

And this is really kind of one of my last questions. But why should people care about this story? Why is this important?

You mean about the Sugihara story or in general?

Sugihara, the flight. Why is it important that people know that you escaped?

For strangers to know what's the reason. That's a tough question. I need a drink. -- how philosophical it is, but I'll try and tell you how I feel, why it's important. OK, I try and tell you why it's important for-- you wanted to know, before I go on with the answer. You want to know why I feel it's important for people to know about it.

In my view and personal experience, I feel the reason for people to know mainly about Mr. Sugihara and those are personal reasons why I feel. If not from Mr. Sugihara being there and doing such a noble and selfless thing by giving the visas to me and my sister and a number of other people, none of us would be here. We would be part of the Holocaust.

I feel the world and future generations should know about this man even though while he was alive, he did not get the recognition that he deserved. He should get it now. And people should remember him for what a great humanitarian he was. That's my personal reason for people to know about it. Also, I would like people to know that each individual, no matter how-- well, it's difficult for me to express. I would like people to remember this experience.

And again, I'm speaking from my own personal experiences. That what my mother told us when she left us, that you're never to give up hope and that you should always try and try and never give up, no matter what the circumstances are. And have the faith in yourself that you're able to-- that you will survive, that you will achieve what you're trying to achieve. And that's about as much as I could analyze. I wish I could-- I have it-- I'm sorry, I don't know if you're rolling.

You're fine.

I have it in my brain, but it's not coming out.

You want to give it another try?

I'll try. Oh, gosh. I know I'm very-- like, I'm very affected right now by the refugee situation in Kosovo and all that. Because not as dangerous as it is for them, I went through sort of a similar situation. And I am almost-- my husband says don't be so angry. I am angry at-- if it's the politicians or whoever is guilty of all these atrocities and this.

So I think maybe the world would see that-- I'm supposed to look at you. If the world in the future would see that or arrive at a lesson from these experiences, maybe it would prevent situations like this to recur. And that's why to do this particular video it's not as painful for me as it was the first one that I did. But I felt that it was the right thing. That maybe I will contribute something to the future by telling my story and by people knowing about that. And maybe, as they say, it shouldn't happen again.

Good.

Seem better?

Yes.

So why don't we take a little break.

Let's get 20 seconds of silence right now.

Room tone.

End room tone. That's just the air conditioner running. We didn't turn the exhaust fan on.

It's not hard. [LAUGHS]

Can you tell me the significance of this document? You were on your sister's passport. Why was that?

The reason my sister and I were on one passport because--

Sorry.

OK, we'll start over?

Yeah.

I just want to try to remember something. Who was it? Yeah, I know now. My sister and I were on one passport because A, it was cheaper. You only had to get one passport. And she was the older one. And her name was first, and that's why. And I was her sister. And that's how it worked. And that's why we were both on one passport.

And did you get two visas or one visa?

One visa.

OK, so?

We had on the next--

Have a pause and just say and since we had one passport, we had one visa.

Should I start from the beginning, about the--

[INAUDIBLE].

I see. And since we had one passport, there was just one visa issued to us by Mr. Sugihara. However, when we got our American visas, we had two separate visas but on the same passport. There were two steps.

Here's a question I forgot to ask you before. How did you react, how did you respond when the Japanese who had been your friends and helped you get to the US invaded the US? Or bombed Pearl Harbor?

Bombed Pearl Harbor, how did I respond? I think my feeling at that time--

Start with "when the Japanese."

Oh. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, I think our feeling at that time was like most Americans. Because we sort of considered ourselves already-- although we were not citizens yet, we considered ourselves as Americans. And we were angry, actually, at the government of the Japanese people. Just like most of Americans were. And Japanese people I remember feeling sad by the fact that some of the American, Japanese-Americans who were put in camps during the war. I remember feeling badly about that.

What was the significance of these candlesticks? Or how did you get them?

These were my mother's candlesticks that she had since she was, when she got married. And she actually brought those candlesticks with her. No matter where she was, she used to light those candlesticks. And I guess they were-- of course they were very meaningful to her. And that's one of the few things that she brought along with her.

Did you observe the holidays, the Jewish holidays while you were in Vilna and in the Soviet Union?

Very much. We observed all holidays and kept kosher while we were in, during the Vilna. And as a matter of fact, I remember when we left Vilna, it was right after the Rosh Hashanah holidays. And we spent Yom Kippur in Moscow. And I remember my sister and I fast during that day because we tried to observe the holiday. We didn't go to temple because the Russians didn't allow it.

But during the time of Vilna, my mother, in that little room that she had, she was able to observe all holidays. She used to have a little plate. What do you call it? A heating plate where she used to cook on it. And she kept-- she did everything. She baked and she cooked did all that. And all the holiday dishes and the holiday, it was whatever you could get. You couldn't always get the ingredients, but whatever she could.

And I remember on Passover, particularly, they issued matzah to us. As a matter of fact, from the United States. Manischewitz, matzah, they issued to us. And my mother made Passover. And I'll tell you the truth, until this day, I keep a kosher home. However, I do eat outside of my home. I eat in restaurants and all that.

But I never eat-- on Passover, I never eat anyplace else except at home. Because it brings me back that if my mother was able to keep kosher on Passover during that time, I could keep one week. I could abstain from going out to restaurants and places like-- or eating in areas, in homes where it's not kosher. And I never even non-kosher food on Passover.

Great. Can you tell me about your relationship with Menachem Begin? I'm looking for something to use with that picture. And what were you celebrating there? Do you know?

I believe it was Hanukkah because I could see the first Hanukkah candle there. My relationship with Menachem Begin started when-- our family relationship with Menachem Begin started when I was a little girl, maybe around 12 years old. Menachem Begin, at the time, became the Betar leader of all of Poland.

And my mother was very active in the Zionist movement. And she used to travel. She went a couple of times to Warsaw for the Congress meetings. And she met Menachem Begin at that time when he became the leader. After, over the years, he used to come to our small town for fundraising. And very often he had dinner at our home and he stayed at our home. And I was about 10 or 12 years old.

Then, when the war-- mother was always in touch and active during the organization with him. Then during the war when we came to Vilna, Lithuania, he escaped the Germans and came to Vilna also. And that's when we formed the Betar internet and hostel.

And the picture that you see that was one of the holidays that we were celebrating. And during that time, we were very close. And then during the time when my sister and I were getting ready to leave for the United States, we were going to say goodbye to him. And just that day, they arrested him. So we didn't get a chance to say goodbye to him. And of course, he spent-- they arrested him and they sent him to Siberia.

Could you tell me during that period of time that you were in Vilna that you were close to Menachem Begin? I need his name.

Well, during the time-- oh, I see. And I could tell you how close we were. During the time that we were in Vilna, we were very close when Menachem Begin and his wife, Aliza. And not only as members of the same group, but real, real personal friends we became. Of course, we were younger. But my mother was very close with him and his wife-- with Menachem Begin and his wife, Aliza.

Could you tell me that you celebrated holidays with him?

Well, during the time, of course, there were holidays. And we-- Shabbat --and, of course, we used to spend it together. And the picture-- should I mention?

Yeah, just mention the picture.

The picture that was taken, I'm almost 100% sure that it was on Hanukkah. Because I remember there was a celebration. And I don't know where the photographer came from, but he took the picture of us. There were other times, and once when he was very ill and my mother helped with cooking certain things for him to make and feel better. There was a very close relationship with the family in Vilna. And then-- should I continue about?

No, that's enough. Tell me about this.

This is a silver dish that belonged to my mother and father. It was used for lump sugar, hard sugar. And then, which was used most of the time in Europe. More than loose sugar. And that tong next to it you used to pick up the sugar out of the box and put it in your cup.

Any particular significance in that? Or why did your mother take that?

I really don't know. Maybe it was one of her first-- I know we used it all the time. Every holidays and Shabbat. Maybe it was one of her wedding gifts or something like that. But that's one-- because we had a lot of beautiful things in our home. And why she picked certain things to take. Because, of course, she was limited, unable to carry it and so were we. But I guess it must have had special significance for her.

How did she get all this stuff out, do you know?

She had just had it packed in a little valise. And the blankets, of course, she gave us. And some of these things, they didn't take up much room. But over the years I've never gotten around asking her how she was able to carry the clock. Because that comes in a special case. But perseverance. [LAUGHS]

Can you describe the little silver bowl?

The little silver--

Tell me-- start with what did your mother take out?

I should list them?

Well, start with you don't know why she picked what she did, but one thing of significance that she picked.

That I realized why she might have picked that.

Right.

OK, all right.

I don't really know what significance-- I'll start from the beginning. I'm not really sure why mother took some of the things that she did take with her. But I know, of course, the candlesticks had a very special religious meaning to her. And this little dish, this little cup or dish that I remember we used to use it during Passover for charoset, which is used during the Seder. And of course it had a special significance because it was only used for that occasion. And I'm sure that was the reason she decided on that little dish.

This is the plans of your house. Why?

These are the, actually, plans of the property. Why she took that with her? Maybe to have proof that she owns that. That it belonged to her. Because those are the official plans of the property. In Poland, you were not-- actually, you did not own the land. If you had a home, you never owned the land. You only owned the house that the land was on.

As Jews, we're never allowed to own land. The land belonged to the land owners. But you were given permission to

build your home and you were able to live there as long as you lived and pay taxes. And then that was that.

So you think your mother took the plans of the house to prove that you owned--

To prove that we owned a house. But I know the house doesn't exist anymore. Because people have gone back to Volozhin most of it was destroyed during the changing of the-- first the Russians, then Germans. And then vice versa. There were a lot of fighting going on.

Could you give me that in a complete sentence? "My mother took the plans to prove--"

I imagine that my mother took the plans for the--

I can't use "I mentioned."

I imagine?

She said "I imagine."

Oh, I see. I think. I think that my mother took the plans to have proof that she owned that property or the home on that property. Those are official plans that were given by the village or the municipality. And I think that was the only reason she took it with her.

Oh, those blankets. Those were her blankets and those were her [INAUDIBLE] blankets that she used. And then when we were leaving home, when she packed us up that night, she gave us those blankets because she wanted to make sure that we would be kept warm. And we did.

We surely use them all the time. And they're very, very unusual. They're very unusual wool. They are reversible. They're beautiful. And they are just like brand new. They must be, let's say, they're probably about 85 years old.

Did you use them all the time? Did you use them on the Trans-Siberian Railroad?

Yes. We used them all the time. And as a matter of fact, when I came back here, we used them when we were here in the United States. And then, of course, they're small. They're for single beds. When my children went to sleep away camp, I used to give them to take them with sleep away camp to keep them warm. It has their names on it from camp. [LAUGHS]

OK, and this?

This is a silver citation that was given to a group of Betar from the national organization for some unusual good deeds that the group did. And when the war broke out and we were leaving Volozhin and they were very anxious to give it to us So maybe we could rescue it and take it out from-- bring it out from Russia or wherever we're going. And we tried very hard to do it. We did it, my sister and I.

What would have happened to you if they had discovered that you had this?

Well, I'll tell you one thing, I don't think even-- I don't think I would be sitting here today. Because they were very, very strict. Why we did it, right now-- I mean, but we were young and, I guess, very national, very zionistically, nationalistically-minded. And we wanted to do it, without thinking of the consequences.

But we knew that if anything, if they would have catch it with us, we would have been detained. We would have never been allowed to leave Vladivostok. We were really scared when they came to body searches. They didn't strip us, but they body searched us.

So could you tell me that one more time a little bit more concisely? When you were in Vladivostok, you were very

scared that they would discover this plaque. And tell me what it is.

I can't be sure I could remember--

People will be looking at it, but they still need to know--

What it is. OK, when we arrived in Vladivostok, we were searched. Our baggage was searched and we were bodily searched, but not stripped. And we had it hidden on our body. But we were very, very concerned that it would be discovered. At that time, I think that we were probably a little sorry that we tried.

But thank God we were successful in rescuing it. The reason we did was it was very meaningful to our organization. It was sort of, we were very proud of it, the fact that we received it. And it was meaningful to my sister and myself to try to get it out because they trusted us. They entrusted us with it.

So this was a silver emblem which was sent to the Betar Volozhin from Warsaw, from the headquarters in Warsaw. And I believe at that time it was [INAUDIBLE] was different. Not Menachem Begin. He was the head of the organization. And that's why it was so meaningful to us to try to get it out, to rescue it. And thank God we were successful. And I hope to donate it, as I said, to the museum.