being annihilated, was constantly. And so I was running
20 back and forth to keep afloat.

21 INTERVIEWER: Right.

22 SHULMAN: To keep alive. Constantly caught
23 and running --

24 INTERVIEWER: In and out.

25 SHULMAN: -- in and out. I was, I was slick. I

1 thought I knew how to get away from the Germans.

2 INTERVIEWER: Did they ever harm you?

3 SHULMAN: Yes, I was. I was harmed. I was shot
4 at.

5 INTERVIEWER: You were what?

6 SHULMAN: Shot at.

7 INTERVIEWER: Oh.

8 SHULMAN: Which I have, which I have left some
9 scars on my body.

10 INTERVIEWER: And (inaudible)

11 SHULMAN: Injured. I was beaten. I was
12 starving.

13 INTERVIEWER: And you were ten years old?

14 SHULMAN: I was twelve already at the time.

15 INTERVIEWER: Twelve.

16 SHULMAN: Remember, the war went on until 1945.

17 INTERVIEWER: And what camp did you end up in?

18 SHULMAN: I ended up after the uprising in
19 Warsaw, I was for one year on the Aryan side of Warsaw, of
20 the ghetto, but after the ghetto, it was exterminated. I
21 was still with my father and my brother. My father was taken
22 to Germany, and my brother and I were taken out to be shot.
23 There was a grave dug for us, and we knew that. My, my
24 wonderful brother -- who thank God he's alive and has a
25 family, he lives in Lakewood, New Jersey -- he grabbed a

1 machine gun from the S.S. guard that was taking us to be shot
2 and threw it, and we ran. And that's how we escaped, and
3 were eventually caught up with by the Germans. And I was
4 interred in Germany in Berlin, in a suburb of Berlin called
5 Biesdorf, B-i-e-s-d-o-r-f, which is East Germany now.

6 My brother was in Sachsenhausen. And
7 we were liberated -- I was liberated in 1945 by the Soviet
8 troops --

9 INTERVIEWER: How's that --

10 SHULMAN: -- which was not a good experience
11 either, because the Soviet soldiers were raping indiscriminately
12 whether we were camp inmates or --

13 INTERVIEWER: Did that happen a lot?

14 SHULMAN: It happened a lot. Fortunately for
15 me, I was so worn out that I didn't probably look human, to
16 get looking like a woman or a girl.

17 INTERVIEWER: Yes.

18 SHULMAN: I had this scrawny appearance, and
19 there wasn't very much flesh on me. So I think they didn't --
20 although for what I observed, they didn't discriminate. Let
21 me just be fair to them. They were people in the Soviet army
22 that had probably -- they, who did not know who we were.
23 They were of Asian descent. They were from Mongolia. And
24 there were real wild creatures, so to say. I really, I don't
25 want to sound unkind, because they were, after all, fighting

1 a fierce war against the Germans.

2 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

3 SHULMAN: And they liberated us. They did
4 liberate us. So I have to -- and moreover, at the time it was
5 important that they, that they avenge us, and they did.

6 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Did they abuse the women
7 more than the Germans, the Nazi officers in the camp?

8 SHULMAN: Well, the Nazi officers wouldn't
9 touch a Jewish woman out of -- because they were --

10 INTERVIEWER: Because they were Jews?

11 SHULMAN: They did it, but because there were
12 Jews, there was this law of miscegenation.

13 INTERVIEWER: Miscegenation. Right; yes.

14 SHULMAN: And so it was, they had to like them
15 very much. But they used them. But I can't say that -- I
16 mean they didn't discriminate who the women were, the Soviets;
17 they just went wild.

18 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

19 SHULMAN: Whereas the Germans, it was beneath
20 them to -- they killed us, so it wasn't -- we didn't even
21 have a chance for that.

22 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. When you were in the camp,
23 were there, like, women commandants, under the Germans?

24 SHULMAN: Yes, we had --

25 INTERVIEWER: What was it like?

1 SHULMAN: We had a woman who was our commandant.
2 She was, she was a, a Yugoslavian lady whose heritage was
3 German. And so she became, during the war she joined the
4 German ranks. She was a big tall dark-haired lady with,
5 walking around with her whip all the time.

6 INTERVIEWER: Did they whip --

7 SHULMAN: Yes.

8 INTERVIEWER: -- women a lot? No matter what
9 age, children?

10 SHULMAN: Yes. At random. Just for, sometimes
11 just the mood would lead them on to crack the whip on you
12 for -- I had a particular hard time because I used to be in
13 the habit of -- I knew how to read German, so I used to be in
14 the habit of picking up German newspapers and bringing the
15 news in to and say oh, guess what, the Americans are here, the
16 Russians are there. And so I had a very rough time.

17 Moreover, I was in Germany; when I was caught in
18 Poland, I gave another name, so I was as a Polish child,
19 rather than Jewish. And because I was constantly picked up --
20 I was squealed on that I was posing, although I used to go
21 around crossing myself saying my Hail Marys and things, just
22 to impress people that I was the real thing.

23 INTERVIEWER: Yes.

24 SHULMAN: But some people felt, some Poles or
25 Germans, they were suspicious of me because I knew German.

1 And I knew German quite well, so I used to sometimes listen
2 in on the radio where I could or read newspapers. I had a
3 real rough time. I used to get beaten all the time. I was
4 really beaten to a pulp. One time in Warsaw I was caught
5 stealing some soap. And I was beaten with boots, you know.
6 Someone was kicking me. I was --

7 INTERVIEWER: Was it a woman?

8 SHULMAN: No, a man. A man. But women were
9 equally cruel. There were a lot of women that it's hard to
10 believe today that we -- they had so much cruelty in them to --

11 INTERVIEWER: Did they actually do the killing
12 in the camps?

13 SHULMAN: I didn't witness this personally, but
14 I know that they did.

15 INTERVIEWER: They did?

16 SHULMAN: They were guarding. They were guards.
17 I saw them. They took pride in, in being equal to the men.
18 It is being said that a lot of these women had, were very
19 angry, supposedly angry at men and themselves.

20 INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh; yeah.

21 SHULMAN: And so they were maybe -- I don't want
22 to say that because this is not fair to other homosexual
23 women who may be very kind. And --

24 INTERVIEWER: Sure. But there were the kind
25 that --

1 SHULMAN: There were those that were real --
2 they also abused children sexually, for their pleasure. They
3 were very, very cruel.

4 INTERVIEWER: Did they have families themselves,
5 some of them, or like did they have --

6 SHULMAN: I imagine --

7 INTERVIEWER: -- children themselves that --

8 SHULMAN: Some did. Some did. I assume they
9 did because they were grown, they were mature people. And
10 now that you question that --

11 INTERVIEWER: Do you think that they were, you
12 know, in the camps that treating the Jewish children that
13 way, they go home to their own families --

14 SHULMAN: Remember, Jewish were not human,
15 were not --

16 INTERVIEWER: Yes.

17 SHULMAN: -- were subhuman, they weren't even
18 subhuman. Ants, I wouldn't crush an ant today. I wouldn't
19 step on it. I would just remove it.

20 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Was --

21 SHULMAN: Whereas, they had actual contempt and
22 did not look on us as human beings.

23 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

24 SHULMAN: So today as, as for the rest, ever
25 since I was liberated, and ever since -- let me remind you

1 that we never ceased thinking, we never ceased living. We
2 were -- we can't, we can't comprehend the tragedy that
3 happened to, that has happened to us as a people.

4 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. What happened to you after,
5 when you were liberated by the Soviets?

6 SHULMAN: I went to Poland. I was looking for
7 survivors.

8 INTERVIEWER: How did you get from --

9 SHULMAN: I walked. There were, there were,
10 there were long convoys of people. Remember, there were
11 camps, there were hundreds of camps in different parts
12 of Germany. Jews and Poles, and other oppressed peoples.
13 The German oppressed, remember, they oppressed all, most of
14 Europe.

15 INTERVIEWER: Yes.

16 SHULMAN: And after liberation all, most people
17 were eager to return to their home towns. Mainly because
18 we were looking for survivors. And when I got to Poland I
19 found nothing.

20 INTERVIEWER: What was it like?

21 SHULMAN: Nothing. I found nobody.

22 INTERVIEWER: What -- did you try and go back
23 to the house you lived in?

24 SHULMAN: I went back to the house. Of course,
25 I knew that there weren't any -- there were other people

1 living in our apartment. Our business was no longer there.
2 And I went to a Polish family that was -- and I stayed with
3 them. A short while later, my brother really returned.
4 My brother was 16. I was 15. He was 17. He came out from
5 Sachsenhausen. Six months later my dad came.

6 INTERVIEWER: He (inaudible)

7 SHULMAN: He was liberated in Austria. Right.

8 INTERVIEWER: You got your family back?

9 SHULMAN: We have -- at least we were a very
10 unusual phenomena --

11 INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

12 SHULMAN: -- to have three people in one family
13 survive. I think if you walk around here and ask, that we
14 were an unusual phenomena to have --

15 INTERVIEWER: Yes, that many survive.

16 SHULMAN: -- that three people in one family.

17 INTERVIEWER: What happened to your mother?

18 SHULMAN: My mother perished. We don't know
19 where. We don't know how.

20 INTERVIEWER: Unbelievable.

21 SHULMAN: Right.

22 INTERVIEWER: It really is. And you're
23 (inaudible); right?

24 SHULMAN: I came here the first time in 1948.
25 And I moved to Israel. And I came back in 1959, to -- and I

1 continued my education. I graduated from college.

2 INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh. Where did you go to
3 school?

4 SHULMAN: I went to nursing school.

5 INTERVIEWER: Yes.

6 SHULMAN: And I went to, a while to C.W. Post.
7 I got my degree in nursing. While I was working as a
8 registered nurse.

9 INTERVIEWER: Right. And where are you working
10 now? Where was it again?

11 SHULMAN: I work in a mental health clinic.

12 INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh. Great. Do nurses --
13 there are a couple -- I want to try and do some of the
14 questions here.

15 SHULMAN: Go ahead.

16 INTERVIEWER: What do you think it was that --
17 I've never done this before.

18 SHULMAN: Uh-huh.

19 INTERVIEWER: What do you think it was that
20 enabled you to survive in the camp? Was it a will for life?

21 SHULMAN: Yes, the will to life. I -- at the
22 time there was not yet in me the kind of strong national
23 urge that I have now. Now I just --

24 INTERVIEWER: You mean like (inaudible)?

25 SHULMAN: -- to watch Israel, the Jewish people.

1 And generally people -- I am against all genocide and --
2 this, remember this was genocide --

3 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

4 SHULMAN: -- against people. And I know that the
5 word genocide is being abused now. Everyone jumps on the
6 thing and yells genocide. Anyone that did not experience
7 genocide should really, out of respect for our --

8 INTERVIEWER: Yes; right.

9 SHULMAN: -- our, or I think if there is such a
10 thing, all the people that perished who were defenseless --

11 INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

12 SHULMAN: -- martyrs and saints. Well, saints
13 is -- I don't want to use that word. We don't have saints.
14 But we had -- there were martyrs.

15 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

16 SHULMAN: Because they were defenseless. Our --
17 today I, I'm thinking of the same thing that are going on
18 worldwide, like in Campucia (sp?) and Cambodia and in Nigeria,
19 the Ibos (sp?), and in India the Asimines. I could list you
20 all the -- so and yet, you know, the -- it doesn't seem like
21 it's, it's ever ending. Except nothing compared to the kind
22 of systematic -- remember, if you haven't read about -- you
23 have to go back to the background of how the German machinery
24 operated. They devised a systematic extermination --

25 INTERVIEWER: A planned --

1 SHULMAN: A planned --

2 INTERVIEWER: Like technology --

3 SHULMAN: We develop, like the United States
4 developed a health plan, if you will, or a --

5 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

6 SHULMAN: -- a defense plan, if you will.

7 INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

8 SHULMAN: The Germans developed an extermination
9 plan --

10 INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

11 SHULMAN: -- to, to make Europe what they call
12 Ooh-din-rein; ooh-din-rein is the expression for utmost
13 cleanliness, you know. Like we were, we were, we were dirt.
14 We were not human. The -- it's very, my experience is things
15 have been such that I actually live it. I live to remember
16 and not forget. And it is a -- yes, you asked me before.
17 I want to digress, remember, about women. Woman had par-
18 ticularly a hard time. We were so dehumanized, you know.
19 A woman -- we were shaven, we were -- we lost --

20 INTERVIEWER: Head shaved?

21 SHULMAN: Shaved; right. We lost our femininity
22 because we, we had, we had no menstrual periods. Due to
23 malnutrition. They were also putting something, I understand,
24 into the, what wasn't food, to make us amenorrhoeaic. And so
25 we had no breasts, we had no appearance, we had no looks. We

1 were feeling -- men had it a little easier, although the men
2 did suffer as much as we did. But as self image of a person,
3 when we came out from the war, we really had a very hard
4 time. We lost five years of our lives. How to dress, who
5 are we? The question constantly came up, what is it like
6 to -- you also wanted to be part of a human family. In
7 addition to have your own -- you wanted to have your own
8 family and everything.

9 INTERVIEWER: Hard to become human again after
10 your experience.

11 SHULMAN: Yeah; right. So --

12 INTERVIEWER: Did you ever manage to laugh at
13 all?

14 SHULMAN: To laugh? I laugh. I laugh, I laugh.
15 I love life.

16 INTERVIEWER: Did you try and talk to each other
17 and cooperate with each other a lot?

18 SHULMAN: During the war?

19 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, in the camp?

20 SHULMAN: During the hard times? Yes, we did.
21 We -- first of all, we always dreamt of having enough food.

22 INTERVIEWER: And that was like your prime
23 concern was to find food every day?

24 SHULMAN: Food and soap.

25 INTERVIEWER: Food and soap? How often did you

1 actually -- did you ever bathe at all?

2 SHULMAN: Rarely, because there wasn't enough
3 water, there wasn't enough time. They wouldn't let you be
4 free to --

5 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

6 SHULMAN: -- pursue any kind of hygiene.

7 INTERVIEWER: What did you do for work all day
8 long in the camp?

9 SHULMAN: Forced labor.

10 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

11 SHULMAN: To help the German war machine.

12 INTERVIEWER: Right; and what was that kind of
13 job?

14 SHULMAN: Personally, I was in a factory that
15 produced -- it's still there. It's called AEG. It's an
16 American -- the German was Eichman Electric something.
17 But it was main, making war parts for different instruments.
18 But it was really --

19 INTERVIEWER: There wasn't just busy work, this
20 was really German war machine?

21 SHULMAN: Oh, we did not busy work, no. We
22 were -- but we didn't have enough to eat, we didn't get
23 enough sleep. We had no clothes to wear. They just barely
24 covered ourselves. Personally, remember, I ran away half
25 naked from under the bullet, and that's how I wound up wearing

1 just a piece of cotton dress. I had no underpants, I had
2 nothing. I had a pair, my brother's pair of shoes with
3 the strings slung over me that I carried around until the
4 end of the war. And that's all I had on me was that piece
5 of cloth. No underwear, no nothing. No towel.

6 INTERVIEWER: What time would you get up in the
7 morning? What -- they made you --

8 SHULMAN: At four.

9 INTERVIEWER: Did they have a roll call?

10 SHULMAN: Big -- roll call whistling and then
11 you knew --

12 INTERVIEWER: Whistling?

13 SHULMAN: Yes, the block woman would have a big
14 whistle. She walked around with a whip and a whistle. The
15 block out elder, you know, that you asked me, she was in
16 charge of our camp.

17 INTERVIEWER: Did you have to make your bed a
18 certain way?

19 SHULMAN: There was no bed. There were, you
20 know --

21 INTERVIEWER: (Inaudible)

22 SHULMAN: -- cots, yeah.

23 INTERVIEWER: Cots and rafter type of thing?
24 Yeah.

25 SHULMAN: We just lay there.

1 INTERVIEWER: And then they put you right to work?

2 SHULMAN: Yes, we were taken by transport. We
3 were transported in a, in a truck to work.

4 INTERVIEWER: What did it feel like when you were
5 working, since you were so tired --

6 SHULMAN: Feelings were --

7 INTERVIEWER: -- and malnourished?

8 SHULMAN: Feelings were very mixed. The basic,
9 the main feeling was of survival. And of hope to -- there
10 were, there was a mixed bag of feelings, really, because
11 one thing was to get enough to eat. And be able to cover
12 yourself up somehow and be, keep warm. The other thing
13 was to also -- that glimmer, that thinking that they will
14 get their due, that the Germans will get their due. That --
15 and we also hoped for -- kind of wishful thinking, what will
16 it be like when liberation comes?

17 INTERVIEWER: Right; yes.

18 SHULMAN: So these were the --

19 INTERVIEWER: So you did --

20 SHULMAN: -- feelings.

21 INTERVIEWER: -- have a sense of hope?

22 SHULMAN: Yes, I always did. I, I personally
23 always knew that I would --

24 INTERVIEWER: That you were going to make it?

25 SHULMAN: -- get through. Yes.

1 INTERVIEWER: That had to be really (inaudible)

2 SHULMAN: I just had so much going for myself.

3 I was into, I wanted to live and see --

4 INTERVIEWER: (Inaudible)

5 SHULMAN: Sure, I wanted to live and see what the
6 outcome and will I ever see any relatives.

7 INTERVIEWER: Relatives?

8 SHULMAN: This was my main concern. I wanted
9 to see anyone --

10 INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

11 SHULMAN: -- alive.

12 INTERVIEWER: And that kept you going, I'll bet.

13 Did you have, like, a group of friends that you did things
14 with or were ^{you} all kind of in it together?

15 SHULMAN: Yes, yes. Went to putsch (sp?).

16 INTERVIEWER: I have heard that many times.

17 SHULMAN: Yeah. Food, food. I want you to --
18 yeah, I did have. I had some, you know, I, I wanted to look
19 in the mirror. I wanted to see what I still looked human,
20 pretty.

21 INTERVIEWER: Right. Did you have (inaudible)?

22 SHULMAN: Yes. Yes, I also wanted to -- I
23 learned how to smoke.

24 INTERVIEWER: Is it really in the camp --

25 SHULMAN: Butts and things, because it was a

1 great satisfaction.

2 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

3 SHULMAN: It was growing up. Remember, I was a
4 teenager, and I wanted to be grown up.

5 INTERVIEWER: Willing to try all that.

6 SHULMAN: I just want -- yes -- just wanted to
7 be treated as a mature teenager, even though I --

8 INTERVIEWER: Yes.

9 SHULMAN: -- looked like a nine-year-old.

10 INTERVIEWER: Do you feel like you had, like,
11 really difficult decisions to make in the camp, or things
12 that you had to compromise on or things that you --

13 SHULMAN: Well, you have --

14 INTERVIEWER: -- found your values were shattered
15 or --

16 SHULMAN: -- to realign values, yes. My
17 values were --

18 INTERVIEWER: But you were young.

19 SHULMAN: Yes.

20 INTERVIEWER: You were young --

21 SHULMAN: -- what you can --

22 INTERVIEWER: Uh-huh.

23 SHULMAN: -- make, you know, survive. And --

24 INTERVIEWER: You'd notice people really helping
25 each other?

1 SHULMAN: Yes, we did.

2 INTERVIEWER: (Inaudible)

3 SHULMAN: We definitely did, ~~we definitely~~
4 we definitely shared. There was no --

5 INTERVIEWER: You didn't see a lot of people
6 getting (inaudible)?

7 SHULMAN: NO, no. I, I refute that. If anyone
8 tells you that, because we --

9 INTERVIEWER: We heard that a lot.

10 SHULMAN: We grew up that way. There was no --
11 remember, it's part of our ethics is trying --

12 INTERVIEWER: Right.

13 SHULMAN: -- to be charitable.

14 INTERVIEWER: That's your culture --

15 SHULMAN: Yes, and ethics, is to share. And
16 also, you know, I had a hard time with my religious beliefs.
17 I grew up kind of --

18 INTERVIEWER: Were you from an orthodox family?

19 SHULMAN: No, no. We were a rather progressive
20 family. Very progressive. But I was taught that there is
21 a god, and a just god.

22 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And then you had it all,
23 you know --

24 SHULMAN: Yes.

25 INTERVIEWER: -- so where is this just god?

1 SHULMAN: Yes. And that sort of really is with
2 me 'til today. I have --

3 INTERVIEWER: Seems to be a Jewish problem.

4 SHULMAN: -- questions about the so-called
5 creator. I don't --

6 INTERVIEWER: You wonder where he was --

7 SHULMAN: Yes.

8 INTERVIEWER: -- when all that was going on?

9 SHULMAN: And why he -- I have trouble with that
10 too. Because why is this a male god? A fierce male god, you
11 know. So I am --

12 INTERVIEWER: Right.

13 SHULMAN: -- wiggled out about that. But I am
14 not in doubt about my Jewishness.

15 INTERVIEWER: Good, good. Your way of life.

16 SHULMAN: Yeah.

17 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Did -- were you -- did
18 they do any medical experiments on you?

19 SHULMAN: No; not on me personally, no.

20 INTERVIEWER: Any people you knew?

21 SHULMAN: Yes, I know firsthand of having the
22 different --

23 INTERVIEWER: What kind of experiments?

24 SHULMAN: -- implants. Of distorting, you know,
25 taking off limbs and putting them elsewhere.

1 INTERVIEWER: No anesthesia.

2 SHULMAN: No anesthesia. Taking -- women had
3 a particular hard time because they, they did a lot of
4 gynecological experimentation on the women, you know. Again,
5 you know, my personal luck at the time was that I was just
6 absolutely so disfigured because of malnutrition and, and
7 sadness. I'd like to impress upon you that this kind of
8 depression, this kind of deprivation changes one's appearance,
9 one's --

10 INTERVIEWER: Yes. Your mental outlook --

11 SHULMAN: -- self image --

12 INTERVIEWER: -- your everything, yeah.

13 SHULMAN: I can relate to it very well today
14 because I can spot people who are depressed and oppressed, for
15 what it's worth. It does a lot of one's body image, self
16 image and what, I imagine how others would perceive me as well
17 is changed due to that maltreatment and the progression. I
18 don't know if I can give you any more --

19 INTERVIEWER: That's a lot; that is a lot. Do
20 you speak? Do you talk a lot about the Polish (inaudible)?

21 SHULMAN: I talk to -- amongst -- my best
22 audience is my dad and a friend of mine who -- he is not here
23 today -- who, who was in Auschwitz, and I was not. But my
24 dad is my very good audience because he knows what we all
25 went through, which sometimes I get a feeling if we compete

1 with each other, my brother too. We compete with each other
2 when we start saying, remember --

3 INTERVIEWER: Remember; right.

4 SHULMAN: And we --

5 INTERVIEWER: And you try and top each other.

6 SHULMAN: Yes. Talk each other, over one
7 another because we -- on the other hand, we are so glad to
8 be alive and made it, you know, that we --

9 INTERVIEWER: That you did it.

10 SHULMAN: That we didn't really --

11 INTERVIEWER: That you survived the impossible
12 odds.

13 SHULMAN: Yeah. So it's -- yes. We talk. We --
14 and I dream all the time.

15 INTERVIEWER: You dream about your experience
16 a lot?

17 SHULMAN: More so lately. Excuse me. But since
18 I started, you know, to put in names and mailings to this
19 gathering here. And also there is -- the media has been in
20 on this too, you know. I get angry at that because I always
21 feel no one can tell our story. I feel -- it's a very
22 interesting thing. I know they are doing maybe their best,
23 and I should not be --

24 INTERVIEWER: But it gets distorted, I mean --

25 SHULMAN: I shouldn't be, you know -- and -- yes,

1 and also I always get this feeling, oh, could I, do I have
2 a story for you. Why don't you ask me or ask my father.

3 INTERVIEWER: They put their own interpretation --

4 SHULMAN: Well, they're doing the best -- they
5 can't remember -- what is your name?

6 INTERVIEWER: Chris.

7 SHULMAN: Chris. Remember, Chris, it is impossible
8 to describe it in words or --

9 INTERVIEWER: In language, yeah.

10 SHULMAN: -- any human terms. There is just no
11 way to --

12 INTERVIEWER: That's what Elie Wiesel
13 said in the -- there is an article in The Post.

14 SHULMAN: This weekend, yeah.

15 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. From his book, The Jew
16 Today. And he said, it's the same thing you said. It's
17 impossible.

18 SHULMAN: We all say that because -- sometimes
19 as it flashes through my, before my face, I keep saying how
20 real is it possible that we were witness to it and we lived
21 it on our own, you know. I know for myself that I don't
22 have an inch on my body that hasn't been beaten. Therefore,
23 and the same thing I witnessed with my brother. And we still
24 have to be members of, of this universe.

25 INTERVIEWER: You're alive, you're --

1 SHULMAN: That's right. We have to somehow
2 produce. We have to eat, we have to sleep, we have to work,
3 we have to pay taxes and be citizens and productive human
4 beings who don't want to be invalids.

5 INTERVIEWER: Pitied or --

6 SHULMAN: Oh, certainly not pitied. Or for that
7 matter, ^{depicted} as damaged beings. That we are not wholesome. We
8 get very defensive, I have to tell you that. In my own line,
9 in my own field of work I've had numbers, many experiences
10 where, you know, I would come across a chart reading on a
11 patient. And it would say, this young man is a child of
12 survivors. As if this were the major reason that their
13 young person, quote, went off the road, smoked pot, was
14 antisocial, couldn't adjust and consequently wound up being
15 in a psychiatric facility. As if one of the reasons and
16 because his, his or her parents were survivors is, it's an
17 injustice. It's not a title. It's not a career. This was
18 not our choice to, to --

19 INTERVIEWER: Inflict that upon you?

20 SHULMAN: That's right. So that's another
21 painful --

22 INTERVIEWER: That people would do that.

23 SHULMAN: Yeah. It's a painful element in our
24 lives, that if you -- some people don't understand, so they
25 say oh, I don't know what you're talking about. Some people

1 would say don't talk about it. Well, why bring it up again.
2 We don't want to know. Some people say why don't you leave it
3 alone, or some people say, as there are large movements to
4 deny --

5 INTERVIEWER: That it ever happened.

6 SHULMAN: -- deny the things that happened. And
7 I guess, to sum it up, that's why we're here, to bear
8 witness. Surprisingly, you know, for us, is that Americans,
9 who usually are very warm and understanding of human suffer-
10 ing, have found, I understand in the middle west in particular,
11 have found it necessary really to -- and again you know,
12 if you emphasize -- don't mean to generalize -- we just
13 want again is to be -- let it be a lesson, that --

14 INTERVIEWER: That it happened?

15 SHULMAN: -- that it happened. That human
16 beings are capable --

17 INTERVIEWER: Of doing that.

18 SHULMAN: -- of doing this kind, to each other.

19 INTERVIEWER: And they still are --

20 SHULMAN: Just because of their, they were born
21 of a certain religion or of a race, of a color, what have you.
22 I think that would go for, for everyone. I'm suggesting that
23 race isn't an inner form, to be condemned for that. If we
24 have to be standard bearers for the rest of our lives, and
25 our children, to condemn prejudice in any form, in any shape.

1 That's my testimonial.

2 INTERVIEWER: I think that's a good one. It's
3 a good one to hear. It really is. Thank you very much.

4 SHULMAN: You're very welcome.

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