

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:03,500
[TEST TONE]

2
00:00:03,500 --> 00:00:41,000

3
00:00:41,000 --> 00:00:42,370
Set a transcript card.

4
00:00:42,370 --> 00:00:44,890
Yeah, transcript's
away, October 18th--

5
00:00:44,890 --> 00:00:47,120
August 18th, 1999.

6
00:00:47,120 --> 00:00:48,200
Yeah, we're rolling.

7
00:00:48,200 --> 00:00:53,780

8
00:00:53,780 --> 00:01:00,230
OK, Max, where were you
when World War II broke out?

9
00:01:00,230 --> 00:01:04,489
In my home town by
the name of Janow.

10
00:01:04,489 --> 00:01:06,530
When you answer the
questions, you're

11
00:01:06,530 --> 00:01:09,440
going to have to
include the question

12
00:01:09,440 --> 00:01:10,920
or the subject of the question.

13

00:01:10,920 --> 00:01:12,680

So in other words,
when I asked you,

14

00:01:12,680 --> 00:01:15,830

where were you when World War
II started, you have to answer,

15

00:01:15,830 --> 00:01:18,200

when World War II
started, I was in.

16

00:01:18,200 --> 00:01:18,773

OK?

17

00:01:18,773 --> 00:01:19,940

Because we don't know what--

18

00:01:19,940 --> 00:01:21,680

I'm going to be
completely cut out.

19

00:01:21,680 --> 00:01:23,600

Yeah.

20

00:01:23,600 --> 00:01:28,610

So when did you--

21

00:01:28,610 --> 00:01:30,180

well, let's try that again.

22

00:01:30,180 --> 00:01:32,270

Where were you when
World War II started?

23

00:01:32,270 --> 00:01:35,810

When World War II started,
I was in my home town

24

00:01:35,810 --> 00:01:37,670

by the name of Janow.

25

00:01:37,670 --> 00:01:42,110

It's in eastern Poland.

26

00:01:42,110 --> 00:01:47,600

And when did you or how did you decide to leave Poland?

27

00:01:47,600 --> 00:01:51,020

I decided from the first minute the Russian came

28

00:01:51,020 --> 00:01:53,660

in and occupied our home town.

29

00:01:53,660 --> 00:01:57,730

I was already inquiring how to get out of it.

30

00:01:57,730 --> 00:02:00,165

How to get out of Russia.

31

00:02:00,165 --> 00:02:06,600

32

00:02:06,600 --> 00:02:10,100

Do I keep going or do I answer your questions only?

33

00:02:10,100 --> 00:02:11,260

Well, you can keep going.

34

00:02:11,260 --> 00:02:14,310

I mean, I want you to tell--

35

00:02:14,310 --> 00:02:15,270

You can cut anything.

36

00:02:15,270 --> 00:02:17,070

Sure.

37

00:02:17,070 --> 00:02:17,670

OK.

38

00:02:17,670 --> 00:02:18,900

So why don't we start again.

39

00:02:18,900 --> 00:02:27,450

And why don't you tell me
what motivated you to leave.

40

00:02:27,450 --> 00:02:28,320

OK.

41

00:02:28,320 --> 00:02:29,310

When the war started.

42

00:02:29,310 --> 00:02:30,660

Start at, you know.

43

00:02:30,660 --> 00:02:34,260

When the war started,
our part of Poland

44

00:02:34,260 --> 00:02:39,900

fell into the Russian hands.

45

00:02:39,900 --> 00:02:43,230

From my youth, I was
a Zionist and I always

46

00:02:43,230 --> 00:02:45,960

wanted to go to Israel.

47

00:02:45,960 --> 00:02:48,600

But once they
occupied our country,

48

00:02:48,600 --> 00:02:51,900

I knew that there wouldn't
be any possibility to get out

49

00:02:51,900 --> 00:02:55,290

from under the Russian regime.

50
00:02:55,290 --> 00:03:00,180
So I was starting to look
ways how to leave my hometown

51
00:03:00,180 --> 00:03:04,830
and get out of this
part of Europe.

52
00:03:04,830 --> 00:03:08,010
And the only places
that we could go

53
00:03:08,010 --> 00:03:16,520
is either through the Romanian
to Romania or to Vilna.

54
00:03:16,520 --> 00:03:20,220
Vilna was occupied
by the Russians,

55
00:03:20,220 --> 00:03:24,180
but they gave it back to
Lithuania, which Lithuania

56
00:03:24,180 --> 00:03:26,490
claimed it as its capital.

57
00:03:26,490 --> 00:03:28,470
So once we could
get to Vilna, it

58
00:03:28,470 --> 00:03:31,110
would be under the
Lithuanian regime.

59
00:03:31,110 --> 00:03:35,400
And from there, there might be
a possibility to leave Europe.

60
00:03:35,400 --> 00:03:39,640
And in meantime, I started
to ask all my friends

61
00:03:39,640 --> 00:03:45,510
which I could trust to find out
ways if they ever hear of a way

62
00:03:45,510 --> 00:03:50,530
how to get there because
everything was in chaos.

63
00:03:50,530 --> 00:03:56,580
The only thing, there was
still a train going to Vilna

64
00:03:56,580 --> 00:04:01,230
through certain stops.

65
00:04:01,230 --> 00:04:05,850
And it was a very
complicated way to get there.

66
00:04:05,850 --> 00:04:08,250
But I found out
that Vilna was going

67
00:04:08,250 --> 00:04:10,380
to be returned to Lithuania.

68
00:04:10,380 --> 00:04:12,900
Then myself and
another two friends,

69
00:04:12,900 --> 00:04:17,670
one by the name of Gottlieb and
one by the name of Gorodecki,

70
00:04:17,670 --> 00:04:21,690
we found out that
we can go to Lida.

71
00:04:21,690 --> 00:04:27,060
From Lida, I have to
take a small gauge train

72

00:04:27,060 --> 00:04:33,150
to a certain city at the
border of Lithuania and Poland,

73

00:04:33,150 --> 00:04:34,650
former Poland.

74

00:04:34,650 --> 00:04:35,820
Now, it was Russia.

75

00:04:35,820 --> 00:04:38,670
All right, so can you
go back and tell me--

76

00:04:38,670 --> 00:04:41,460
you and a couple friends
decided to leave.

77

00:04:41,460 --> 00:04:43,140
Did you leave your
family behind?

78

00:04:43,140 --> 00:04:45,720
Well, I lived--

79

00:04:45,720 --> 00:04:49,200
So tell me-- you made
the decision to leave,

80

00:04:49,200 --> 00:04:53,880
and what you took with you,
and who you left behind,

81

00:04:53,880 --> 00:04:59,200
and what it was like
crossing the border.

82

00:04:59,200 --> 00:05:00,550
OK, when do I start.

83

00:05:00,550 --> 00:05:02,590
Go ahead.

84

00:05:02,590 --> 00:05:08,390

When the Russian occupied our
hometown, from the same moment,

85

00:05:08,390 --> 00:05:14,560

I started to look for
ways to get out of Poland

86

00:05:14,560 --> 00:05:17,050

to Russia, whatever
it was at that time.

87

00:05:17,050 --> 00:05:18,850

That time was Russia.

88

00:05:18,850 --> 00:05:22,000

And the only way
that was left open

89

00:05:22,000 --> 00:05:26,410

was either Romania or Vilna.

90

00:05:26,410 --> 00:05:31,090

Which Vilna, by rumors,
we knew that this

91

00:05:31,090 --> 00:05:33,370

is going to be
returned to Lithuania

92

00:05:33,370 --> 00:05:37,540

and the Lithuanian government.

93

00:05:37,540 --> 00:05:43,390

And in meantime, we had some
friends that lived in Vilna

94

00:05:43,390 --> 00:05:46,090

and told us that there
are certain ways that you

95

00:05:46,090 --> 00:05:47,950
can come to Vilna.

96
00:05:47,950 --> 00:05:51,670
And they wrote us a
letter and told us

97
00:05:51,670 --> 00:05:54,490
that the only way is
you have to go to Lida,

98
00:05:54,490 --> 00:06:03,220
from Lida, backtrack
with a small gauge train

99
00:06:03,220 --> 00:06:08,530
to a city on the border of
Lithuania and former Poland,

100
00:06:08,530 --> 00:06:13,000
which by the name of Oswiecie--

101
00:06:13,000 --> 00:06:15,760
Swiecany, sorry.

102
00:06:15,760 --> 00:06:17,065
I don't need all the details.

103
00:06:17,065 --> 00:06:18,167
It took three--

104
00:06:18,167 --> 00:06:19,130
Hold on.

105
00:06:19,130 --> 00:06:19,630
OK.

106
00:06:19,630 --> 00:06:20,560
Tell us about it.

107
00:06:20,560 --> 00:06:26,050
It took three months to find

the way how to get to Vilna.

108
00:06:26,050 --> 00:06:29,980
It wasn't a simple that
you go and buy a ticket

109
00:06:29,980 --> 00:06:31,150
and go to Vilna.

110
00:06:31,150 --> 00:06:34,210
You had to go
through many stops.

111
00:06:34,210 --> 00:06:38,890
And sometimes, you had
to go backtrack sideways

112
00:06:38,890 --> 00:06:42,610
till we came to a city
by the name of Lida.

113
00:06:42,610 --> 00:06:46,240
And from there, we
went to the border

114
00:06:46,240 --> 00:06:49,240
between Lithuania and
Russia, which was now

115
00:06:49,240 --> 00:06:52,420
under Russian government.

116
00:06:52,420 --> 00:06:57,740
And from that city, we
had to get smugglers.

117
00:06:57,740 --> 00:07:01,390
There were special smugglers
that took you over the border

118
00:07:01,390 --> 00:07:02,800
to Lithuania.

119

00:07:02,800 --> 00:07:05,680

Because the Lithuanians
didn't let you in.

120

00:07:05,680 --> 00:07:10,000

And the Russians
didn't let you leave.

121

00:07:10,000 --> 00:07:11,320

So what did you have with you?

122

00:07:11,320 --> 00:07:12,010

How did you?

123

00:07:12,010 --> 00:07:14,230

Was it in the snow or
was it in sunshine?

124

00:07:14,230 --> 00:07:18,640

It was one of the hardest
winters in my memory.

125

00:07:18,640 --> 00:07:21,490

Snow was up to my knees.

126

00:07:21,490 --> 00:07:25,270

And we had to go all
night through the woods

127

00:07:25,270 --> 00:07:28,930

and through the snow till
we came on the other side

128

00:07:28,930 --> 00:07:30,490

of the border.

129

00:07:30,490 --> 00:07:34,210

And the other side was
also a little town.

130

00:07:34,210 --> 00:07:35,860

And we didn't know

where to turn,

131
00:07:35,860 --> 00:07:39,190
but they told us the rabbi
lived in this and this place.

132
00:07:39,190 --> 00:07:41,840
We went to the rabbi.

133
00:07:41,840 --> 00:07:45,520
It was, by the time we came--
from 12 o'clock to 4 o'clock,

134
00:07:45,520 --> 00:07:47,230
we were walking.

135
00:07:47,230 --> 00:07:49,690
And at the rabbi's
home, of course,

136
00:07:49,690 --> 00:07:52,510
they took us in right
away and gave us

137
00:07:52,510 --> 00:07:59,230
some hot food and some
place to lie down to sleep.

138
00:07:59,230 --> 00:08:01,840
And we slept till
about 8 o'clock.

139
00:08:01,840 --> 00:08:06,340
At 9 o'clock, there was a train
going to Vilna from there.

140
00:08:06,340 --> 00:08:11,860
We have to disguise ourselves
as local people, like peasants.

141
00:08:11,860 --> 00:08:17,560
And we put on peasant
clothes and a peasant hat.

142
00:08:17,560 --> 00:08:19,750
And they gave us
even a basket to hold

143
00:08:19,750 --> 00:08:23,650
in our hands covered with
something, as if we are

144
00:08:23,650 --> 00:08:25,810
taking some produce to Vilna.

145
00:08:25,810 --> 00:08:29,680
Because the police were all
around, looking for refugees

146
00:08:29,680 --> 00:08:34,120
which are pouring it into
Lithuania, into Vilna.

147
00:08:34,120 --> 00:08:36,820
And this way, I came to Vilna.

148
00:08:36,820 --> 00:08:39,880
Coming to Vilna, we
had there two friends

149
00:08:39,880 --> 00:08:42,549
which right away took us in.

150
00:08:42,549 --> 00:08:45,700
And the first night, we
slept in their place.

151
00:08:45,700 --> 00:08:48,280
Which it wasn't much of a place.

152
00:08:48,280 --> 00:08:53,380
It slept two to a
very small sofa.

153
00:08:53,380 --> 00:09:00,340

And the next day, we went
to look for a place to stay.

154
00:09:00,340 --> 00:09:02,710
Of course, we didn't have
too much money with us.

155
00:09:02,710 --> 00:09:07,060
But still, we had
enough to get a room.

156
00:09:07,060 --> 00:09:11,290
And we found a place
and we moved in there.

157
00:09:11,290 --> 00:09:15,140
And in Vilna, there
was organizations

158
00:09:15,140 --> 00:09:19,240
right away supported by
the United Jewish Appeal.

159
00:09:19,240 --> 00:09:22,480
At that time was
the Joint Committee.

160
00:09:22,480 --> 00:09:27,610
And they organized the
kitchens for people

161
00:09:27,610 --> 00:09:31,570
to come and have dinner.

162
00:09:31,570 --> 00:09:34,750
Of course, breakfast
we had in our room

163
00:09:34,750 --> 00:09:37,660
and where we lived, with
the family we lived.

164
00:09:37,660 --> 00:09:39,880

But dinner, we went to the--

165
00:09:39,880 --> 00:09:41,930
it was called the Club.

166
00:09:41,930 --> 00:09:46,240
It was the Zionist
organization's club.

167
00:09:46,240 --> 00:09:52,630
And it was a restaurant, which
was a very, very welcome.

168
00:09:52,630 --> 00:09:54,860
They welcomed us very well.

169
00:09:54,860 --> 00:09:57,490
And the food and
everything was beautiful

170
00:09:57,490 --> 00:10:02,260
like in a four-star
restaurant or five-star.

171
00:10:02,260 --> 00:10:05,290
And for a very nominal price.

172
00:10:05,290 --> 00:10:08,860
At that time, the
price was like, say,

173
00:10:08,860 --> 00:10:11,890
20% of a regular meal.

174
00:10:11,890 --> 00:10:14,560
And in Vilna we were
looking for ways

175
00:10:14,560 --> 00:10:20,050
how to survive because we didn't
have too much money with us.

176

00:10:20,050 --> 00:10:24,270

So right away, started
to look to do some--

177

00:10:24,270 --> 00:10:26,650

to getting into commerce.

178

00:10:26,650 --> 00:10:28,660

If somebody want
to sell something,

179

00:10:28,660 --> 00:10:31,090

I went to try to
sell it for him.

180

00:10:31,090 --> 00:10:34,090

And this way, I
kind of survived.

181

00:10:34,090 --> 00:10:38,740

But the Lithuanians didn't
let us stay all in Vilna

182

00:10:38,740 --> 00:10:40,990

because Vilna was
getting crowded.

183

00:10:40,990 --> 00:10:45,290

And besides, they were afraid of
too many Polish citizens coming

184

00:10:45,290 --> 00:10:48,940

in into Vilna because
actually, they

185

00:10:48,940 --> 00:10:51,920

took away Vilna from Poland.

186

00:10:51,920 --> 00:10:54,520

So they sent us out
into small cities,

187

00:10:54,520 --> 00:10:58,990

dispersed is as far as
it could be dispersed.

188
00:10:58,990 --> 00:11:01,780
And I with a friend
of mine by the name

189
00:11:01,780 --> 00:11:05,560
of Gottlieb, Bernie Gottlieb,
we went to a small city

190
00:11:05,560 --> 00:11:07,060
in Lithuania.

191
00:11:07,060 --> 00:11:11,440
Over there, we got acquainted
with the Jewish community.

192
00:11:11,440 --> 00:11:13,810
And they were very nice to us.

193
00:11:13,810 --> 00:11:16,300
But we still had my
money of our own,

194
00:11:16,300 --> 00:11:19,330
we didn't need their support.

195
00:11:19,330 --> 00:11:22,840
And then over there, I
started to look for work.

196
00:11:22,840 --> 00:11:26,080
I come from a background of--

197
00:11:26,080 --> 00:11:28,130
my father was in
the lumber business.

198
00:11:28,130 --> 00:11:30,070
And I was an expert in lumber.

199

00:11:30,070 --> 00:11:32,200

So I was young,
but they I already

200

00:11:32,200 --> 00:11:35,950

knew lumber since a child.

201

00:11:35,950 --> 00:11:43,200

And over there, I got
some jobs in lumber mills

202

00:11:43,200 --> 00:11:46,840

as a supervisor.

203

00:11:46,840 --> 00:11:50,680

Let me backtrack a little bit.

204

00:11:50,680 --> 00:11:52,120

Who did you leave behind?

205

00:11:52,120 --> 00:11:54,470

And how did you feel about that?

206

00:11:54,470 --> 00:11:57,100

Why didn't they come with you?

207

00:11:57,100 --> 00:12:01,480

You see, I left my
parents and a brother,

208

00:12:01,480 --> 00:12:05,770

who was the last year
in the Gymnasium.

209

00:12:05,770 --> 00:12:09,610

And when I went
to Vilna, I didn't

210

00:12:09,610 --> 00:12:13,210

know where I'm going,
what's going to be there.

211

00:12:13,210 --> 00:12:16,720
My brother begged me
to take him with me.

212
00:12:16,720 --> 00:12:20,200
He was five years
younger than I am.

213
00:12:20,200 --> 00:12:22,330
And I told him,
listen, I am going.

214
00:12:22,330 --> 00:12:27,940
If there is a place for you
or the place is good for us,

215
00:12:27,940 --> 00:12:30,640
then I'll send for you.

216
00:12:30,640 --> 00:12:32,500
Of course, my parents
couldn't leave.

217
00:12:32,500 --> 00:12:36,910
We were well-established
and besides that, we

218
00:12:36,910 --> 00:12:41,200
were in the lumber business,
we had a flour mill also.

219
00:12:41,200 --> 00:12:44,560
And my father, my
mother, they were

220
00:12:44,560 --> 00:12:49,270
born there, and with a nice
house, and well-established.

221
00:12:49,270 --> 00:12:52,270
Nobody wanted to leave
because you didn't know what's

222

00:12:52,270 --> 00:12:55,150
going to-- you never expected
that the Germans will

223
00:12:55,150 --> 00:12:58,900
be such beasts what
they did to us.

224
00:12:58,900 --> 00:13:01,930
So we figured that
I'll go, one of us

225
00:13:01,930 --> 00:13:07,570
will go, and then see later
how to help the others out.

226
00:13:07,570 --> 00:13:09,565
And that's why I left by myself.

227
00:13:09,565 --> 00:13:13,554

228
00:13:13,554 --> 00:13:15,150
What was your departure like?

229
00:13:15,150 --> 00:13:17,930
Did you-- were you crying?

230
00:13:17,930 --> 00:13:22,575
Of course, we hugged,
and kissed, and cried.

231
00:13:22,575 --> 00:13:23,700
Could you start over again?

232
00:13:23,700 --> 00:13:25,230
I was talking you, have to wait.

233
00:13:25,230 --> 00:13:26,850
Oh, OK.

234
00:13:26,850 --> 00:13:31,980

You see, it took us three
months to find out a way

235
00:13:31,980 --> 00:13:35,760
how to get out of our hometown.

236
00:13:35,760 --> 00:13:40,440
And on a weekend,
a friend of mine

237
00:13:40,440 --> 00:13:43,770
called me up that he
found a way how to get.

238
00:13:43,770 --> 00:13:49,180
And I wasn't home, I was 40
kilometers from my hometown,

239
00:13:49,180 --> 00:13:50,820
which we had the mill there.

240
00:13:50,820 --> 00:13:54,390
And I came back right away.

241
00:13:54,390 --> 00:13:57,820
And Saturday night, we
were supposed to leave.

242
00:13:57,820 --> 00:14:01,060
I came back Friday.

243
00:14:01,060 --> 00:14:04,570
Of course, I didn't tell
anybody except a few--

244
00:14:04,570 --> 00:14:06,340
the family.

245
00:14:06,340 --> 00:14:08,350
And I went and said
goodbye to everybody

246

00:14:08,350 --> 00:14:10,120
quietly and told
them nobody should

247
00:14:10,120 --> 00:14:16,600
know that we're leaving, because
if the Russian government would

248
00:14:16,600 --> 00:14:18,160
find out that we
are leaving, they

249
00:14:18,160 --> 00:14:21,080
would arrest us right away.

250
00:14:21,080 --> 00:14:23,710
And then I had a few
friends that I said goodbye,

251
00:14:23,710 --> 00:14:25,750
and of course, a few girls--

252
00:14:25,750 --> 00:14:29,050
one girl, actually,
I said goodbye to.

253
00:14:29,050 --> 00:14:35,140
And of course, she was crying,
and it was heartbreaking.

254
00:14:35,140 --> 00:14:36,820
But we had to leave, I know.

255
00:14:36,820 --> 00:14:42,700
And we left in the
evening Saturday night.

256
00:14:42,700 --> 00:14:48,436
It was on December 20th.

257
00:14:48,436 --> 00:14:51,070
It was so cold that
we never, didn't

258
00:14:51,070 --> 00:14:53,270
remember such a cold winter.

259
00:14:53,270 --> 00:14:56,620
So you had cold and
snow, lots of snow.

260
00:14:56,620 --> 00:15:01,480
And as I told you, I
went by train till Lida.

261
00:15:01,480 --> 00:15:08,980
From Lida, I took a small-gauge
train to that little town

262
00:15:08,980 --> 00:15:10,210
on the border.

263
00:15:10,210 --> 00:15:15,400
And over there, we hired some
smugglers who took us over.

264
00:15:15,400 --> 00:15:18,280
But we had to walk.

265
00:15:18,280 --> 00:15:24,220
You couldn't go by horse and
their wagon or by sleigh.

266
00:15:24,220 --> 00:15:26,260
You had to walk all
the way because you

267
00:15:26,260 --> 00:15:27,970
had to be very quiet.

268
00:15:27,970 --> 00:15:32,560
And you had to avoid from
one side, the Russian border

269
00:15:32,560 --> 00:15:35,590

police, from the other
side, the Lithuanian.

270
00:15:35,590 --> 00:15:40,930
And after four hours walking,
it was very hard and cold.

271
00:15:40,930 --> 00:15:45,790
We came in into Lithuania,
into that little town.

272
00:15:45,790 --> 00:15:49,780
And over there, I
stayed a few hours.

273
00:15:49,780 --> 00:15:55,780
After having a hot breakfast,
we went to Vilna by train.

274
00:15:55,780 --> 00:15:57,110
And in Vilna, I came.

275
00:15:57,110 --> 00:15:59,940

276
00:15:59,940 --> 00:16:01,585
We had two friends
that took us in.

277
00:16:01,585 --> 00:16:04,460

278
00:16:04,460 --> 00:16:06,600
What did you take
with you on this trip?

279
00:16:06,600 --> 00:16:13,190
I took with me only two changes
of underwear, two shirts,

280
00:16:13,190 --> 00:16:17,000
an extra pair of pants,
and an extra pair

281
00:16:17,000 --> 00:16:22,760
of shoes in a backpack.

282
00:16:22,760 --> 00:16:27,110
But I was very warm dressed.

283
00:16:27,110 --> 00:16:31,490
And I had a leather jacket
but with fur underneath.

284
00:16:31,490 --> 00:16:33,200
And this way, we came to Vilna.

285
00:16:33,200 --> 00:16:37,610

286
00:16:37,610 --> 00:16:40,670
Why did you hate
the Russians so much

287
00:16:40,670 --> 00:16:46,730
and how did you figure out
how to get out of Lithuania?

288
00:16:46,730 --> 00:16:52,490
You see, I was born into
Zionist family to start with.

289
00:16:52,490 --> 00:16:56,510
Israel was our goal in life.

290
00:16:56,510 --> 00:16:58,910
As a matter of
fact, I had a sister

291
00:16:58,910 --> 00:17:04,400
who left our home in
1929 and a brother

292
00:17:04,400 --> 00:17:07,010
who left in 1935 for Israel.

293
00:17:07,010 --> 00:17:08,450
And they were there.

294
00:17:08,450 --> 00:17:12,290
So I was going like
home to Israel.

295
00:17:12,290 --> 00:17:17,660
It was very hard to leave
Poland because you needed

296
00:17:17,660 --> 00:17:21,950
a certificate from
the British government

297
00:17:21,950 --> 00:17:23,120
to get in into Israel.

298
00:17:23,120 --> 00:17:25,849

299
00:17:25,849 --> 00:17:26,780
They had a quota.

300
00:17:26,780 --> 00:17:29,150
So many and so many
could come in a year.

301
00:17:29,150 --> 00:17:31,880
And it was very hard,
but somehow, my brother

302
00:17:31,880 --> 00:17:35,870
and my sister found a way.

303
00:17:35,870 --> 00:17:37,790
And they went to Israel.

304
00:17:37,790 --> 00:17:39,710
And when the war
broke out, I was only

305
00:17:39,710 --> 00:17:42,590
thinking how to get
out and get to Israel.

306
00:17:42,590 --> 00:17:44,360
And that was my main goal.

307
00:17:44,360 --> 00:17:49,130
We didn't know what's
awaiting us in our hometown.

308
00:17:49,130 --> 00:17:52,580
Not that I could foresee
it, nobody could foresee it.

309
00:17:52,580 --> 00:17:54,380
But one thing I
knew, I don't want

310
00:17:54,380 --> 00:17:57,920
to be under communist regime.

311
00:17:57,920 --> 00:17:59,420
That I knew.

312
00:17:59,420 --> 00:18:06,320
And my goal was Israel,
Israel from the first moment

313
00:18:06,320 --> 00:18:08,280
that I was conscious.

314
00:18:08,280 --> 00:18:08,780
OK.

315
00:18:08,780 --> 00:18:11,550

316
00:18:11,550 --> 00:18:12,900
Did you realize that goal?

317

00:18:12,900 --> 00:18:15,810

And how did you get
out of Lithuania?

318

00:18:15,810 --> 00:18:19,230

Well you see, by
inquiring all around.

319

00:18:19,230 --> 00:18:23,520

First to try, I wanted to
go to the Romanian border.

320

00:18:23,520 --> 00:18:27,780

By the time we found out how
to get to the Romanian border,

321

00:18:27,780 --> 00:18:29,580

the Romanians closed the border.

322

00:18:29,580 --> 00:18:34,560

Didn't let in any
more Polish citizens

323

00:18:34,560 --> 00:18:37,410

to go to Romania
and from Romania.

324

00:18:37,410 --> 00:18:40,068

Even for transit, they
didn't let anybody in.

325

00:18:40,068 --> 00:18:42,610

You're going to have to tell
me, though, the shorter version.

326

00:18:42,610 --> 00:18:46,210

I appreciate all the details.

327

00:18:46,210 --> 00:18:48,750

I mean, I understand that
you couldn't go to Romania.

328

00:18:48,750 --> 00:18:51,360
But you're going to have to--

329
00:18:51,360 --> 00:18:54,710
I need it in like 30 seconds.

330
00:18:54,710 --> 00:18:55,210
I know.

331
00:18:55,210 --> 00:18:55,860
OK.

332
00:18:55,860 --> 00:18:56,680
It's hard.

333
00:18:56,680 --> 00:18:57,180
OK.

334
00:18:57,180 --> 00:18:59,092
Hold on, one second, hold on.

335
00:18:59,092 --> 00:19:00,900
Wait a second.

336
00:19:00,900 --> 00:19:05,610
Someone's walking
upstairs and it's

337
00:19:05,610 --> 00:19:07,200
a very sensitive microphone.

338
00:19:07,200 --> 00:19:08,990
How's his face, Eddie?

339
00:19:08,990 --> 00:19:09,540
It's holding.

340
00:19:09,540 --> 00:19:13,020

341
00:19:13,020 --> 00:19:16,470

By looking around
and asking around,

342
00:19:16,470 --> 00:19:20,050
we found out that the
Romanian border was closed.

343
00:19:20,050 --> 00:19:21,310
They couldn't go out there.

344
00:19:21,310 --> 00:19:23,970
The only place that
was left was Vilna.

345
00:19:23,970 --> 00:19:26,970
Vilna was still in
the Russian hands.

346
00:19:26,970 --> 00:19:30,480
But the rumors were
that Vilna is going

347
00:19:30,480 --> 00:19:33,630
to be returned to Lithuania.

348
00:19:33,630 --> 00:19:35,860
The Russians took
away from Poland

349
00:19:35,860 --> 00:19:38,520
and now, they're going
to give it to Lithuania.

350
00:19:38,520 --> 00:19:41,070
Of course, there were
some strings attached.

351
00:19:41,070 --> 00:19:43,650
They Lithuanians had
to give the Russians

352
00:19:43,650 --> 00:19:52,080
bases for some of the army

and some of the air force.

353

00:19:52,080 --> 00:19:55,230

And that's why they came
back Vilna to Lithuania.

354

00:19:55,230 --> 00:19:57,990

355

00:19:57,990 --> 00:20:01,440

In Vilna, two friends of ours--

356

00:20:01,440 --> 00:20:05,250

not friends, but acquaintances
lived in Vilna already.

357

00:20:05,250 --> 00:20:07,110

They were in Vilna already.

358

00:20:07,110 --> 00:20:08,580

They left.

359

00:20:08,580 --> 00:20:12,330

When Poland was still
Poland, they left for Vilna.

360

00:20:12,330 --> 00:20:15,840

So they wrote a letter
and described a way

361

00:20:15,840 --> 00:20:18,930

how to get to Vilna.

362

00:20:18,930 --> 00:20:20,220

We have Vilna covered.

363

00:20:20,220 --> 00:20:22,350

I want to know how you
got out of Lithuania.

364

00:20:22,350 --> 00:20:23,880

Oh.

365
00:20:23,880 --> 00:20:29,100
In Lithuania, after they
sent us out to a small city,

366
00:20:29,100 --> 00:20:32,370
I become friendly
with a Jewish builder

367
00:20:32,370 --> 00:20:35,465
who built for the government,
for the Lithuanian.

368
00:20:35,465 --> 00:20:35,970
OK.

369
00:20:35,970 --> 00:20:37,110
Can you start over again?

370
00:20:37,110 --> 00:20:39,060
I don't need the details.

371
00:20:39,060 --> 00:20:40,200
I don't need your friend.

372
00:20:40,200 --> 00:20:42,750
I just want you decided
that you wanted to get out.

373
00:20:42,750 --> 00:20:43,920
What did you do?

374
00:20:43,920 --> 00:20:45,722
I went, of course--

375
00:20:45,722 --> 00:20:47,430
You're going to have
to start over again.

376
00:20:47,430 --> 00:20:52,470
When we came to Vilna, we looked
for ways to get out of Vilna.

377
00:20:52,470 --> 00:20:55,830
And we went to all the
consulates there were.

378
00:20:55,830 --> 00:20:58,200
Of course, the
consulates, by the time

379
00:20:58,200 --> 00:20:59,970
we came and started
to look around,

380
00:20:59,970 --> 00:21:01,470
all the consulates left.

381
00:21:01,470 --> 00:21:06,330
Because the Russians didn't they
don't need any consulate there,

382
00:21:06,330 --> 00:21:08,460
you have a Moscow consulate.

383
00:21:08,460 --> 00:21:13,700
And later, when they gave
it to the Lithuanians,

384
00:21:13,700 --> 00:21:16,800
the capital was Kaunas.

385
00:21:16,800 --> 00:21:22,350
So they say, Kaunas
they have consulates.

386
00:21:22,350 --> 00:21:27,390
But pretty soon, they closed all
the consulate in Kaunas also.

387
00:21:27,390 --> 00:21:30,720
But there was a
Japanese consulate,

388

00:21:30,720 --> 00:21:35,250
which they gave him two
weeks to wind up his office

389
00:21:35,250 --> 00:21:37,860
and move to back to Japan.

390
00:21:37,860 --> 00:21:41,220
Because they don't
need a consulate there.

391
00:21:41,220 --> 00:21:46,410
But this consul, by
the name of Sugihara,

392
00:21:46,410 --> 00:21:51,330
he was one of the finest
people, most men, [INAUDIBLE]

393
00:21:51,330 --> 00:21:53,850
men alive.

394
00:21:53,850 --> 00:21:58,800
And he saw what's going on, how
they are trapping all the Jews.

395
00:21:58,800 --> 00:22:03,240
And he knew, probably, through
the government, the Japanese,

396
00:22:03,240 --> 00:22:06,690
what the Germans having for--

397
00:22:06,690 --> 00:22:09,480
what they are planning
to do with us.

398
00:22:09,480 --> 00:22:12,690
So anybody that came
to him for a transit

399
00:22:12,690 --> 00:22:19,140
visa through Japan to any

country in Latin America

400
00:22:19,140 --> 00:22:24,640
and in America or Cuba,
any part of America,

401
00:22:24,640 --> 00:22:28,560
so he gave a transit
visa for two weeks.

402
00:22:28,560 --> 00:22:31,110
So anybody had a
paper, a certain paper,

403
00:22:31,110 --> 00:22:34,230
he came with this paper,
and he stamped right away

404
00:22:34,230 --> 00:22:36,960
the Japanese visa on it.

405
00:22:36,960 --> 00:22:39,720
I found it out a
little bit later.

406
00:22:39,720 --> 00:22:43,710
A friend of mine came to me
and said that there is a way

407
00:22:43,710 --> 00:22:46,080
to get a Japanese visa.

408
00:22:46,080 --> 00:22:50,610
But I didn't have any
documents with me.

409
00:22:50,610 --> 00:22:57,180
So I found out that people are
forging documents and selling

410
00:22:57,180 --> 00:22:57,900
it.

411

00:22:57,900 --> 00:23:01,290

And I paid 1,000 rubles
for a certificate

412

00:23:01,290 --> 00:23:04,110

that I am a Polish
citizen, and I am

413

00:23:04,110 --> 00:23:05,690

waiting for a Polish passport.

414

00:23:05,690 --> 00:23:09,870

In meantime, these papers
should serve me as a Polish--

415

00:23:09,870 --> 00:23:14,640

as a passport for
all the authorities.

416

00:23:14,640 --> 00:23:18,150

So I came up with this
paper to the Japanese.

417

00:23:18,150 --> 00:23:20,820

I went to the
Japanese consulate,

418

00:23:20,820 --> 00:23:23,760

but he was already on
his train back to--

419

00:23:23,760 --> 00:23:25,080

I was too late--

420

00:23:25,080 --> 00:23:27,150

back to Japan.

421

00:23:27,150 --> 00:23:30,360

So the people that
gave me this passport,

422

00:23:30,360 --> 00:23:37,740

this so-called passport,
gave me also a Panama visa.

423
00:23:37,740 --> 00:23:42,360
And they wanted to give me
also a forged Japanese visa.

424
00:23:42,360 --> 00:23:44,350
Of course, the Panama
visa was also forged.

425
00:23:44,350 --> 00:23:47,360

426
00:23:47,360 --> 00:23:50,830
But the Japanese visa, I say,
no, if I'm going through Japan,

427
00:23:50,830 --> 00:23:56,380
I want a real visa,
not a forgery.

428
00:23:56,380 --> 00:24:00,500
I don't want to wind up in
somebody else's prisons.

429
00:24:00,500 --> 00:24:03,820
So I didn't have
a Japanese visa.

430
00:24:03,820 --> 00:24:10,420
But I went and applied to the
Russian NKVD for a transit

431
00:24:10,420 --> 00:24:14,620
through Russia to Japan.

432
00:24:14,620 --> 00:24:17,380
They took the
documents and they told

433
00:24:17,380 --> 00:24:20,140
me to come back in 10 days.

434
00:24:20,140 --> 00:24:21,880
I came back in 10 days.

435
00:24:21,880 --> 00:24:24,430

436
00:24:24,430 --> 00:24:28,600
After 10 days, they
posted on the wall

437
00:24:28,600 --> 00:24:31,930
who should come and
pick up their visas.

438
00:24:31,930 --> 00:24:33,670
And in 10 days, I had my--

439
00:24:33,670 --> 00:24:34,660
posted my name.

440
00:24:34,660 --> 00:24:35,680
I came in.

441
00:24:35,680 --> 00:24:40,612
And the guy that gave out
the visas looked at me

442
00:24:40,612 --> 00:24:42,070
and looked at the
papers, and says,

443
00:24:42,070 --> 00:24:45,620
tell me, how much did
you pay for this paper?

444
00:24:45,620 --> 00:24:48,760
I say, I made myself
innocent, two zlotys.

445
00:24:48,760 --> 00:24:53,350
Two zlotys was the

official government price

446
00:24:53,350 --> 00:24:55,150
for a document.

447
00:24:55,150 --> 00:24:59,140
So he smiles at me and says
no, now, how much did you pay?

448
00:24:59,140 --> 00:25:03,020
And I made myself innocent, but
he smiled and gave it to me.

449
00:25:03,020 --> 00:25:05,140
And I had the visa.

450
00:25:05,140 --> 00:25:08,410
Of course, now I
had to buy tickets

451
00:25:08,410 --> 00:25:13,310
to get from Russia to
Vladivostok and to Japan,

452
00:25:13,310 --> 00:25:14,380
which I got.

453
00:25:14,380 --> 00:25:18,400
It cost me 150 American dollars.

454
00:25:18,400 --> 00:25:21,520
You had to buy it
from Russian interest.

455
00:25:21,520 --> 00:25:25,270
But you couldn't have any
dollars in your pocket.

456
00:25:25,270 --> 00:25:29,980
So that was a dilemma.

457
00:25:29,980 --> 00:25:32,380

But still, they
took it and went in.

458
00:25:32,380 --> 00:25:41,560

And when you came to the
Russian interest office,

459
00:25:41,560 --> 00:25:43,750

they didn't ask you
where you got it.

460
00:25:43,750 --> 00:25:46,630

They took your money and
gave you the tickets.

461
00:25:46,630 --> 00:25:49,960

And I had 10 days
to wait for a train.

462
00:25:49,960 --> 00:25:53,350

I took a train to Moscow,
from Moscow to Vladivostok.

463
00:25:53,350 --> 00:25:57,410

But the next day,
somebody came to me

464
00:25:57,410 --> 00:26:01,240

said the guys that sold you
the visa, falsified papers,

465
00:26:01,240 --> 00:26:05,020

were arrested and they
are giving out names.

466
00:26:05,020 --> 00:26:06,910

So you better be careful.

467
00:26:06,910 --> 00:26:10,300

I was staying at that
time in Kaunas in a hotel.

468
00:26:10,300 --> 00:26:12,790

Right away, I went
away from the hotel.

469
00:26:12,790 --> 00:26:15,520
And I slept, went to
sleep in a friend's

470
00:26:15,520 --> 00:26:18,100
house, a private house.

471
00:26:18,100 --> 00:26:25,750
And I had a very good friend
that had a ticket for next day.

472
00:26:25,750 --> 00:26:30,070
And he came to me, says,
listen, give me your ticket.

473
00:26:30,070 --> 00:26:31,660
I have time to wait.

474
00:26:31,660 --> 00:26:38,620
Because all his papers were on
the level, no falsification,

475
00:26:38,620 --> 00:26:39,400
nothing.

476
00:26:39,400 --> 00:26:40,840
He says, and take my ticket.

477
00:26:40,840 --> 00:26:44,650
And next morning, the train
is leaving for Moscow.

478
00:26:44,650 --> 00:26:46,690
And that was a
sacrifice on his side,

479
00:26:46,690 --> 00:26:49,180
because under the
Russian government,

480

00:26:49,180 --> 00:26:54,130

you never knew what kind
of law in the next 24 hours

481

00:26:54,130 --> 00:26:55,510

will come out.

482

00:26:55,510 --> 00:27:01,180

So next morning,
I went to Moscow.

483

00:27:01,180 --> 00:27:05,230

In Moscow, they took us
in in a beautiful hotel.

484

00:27:05,230 --> 00:27:15,250

Because we were as foreign
citizens and as transit people.

485

00:27:15,250 --> 00:27:17,770

So they gave us the best hotels.

486

00:27:17,770 --> 00:27:20,120

Which we paid for it.

487

00:27:20,120 --> 00:27:23,110

And the minute we
came there, we started

488

00:27:23,110 --> 00:27:26,680

to look for a way to
get a visa someplace.

489

00:27:26,680 --> 00:27:29,860

Because we knew Panama
wouldn't let anybody in.

490

00:27:29,860 --> 00:27:32,980

Because the American
government closed

491

00:27:32,980 --> 00:27:37,000

the canal, the Panama Canal.

492

00:27:37,000 --> 00:27:41,860

And they didn't let
anybody in into Panama.

493

00:27:41,860 --> 00:27:46,210

So I went first to the
American consulate.

494

00:27:46,210 --> 00:27:48,250

And I showed them I
have a Panamanian visa,

495

00:27:48,250 --> 00:27:50,480

I need an American transit.

496

00:27:50,480 --> 00:27:54,910

So he looked at me and he
says, Panama is a closed place.

497

00:27:54,910 --> 00:27:57,580

You cannot get into Panama.

498

00:27:57,580 --> 00:28:00,340

So sorry, I can not
give you a visa.

499

00:28:00,340 --> 00:28:02,830

From there, I went to
the English consulate

500

00:28:02,830 --> 00:28:05,680

to try to get a visa to Israel.

501

00:28:05,680 --> 00:28:06,850

Can we--

502

00:28:06,850 --> 00:28:08,710

Too much time?

503

00:28:08,710 --> 00:28:09,220

The rain.

504

00:28:09,220 --> 00:28:10,360

No, that was good.

505

00:28:10,360 --> 00:28:13,080

It was a plane.

506

00:28:13,080 --> 00:28:38,000