

Interview with Anna Leiser-Kleinhaus

[Date not labeled on tape]

A: ...the past as much, you know, I try not to. So it's very hard and have some chronological, I mean I have some period after the war, certainly the early years, I have more, very strong impressions and feelings than be able to tell you exactly what happened at this and this time, you know, that kind of thing, so that's why questions help focus and put some structure in because I could probably talk for hours and it wouldn't, would be a little rambling, this is what I'm saying.

Q: Life isn't so tidy.

A: No, and life isn't tidy, but I mean people get, I mean I don't know whoever is going to listen to this, so it doesn't even matter, you know, but I guess if you're interested in facts, then you need to guide me to some extent to _____.

Q: Okay, let me start with the first fact because I actually need at the top of each side of the tape to have your name.

A: My name, okay. So is it the beginning of the tape?

Q: (Yes).

A: Okay. Well my name is Anny, my official name is Anna Leiser and my married name is Kleinhaus, so my name is Anna Leiser Kleinhaus.

Q: You say official name?

A: Because I'm, people call me Anny and not Anna, so it's very strange when somebody does call me Anna _____, although at work people do, they see my name and that's what they call me. So I'm used to being called Anny by my friends and relatives and so on. So that's my name.

Q: I wanted to go back over a couple of things that struck me about the earlier interview if you don't mind?

A: No.

Q: You mentioned that you used a whole, you had been given a series of names and you'd also said that you didn't remember them all. Since the interview, have you remembered more of them?

A: Well, I don't remember which ones I did remember at the time. But, one of them was Anny, as a matter of fact, and that why it was so striking to see that book. One of them was Shalot(ph) Donrae(ph), I think at some point I must have had a name Marie, you know, to make me as Catholic as possible. That's about all I remember, so I don't know if those are the ones I said, but at least those three I remember.

Q: So you started out life as Anna?

A: Well, I actually started life as Hannala(ph), which is, my parents were both from Poland and they spoke Yiddish and Polish and certainly only gave me the name, let's say, Anna because they had to have some official sounding European, I mean Western European name. But, my Hebrew name was Hannah and, or is still Hannah, Hannah _____, as a matter of fact, and that was my maternal grandmother's name. Until, my mom died about six months ago, and she used to call me Hannala still. So, that's how I started out. And then as a kid, as I went through the war, I guess they made it from Anna, Anny because that sounded more French when we got into France. And then with all the various papers that my parents got, mostly my mother, I was with her most of the time, they came, the name came with the papers. So if it was Marie, well, I was told, you know, you are now Marie, if it was Renee(ph), you are Renee, if it's Charlotte, I think the last one was Charlotte, Charlotte Henri(ph), that was the one before. And a very funny thing happened after the war, when my father came back from concentration camp and my mother wanted him to meet the people who had, they weren't officially hiding us because we were paying rent there supposedly, but at least we were living there under false pretenses and I think they knew that we weren't exactly who we said we were. My mother wanted to meet those people and they, so her name was, I can't remember what her name was, Tonree(ph) was the last name, which is a very French name, and they called him Monsieur Tonree when they first saw him, which was very funny. They never got used to the idea that we, actually even our names were not our names. And so that's the story of the name.

Q: How did you go about unlearning one name and learning another one?

A: Well, it was very difficult. It was very difficult. It was, I was very, very frightened most of the time, I mean I was living in terror and I was so afraid that I would mix it up, you know, that I would just say, whatever the name was, was wrong, you know? So I'd just try to concentrate, you know, and keep telling myself, you are now such-and-such. But I was very frightened, I mean there wasn't, it wasn't hard in the sense of, you know, these are names I could pronounce and I learned French very quickly, but it was very hard emotionally. To not know from one day to the next who you were supposed to be and make sure you remember the right, you know, the right person to be that particular time.

Q: Were you ever afraid that you would forget your real name?

A: I don't think I was thinking about that very much. I mean, the only concerns I had was to survive, I think, I didn't think about, ahead very much, and the only concern about, let's say ahead, was that my father should come back from Auschwitz, I didn't know where he was, but that's where he turned out to be. That where my, those were my concerns was to remain alive and to have a family, but not whether I would remember who I was or who I wasn't, that, you know, I think inside of me, I knew very well who I was. So that, I mean after awhile, even though I was very young, I understood that it was just necessity and that it didn't really change whoever I was. And I played the game, essentially. I went to church, you know, I played the game. You know. Just knew this is what you have to do and that was that. You know, went for communion to the priest and all that stuff. And at that time I must have been six or seven, you know, so, at the most. So I just did it, you know, and I knew it was a game and I knew, you know, sometimes I said I wish I were Catholic because it would be so nice, particularly when they had communion and they had the white dresses and, that I really envied, you know. And I did stand somewhat in awe of the church, you know, it was extremely impressive, you know, when you go into a big church and the priest stand there and, you know, pontificates and the music and so on. That was impressive and I kind of wished I could identify with that whole thing, but as my mother told me and many people repeated to me, that at the age of four I already had sort of taken leave of religion, you know, and didn't want to obey anything. So that, basically, I think was sort of a refuge, it made me, in some ways, feel safe, you know, if I could be part of that group, I would be safe. And I don't think it was, in retrospect, such a deep religious feeling as some sort of feeling of being protected, you know, in church you were protected. And if you're part of that group, nothing happened to you. So I think it was, you know, as a young kid, going with the children of the town and our neighbors, I mean our landlords, going to church on a Sunday, I was, I felt extremely alienated, you know, in one aspect, and trying to play the game and like believing that maybe I was Catholic and I could be Catholic and I could just proceed, you know, from there on and not have to worry about being who I was. So it was all confusing.

Q: Do you remember if you prayed?

A: I can't remember that, I can't remember that. I, I mean I know all the prayers because I had to pretend, you know, but I don't, as I said, it's hard to be quite authentic, but being, knowing the religious feelings that I don't harbor now, or the anti-religious feelings that I harbor and have, apparently, since really childhood, according to my parents, it's hard to believe that I was swayed by anything more than the sense of, this is going to protect me, you know, so maybe it's worth doing. But not, I don't think I had, I certainly never believed in Jesus Christ or anything of the

kind. I mean, that stuff was not believable, but, not that any other was, but I mean this in particular, I found very hard to stomach, so, but as I said, the atmosphere and the big voices and the, you know, the echoes in the church and all the people that looked so, umm, you know, they looked very happy to be there and they looked like they were participating and so on, and I was participating but knowing I was a fake, you know, and, but I don't think I ever prayed to anybody with conviction. Never. So I don't think I did. But I did pray, because I certainly had to go to communion and say all the words and go to confession and confess to sins that I made up. You know, things of that sort. So...

Q: You were a performer?

A: I think to some extent, but that was part of the game, you know, if I had to change names, I had to change everything about myself, so I, but I knew it was fake, you know, I never, I think, totally took on the other identity. I don't think I ever did, I mean whoever I was, I mean I certainly got, I'm sure I got to some extent, you know, damaged by this whole experience, but maybe not, not as much as, if one listens to the scripture and you could expect somebody who would be much worse shape than I, I am, maybe, I think I was in pretty bad shape, actually, right after the war. I was really in, but nobody had time to pay attention, so I just had to pull myself together, I think that's what happened. I don't think anyone had the time to pay any attention to me. So I just had to survive, which I had learned, you know, to survive. So, that's it.

Q: That's the beginning.

A: Yeah. But, it's very difficult, you know, I am a very successful person, I mean I, and when, that's why I don't like to go to reunions of hidden children anymore because I feel that maybe I'm just an elitist, you know, and that's all there is to it, but I, there are a lot of people who are still whining about this and it's, I don't, really don't want to downplay it in any sense, but it's past and a lot of people have bad things happen to them in life. And if you're going to just focus on those things, you're just not going to get anywhere and I, I can't, I cannot go and sit there and talk about this over and over and over. And, you know, maybe it's denial for me which is, that's possible, too, I just don't want to deal with it anymore. I mean, I'm happy to tell you my story, but I don't think that what's happening in my life now or let's say to a great extent, has that much to do with that experience. I think I've, I know myself pretty well now and I, I can tell, you know, where things are coming from more than just blaming it all on the war and everything of that nature. So.

Q: You're wearing, are those diamond earrings?

A: Yeah.

Q: Are those from your family?

A: Yes. Well, they're actually, my husband gave them to me, but all our families are in diamonds, so, I mean both my parents and his parents were both into diamonds, so that's Antwerp for you.

Q: One of the things I was curious about reading your family history, your father's history, is that you're feeling toward diamonds now, because you had talked about how, when you fled, your mother took the diamonds and threw them out the window. That's quite a dramatic image.

A: Yeah, I always try to, you know, save some, to try and sell them and that's all they had, was diamonds. They had nothing, no property, no money really to speak of, but the diamonds that they were dealing with, they could try and sell to survive. So, that's...

Q: So the ones in your ears aren't part of that pile?

A: No. They're not. I, I didn't, there is nothing, I mean the only diamonds actually that survived the war, was my mother's engagement ring, but no, my in-laws, actually, because they came here, so they, they fled, but they fled as a family and they didn't really go through any camps or anything, so whatever they took with them they, except for what they had to spend to bribe officials along the way to survive, they came with quite a bit of diamonds with them, so my mother-in-laws jewelry that she gave me along the years, those are really pre-war, many of them. My mother didn't have that much to begin with and she didn't, she wasn't able to keep much of it and so, the only thing is her engagement ring, that's the only thing that actually survived the war and I have that. So, that's pretty nice. So.

Q: Do you wear it?

A: No. No, I put that away. I have my own engagement ring, which I actually very rarely wear. So, and my mom just passed away, you know, and it's very hard for me to take her jewels and put it on, I just put them away someplace. And I think, my daughter isn't married and if she does, at some point, I want to give it to her. Because she was very close to my mother so I would give it to her. So...

Q: You had talked about being in the children's home and the sweet potatoes or the sweet potato-like things.

A: Ah, please.

Q: All right, I'm not going to ask quite about that, but you said there was a song about it and I was wondering if you remembered the song?

A: Umm, yes, there was a song that just came back to me not too long ago which had to do with getting up in the morning and having to go wash. How was that?

[Singing in French]. So that was a song to get our, [French phrase], which is whatever. And [French phrase] was, is that sweet potato or whatever it is, I don't know if I remember that song. It will come back maybe. If I think about it, it won't, but it might just spring up at some point. There's a fellow that lives in Antwerp who is my childhood friend and he's now the only one alive because his parents died just over the last two years, they were in their 80's and his sister, unfortunately, was a very good friend of mine, and she died at age 21 in childbirth, so he's the only, and he seems to have a better memory than I do for these things. I mean, he actually went back to the place where we had been hidden and looked up the priest who had been in charge of the place and it apparently has not turned into some kind of a hotel or inn and...

Q: Where is this?

A: This is in Von Deen(ph), which is in the Pyrenees and he recognized it, he said he really did and he took some pictures and he showed me. I don't think I remember it quite as well as he does. And we're the same age, so it's not a matter, he's six months older, so it's not a matter, I think I just tuned out a lot of it. Just tuned it out, it was just too awful. So I don't think I would really recognize it.

Q: You were, until you were 10, you were the only child, right?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you feel more responsibility because you were the only one?

A: Towards?

Q: Toward your mother, for example. Responsibility to kind of keep alive and keep going?

Q: Well, I think I, I took a lot of responsibility on, for that friend of mine who, because we were together and she was two years younger and as I was, I would say essentially, anorectic(ph) and she, but not anorectic in terms of throwing up, but just wouldn't eat, I mean I was just not interested in food, but not that I had an image of being fat or what goes along with anorexia these days, just, just so distraught that I couldn't eat. But she on the contrary, being upset, she wanted to eat more, every time, so we were the opposite and we would go in the kitchen and steal food for her at night and so I was, I felt very responsible for her. I don't think I felt responsible for my mother or to stay alive for any other reason than I just wanted to be alive. You know, not for any particular reason. No, I don't think, I think, I can't remember if my mother, you know, felt or made me feel very safe, I can't say that. I think I did feel abandoned quite frequently because she was gone a lot. So I, no, I don't think there was any consideration of my mother, of me doing something for her, protecting her,

I think it was clearly the opposite. Even though I didn't feel that protected by her, I felt more protected by playing the Catholic girl and going to church with our neighbors. You know, I felt a lot more safe than being with her. And in some ways, when she didn't learn, she didn't know French very well and she learned it, you know, on the run and she had a pretty heavy accent, even though she learned the language, and so I didn't feel comfortable with her. I mean, I sort of thought she was going to get us into trouble more than anything else. And I, I don't know if I said that on the tape, but I was very nasty, I mean I was extremely nasty, and you know, just plain old angry. And I threatened the people that she used to put up with the denouncing them to the Germans, thinking they're not going to catch me because I'm this French girl, you know. But they'll catch you. And scaring people to death, you know, just scaring them to death. And it was silly, I mean I was this six year old, I really wasn't going to go up to, and I knew that I was never going to do that and I knew that I was just as, as much in danger as they were, but I could go out and pretend to be whoever I was and they couldn't. You know, they didn't know the language or they didn't appear to be totally French, you know, and also I would really torture them, make them feel very sad. Some of them have, you know, they're all dying out now, but they reminded me of that frequently as I went back to visit my mother, which I did frequently. So, I was not a nice person, not a nice kid, I mean just not at all. Not at all. And you're interested in what's happening after the war, so after the war, in school, I mean I was an absolute terror. I mean, a completely uncontrollable terror. And, but I was smart, you know, and I knew I could get away with it because our class was made up of just really the dregs of the earth and, you know, people of all ages speaking different languages.

Q: Where was this?

A: That was in Belgium, so we went back to Belgium.

Q: To Antwerp?

A: Yeah. And so I went to, so there was a Jewish school which had been flourishing before the war, but at that point it was just sort of in shambles and the teachers were themselves survivors and nothing that relates to modern pedagogical methods had reached the shores, even among the non-Jewish teachers, I mean they were still pretty much versed in ancient methods of discipline and, and as I said, the class was made up for, of all kind so of people, all kinds of ages and some spoke just _____ and some spoke Polish and some spoke Hungarian and some, you know, it was just really the Tower of Babel and, but I knew French and that was a big advantage and...

Q: How many languages did you know then?

A: Well then, I knew, I don't know what I knew because I grew up in Yiddish and Polish and I learned French really well, so at least those three I knew. But I didn't get to practice that, those that much, I mean I went to school and it was French, so I spoke French at school and then they taught me Hebrew, they started to in that school and, you know, I just had great ease of learning so they used to parade me in front of, you know, they were trying desperately to get money for the school and so the donors came and, you know, you have to parade the monkeys in front of them, so they, I was their monkey, you know, they knew that they could rely on me for giving the right answers and reading and doing all these things to see their wonderful methods of teaching and so I would really take advantage of that. I mean, I knew this was a game for them, you know, it was a great thing to have somebody to show and I would just totally, totally not follow any rules. I would jump on the desks and I would be, you know, when there was no inspection, when they came for inspection I performed, I did everything according to what they expected me to do, but as soon as they left, you know, these donors and inspectors and whatnot, I would just go wild, just wild. In fact, a couple of, about six months, well eight months ago, I was in Belgium visiting my mother, just a week before she died, and we went to a go-away party for my uncle who is also 80-something and who moved to Israel with his family. So my mother and I went to it and one of my Hebrew teachers from that time was there and a very strange thing happened because I had not seen the man in, oh probably 30 years, and he came up and he says, "Is that you?" And I said, "Yes". And he says, "You know, look at my gray hair, you did this to me". He said, well me and, you know, a couple of years. But then, so we talked awhile, then it was really funny because his daughter was there and she said, "I don't know how he recognized you because he's blind and he doesn't see anything". Because I couldn't tell, you know, I saw him and I greeted him and just from the voice, or I don't know what, I mean it was very funny, very funny. So I really made an impression on this man.

Q: What language was the school taught in since people spoke so many languages?

A: Well see, it had been, this is before the uproar, this is just at the time when the uproar began between Flemish and French in Belgium, so, and this school had been a private school, it was a private day school just like there are some here, and so we were taught in French, which is, that was it, we had to be taught in French and the Hebrew teachers taught without speaking any other language essentially. There was not translation, you were taught the alphabet and that's, now kids learn very quickly, they really do. I mean, all this bilingual crap is crap, it's ridiculous. Because we came from so many different parts and we all learned French in a matter of months. I mean, I knew it but everybody spoke French in a matter of months. Even just, and as I said, we did not have sophisticated teaching methods or language labs or anything, it was just. When you know you have to, you learn.

Q: Were you aware that the war had ended?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, absolutely.

Q: How did you become aware of that?

A: Well, for one, in France they had this incredible celebration, Victory Day, so there was no, no avoiding knowing it.

Q: Do you remember that day?

A: Not in great detail, I just remember more of an impression of people jumping in the streets and music and dancing and, but I was, you know, an eight year old, I mean I can't remember details, I just remember that everybody was just elated and then we took down the, we had these black blankets on the windows because we had curfews, so you know, the light wouldn't go out, wouldn't shine in the street, we took off all of that.

Q: Who's we?

A: My mother and I who lived in that place.

Q: Which was in?

A: In Exleba(ph), Exleba, and the neighbors, you know, were all so happy because the neighbor, the man, had been in World War I and he had been injured, in fact, in World War I and he had no love for the Germans at all, so he was, you know, very, very happy, even though in this war they didn't suffer that much. He was too old to join and he was, anyway, he was injured, so he was really, really, really happy. And then, so that's, you know, how we found out. I mean, the radios and everybody was just extremely, extremely excited. So there was just a joy in the streets and everybody, people pouring out from every house, apartment, in the streets, there was just thousands of people even though it was a small town, it looked to me like, you know, thousands of people. I really don't know how many they were. So that's, essentially, what I remember. And I remember then, somehow, my mother getting notice that my father had returned. And leaving me there to go find him. So she left me with those neighbors and so that, I remember that and I remember when she came for me, she had actually found him and we went back and that trip was horrendous. And it was in a truck, you know, just one of those trucks with, not even covered, but some sort of tarp cover, that's it, and we traveled from there and it took days and days and days. I don't know who was driving the truck, I have no idea. And it just, see, certain stupid things, I mean, I, I was still very nasty and very angry and at some stop there was nothing to drink except beer and I said that I would rather die than drink beer, you know, just as a, who knows why? You know, I mean if you're really, really thirsty you'll drink beer and I was thirsty, but I said I would rather die than

drink beer. And I don't like beer to this day, so I mean, why? Who knows? Just a stupid, you know, detail that comes to mind. And so we went back.

Q: You went back to where?

A: To Antwerp and the place we had lived in was pretty much destroyed, so, in Exleba we had met a woman who had two children who was from Antwerp as well. And she owned a house and her husband had been deported and she didn't know whether he would come back or not, but she had a house with several floors and she said that she, we could come and live in her place, you know, for rent. And so we did. We moved, my mother, my father, myself, moved to that, we moved to the ground floor of the house that had three flights. It was like one of these railroad houses, very skinny, everything was one room behind the other. And there was no running water, I remember that very well. There was no central heat. So we had to pump the water. And we had a coal stove to do everything, basically. And at first, when we first got back, my parents and I went to a sort of an inn in the Ardennes(ph), which is the hilly part, they call it mountains, but in reality it's just hills, hilly part of Belgium and I think that was the only time in his life that my father ate non-kosher food.

[end of side 1 of tape 1].

Q: Okay. It's the only time in his life your father ate non-kosher food?

A: Yeah. And it was really to get him back on his feet. I mean, he accepted that, it was a necessity, there was no kosher food and he needed to just get back on his feet. So, we went, I think originally it was supposed to be for a month, but no sooner we were there, my mother took off and she went to Antwerp because there were many people who were getting married who had been separated during the war and got together and she went to cook for weddings. Not for money, you know, just out of, you know, community feeling. And so she left us and she would come back and forth. You know, she would be doing all these charity, volunteer and whatever kind of works, so she didn't stay the full month, but my dad and I did. And then we went and moved into this place that I told you about.

Q: I'm just curious, when you saw your father, you hadn't seen him, for a time you didn't know if you would see him, you had been very close to him.

A: I had been extremely close, so that was a terrible disappointment, terrible, terrible disappointment because, well, what you remember as a three or four year old from your father is very different from the way you see him at age eight or nine, particularly since there hasn't been a progression, you know. So, and I was extremely disappointed because he was extremely orthodox and wanted me to be that way. And extremely rigid in his, the practice of religion where, you know, he wouldn't allow me to turn on the light on the Sabbath, I mean he was extremely, extremely,

extremely strict and rigid and I could not abide by this. I just could, I didn't believe in it and I kept telling him that I didn't see how, after what he's gone through, he could still believe in this sort of stuff. And so there was really a crack in our relationship because of that. You know, he tried, on other fronts. I mean, my father was not an educated man and he would make an effort and take me to the movies and I know that this was not something that he would have done normally, this is something he really did to try and regain some, some closeness with me. I mean, I'm sure he missed it, too, but he just didn't know how to go about it. And I think in some ways, he was soiled, you know, as far as, why did he let himself be taken? Why didn't he, why wasn't he the strong man I thought he was in, you know, protecting us all and why did he just disappear? I mean, he just, he was supposed to meet us somewhere and he never showed up. You know, and at that time, I think I had this certain resentment towards him for being my fallen hero, you know, why didn't, why didn't you protect us and why were you gone and why were you, come back in such a decrepit state, you know, you look terrible and, you know, you can't really be my strong father. You know, so I had a lot of that. And I don't think I could tell him, I really couldn't, the only fights that we openly had was about religion. And I think I then channeled everything into absolutely refusing to have anything to do with the religion because I got, you know, it was a little inconsistent, like angry at God like for allowing this to, and then somebody who allows this to happen, can't exist, just can't be. So that was the end of my religious, and we fought about that for a very, very long time. Through my teens it was really bad, really bad because there were very few of us left, for one, of children my age who returned to Antwerp. And the majority of them were not observant and so, I mean their families weren't, and by forcing me to, you know, stay in on the Sabbath and not being able to go to the movies like Saturday afternoon, I was cut out from a lot of social activities, as well, so I resented that terribly, terribly, so I was really angry as an adolescent. I mean, on top of everything else, I was not a, not a happy camper in my youth. Not at all. So I don't think I ever, I mean now, you know, my father has been dead for 20 years or more, I can understand what he was about and how strong he actually had been to survive this and to be able to rebuild a family and bring his entire family, his entire surviving family to live with us after having gone through hell himself. And making money just to, you know, feed all these brothers and sisters, I mean two brothers, a sister and his father moved in with us, into that place what didn't have water. His father, a sister and two brothers, right. You know, and I just resented that awfully, I mean I wasn't, not charitable at all.

Q: How long had you been reunited with your father before the rest of his family came?

A: Not that long because a few, when my parents, my brother was born in May, '46, so maybe a year or less after they had been reunited. And that family, I think, moved

in with, my brother was clearly an infant, so I don't know if they moved in just before or, he was born, or right after, so that's not clear in my mind. But they, my father found some smuggler and he paid him a lot of money to go and rescue whoever was left.

Q: Where were they?

A: Well, they were actually in Siberia. They made it to Siberia from Poland. And I don't know how he found out about it, I really don't know.

Q: That was going to be my next question.

A: I don't know, but they, they were people coming from various places and they tried to find people who were from the same villages that they had been and then they would, I think it's just word of mouth. On the other hand, they knew, since my father had been in Belgium since 1933, his family knew that, at least he had been in Belgium, they didn't know whether he, where he went during the war or if he had ever, if he had stayed or if he had returned, if he hadn't stayed. So I think they might have tried to contact the, you know, Jewish Refugee Agency and that sort of thing. So it was probably a little bit word of mouth, a little bit through official channels, you know, Jewish _____ or something like that. I would imagine that that's how they found each other. Because they knew at least to look for him in Belgium where he didn't know where to look for them at all.

Q: So less than a year, obviously, if your brother was born in '46?

A: Yes.

Q: After you got together as a family, suddenly the family dynamic changed.

A: Entirely. What are you doing here? Sylvan(ph)?

[Greetings exchanged between parties in the room and someone who came in -- tape turned off briefly].

A: So, yeah the dynamics changed completely from being a family with just one child, to a family with two children and uncles and aunts and grandfather, to boot. And I felt that my mother was completely unavailable to me, essentially. Because she was completely hassled, I mean, but again, I can see that now and as an adult, but as a child, I didn't see that at all. I mean, it was just like now you get this stupid baby and all these other people living with us, you know, and now then we could maybe be happy or, you know, have, you're not there. And then she was running all her volunteer activities on top of everything else.

Q: So tell me what it was like, you're, what, 10 years old or something?

A: Yeah, about 10.

Q: And you've got a home without running water, with all sorts of people, many of whom you've never met before.

A: Yeah, most of them.

Q: And you had said earlier, that this was a time when you really needed attention and you really didn't have it.

A: Yeah, that's true, I didn't have any. At least, I felt I didn't have any, I'm sure that I did have, you know, I mean my basic needs were taken care of, I mean I had food on the table and I had clothes and I went to school and I even, well I don't know if in that apartment, a little later, I got piano lessons because I was dying to play the piano. So they bought me some kind of secondhand upright piano which I still remember.

Q: Do you still play?

A: Not much, no, I always say I'm going to go back to it, but, I used to play quite well, but I didn't really pursue that very much, after 15 or 16 years of age I gave up. So again, it was a matter of feeling, you know, in that first place, it was a railroad house, as I said, so the kitchen was all the way in the front, behind it was something which was more, was the dining room I would say, and then in the back of it was a living room that wasn't used at all, and then in the back of it was a bedroom. And the first, I don't know whether months, how long, but the first, for sure, month that we lived there, my parents and I slept in one bed and the bed used to collapse. It was extremely frightening. It was, I don't know what it was made of, it was some cheap wood bed and it would just collapse and we would find each other, you know, on the floor. And my father had these incredible nightmares and he would be screaming, aside from that. And I had my own nightmares. So it was a nightmare, it was hell, absolute hell. And then, again, I can't say for, it's six months or a year, they bought me some kind of bed where I was in the so-called dining room and the family, the additional, the uncles and aunts and that group, moved to the third floor, so we had the first, ground floor, the family, the owners, had the floor right on top of us, the owner's husband did not come back from the war, so she was with two children by herself, so she needed the rent, and then the top floor was for the two uncles, the aunt and the grandfather. But food was all at our house, everything, laundry, food, everything. Without refrigerator, without any, you know, fancy appliance of any kind, so in some ways, in some ways it was almost worse than during the war. Because during the war, I had some kind of stability, I mean for the last couple of years when I lived in that house in Exleba, as I said, I was in terror but it was, to some extent I had accommodated to the terror. There was not that much unpredictable that was happening. We had our air raids and we'd run off and go to the shelters, by that time

I had one name and that didn't change any more and I had some sort of routine. And my mother, when she was there, was there for me, there was no, she had all these people that she was hiding and so on, but still, I felt that she was there, you know, for me. We would go to the beach together on occasion and we would do things together, whatever they were. But then she disappeared, essentially. She was diluted so much to such an extent that in some ways, I felt more abandoned than during the war, even though I wasn't afraid for my life. I mean, and so my, I think a lot of that anger was due to the fact that I was just lost, you know, just, it felt like I was to take care of myself plus take care of my brother. Which I had to do, I mean I had to babysit for him and, because we couldn't afford any help, and my mother was just unable to do everything, she was doing _____ care for my brother, you know, day and night, so when I came home from school, I mean I had to watch my brother, I had to, I learned how to cook very early because I had to help for, you know, for making a meal for Friday night for 10 people without, you know, appliances, I mean on a coal stove and it was a Friday night and for Saturday lunch and for Saturday evening before you could turn on the lights again. I mean, that sort of, so I had to pitch in, come home from school Friday early and help my mother or watch my brother or both and I didn't have much time to be a kid, you know. Just not much time. But, the lady who rented the place had two children and one boy was about a year or two older than I was at the time and he and I had become really good friends in the war and sort of partners in crime, you know, we could think of every possible mischief and we would just do it. And so we continued that. And we established, he was very mechanically gifted, in fact, he's an aeronautics engineer for Israel, for the Israel government, so that really panned out. And we would just build things and we'd build some kind of telephone between his bed and mine and we'd go to the, there was a flea market every Sunday morning and we'd go and we'd buy all these components and we'd build radios and so dolls was really not my thing. It was erector sets and radios and that sort of thing. So he had a tremendous influence on me. Unfortunately, he left for Israel when, I mean he and his mother and sister left when he was about 13, so that was a terrible loss. And we used to, we were inseparable, inseparable, but we also would fight.

Q: What was his name?

A: Bobby, Bobby Ackleman(ph). I don't know what they call him now in Israel, but, and he, we would fight and he was stubborn and I was stubborn, and so we wouldn't talk for weeks on end, and we'd go to school together and we'd walk one behind the other, without exchanging a word. And then we'd wait for each other to go home, we wouldn't say a word. It's very funny. We had a lot of imaginary games and then we'd, we'd build swords, swords out of wood, and shields and paint them. And my favorite book was the Three Musketeers, and so I would read that over and over and over again. And so we'd play the Musketeers and we'd have sword fights and, so I had a

good time, I mean it's not like I was completely miserable at all times, but I think I was very troubled, you know, a very troubled person.

Q: Which Musketeer were you?

A: I think I was _____, you know. And we had an area not far from the house, which now is really built up, but it was, they called it in Flemish, the Barta(ph), which is like the countryside, you know, and it was really very rural, there was nothing, there were some old fortifications from World War I and we'd use those, you know, to hide and play and have war games and really not very, you know, pacifist type of, but mostly like little boy's games, you know.

Q: You had mentioned that when you were very young, your father treated you as if you were a son.

A: Yes, yes. And I think that carried through. But, in addition, because that little girl, Imogene(ph), my friend, I gave her my doll and carriage that they bought for me, I just had zero interest in it. Even when I, even before the war, you know, for my parents to buy something like that was a tremendous financial sacrifice and I had absolutely no interest, none. So, but having this kind of a friend reinforced the entire, I mean I wasn't just passively doing what he was doing, but I really enjoyed it, I really enjoyed those games. And, but he was great because he was so mechanically gifted and he, apparently, didn't have a better friend, you know, a male friend, so I just had to do, basically. And I think he was, you know, I think we were mutually, you know, in love with each other. I mean, we only, because when he left for Israel, he used to send me these terribly, you know, sad letters and how he missed me and, which was not his type at all because he was very withdrawn and very noncommunicative with other people. Very, very closed person except with me, you know, and we met when we were six or seven years old. And I haven't spoken to him in a few years, but I had about six, seven years ago I did call him up when I was in Israel because I don't have a lot of time when I go there. Mostly, because I'd like to see him, but, and I think he still likes me a lot, you know. It was clear, at some point I came, when I was about 17 or so and he was, at that time, he must have been 19 and then he showed some interest in me which I could not respond to. You know, I just wasn't, I mean I loved him as a kid and I love him still as a friend, but I wasn't interested in him romantically and he was, you know, so I think that sort of, I don't know, I guess by now it doesn't matter any more, but there was a time when there was a break, we couldn't really communicate because I didn't want to hurt him and so we just left it.

Q: So all these relatives who were living up on the third floor, they didn't help at all, they didn't do anything?

A: Well, I'll tell you, you know, they, my aunt, she's still alive, I could show you a picture of them, I can show them to you before the war and after the war, it's very telling. My aunt was a very depressed person and, you know, in those very orthodox families, you had to get married young, if you didn't, it was terrible. So her years where she should have been married, passed, you know, and she was not very attractive at that point and she was very bitter, very bitter person. And a depressed person, so I don't, she acted as if my mother was her mother, but my mother was just a few years older than she was and had gone through hell herself and had a family. She really expected my mother to do for her. And my mother did. So I don't think she helped a lot, at all. The men, my father, you know, paid for their apprenticeships to become diamond cutters and diamond whatever, but one uncle then took that on, so, and he wasn't going to help in the household, I mean that's just unheard of. And to be honest, he worked long, long hours. I mean, he would take diamonds home and he would have the machine at home and he would work 12, 13 hours, so you couldn't expect him to do a lot. Not that he knew how anyway, but it wasn't part of the culture, but he wasn't just sitting there and doing nothing. I mean, and the other uncle, had been a teacher and so he tried to learn diamonds, but he really wasn't gifted and so he got a job in the school, that Hebrew school. And so he remained a teacher until his retirement. And my parents, my grandfather was in his 60's and he really, certainly wasn't going to help in the household, he did try and do odd jobs to earn a few dollars here and there, I mean franks, it wasn't dollars, but he wasn't a parasite in the sense of sitting at home and hoping to be catered to, but in essence, culturally, you expected a daughter-in-law to take care of the father-in-law, you know, the father. And he did try, he started a little business of, he would wrap packages and take them to the post office for people who would send food and gifts and whatever to Israel, you know, people who had re-established contact with relatives who were from their country, from their town and they would send them food or whatever, clothes, whatever they could save and gather. And so he would pick it up at their houses and he would wrap it up and he would ship it. And he got a little commission for doing that, so, you know, he was trying to participate in some ways financially, you know, even if it was just to buy himself, you know, his own pocket money to buy himself some clothes and things of that nature. So it's not that he was, that they were mean or bad people, they just came from a culture where it was, I mean their mother had eight kids, so it was not, you know, that's what they were used to and they were all trying to do something to better themselves and to get themselves on their feet and financially independent. And they did. And they all got married, my mother married them all. And had a lot of kids, each of them had, I think three was the minimum, so they had three, three and four, these people had, so...

Q: How do you feel about these people?

A: Well, now I love them, really, I do. I love their kids, I mean I'm very close to some of them, not all of them. I got to love them, you know, as I grew up and I, my resentment sort of disappeared.

Q: How long did you all live together?

A: Well, they were married, you know, in the, I say, probably by two or three years after they got there, they were all on their own and the only one who stayed back was my grandfather, he stayed with us til he died.

Q: And the bitter one got married off?

A: She did and it was, my mother was very heavy after my brother's, having my brother. And she used to go to a seamstress, sort of, who would make clothes, custom, I mean people did that in Europe anyway, but she was a very good seamstress because my mom really didn't look that great and so she had very, you know, very well made clothes and that part I remember. She took my aunt and she wanted to dress her in that same fancy place and this lady was very, very arrogant, elegant, French lady, and she took a look at her and she said, "But Madame Leiser, what are you going to do with her?" And my mother said, "Marry her". She said, "Well, I wish you a lot of luck". But she did, she married her off. And I'm not saying that it was the happiest marriage ever, but it was probably the best that she could expect, being from that culture and this background and everything she'd gone through. And they had three daughters and he's dead now, but the daughters are alive and two of them are married, have several children, so she has, you know, I don't know, four, five or six grandchildren, this famous aunt.

Q: Does she still live in Belgium?

A: She lives in Belgium, yes.

Q: What's her name?

A: Her name is _____. And her daughter's names are Holza(ph), and Cecile(ph), and Freda(ph). Those are her three daughters. And Holza lives in _____, which is above _____, one of those settlements. Cecile is not well, she's mentally, a very disturbed person, which is not surprising, and she lives in Antwerp with her mother. And Freda lives here in Washington Heights, married a very nice young man and they are struggling financially, but they are basically okay. So, and the two uncles married, one married a Hungarian survivor, had come out of Holocaust, of a concentration camp, and they have three children and one, two of them live in Israel. And one is extremely successful, he's the director of the opera of Villone(ph), very successful throughout Europe and even the States, has staged operas that have been very, very well received, critically acclaimed, was invited

several times to the Spiletto(ph) Festival in Charleston. The daughters are successful in, you know, in their lives and not successful career people. They each have, well, one daughter has two boys and the other one has a girl and a boy. And the other uncle, he's dead now.

Q: Would you give these people names when you talk about them?

A: Okay. Well, my uncle, the one I just mentioned, his name is Heim(ph), his wife is Lilly, and he was the teacher. Raised his children in Belgium, but when they reached college age, two of them moved to Israel, the two girls, and I don't remember if the boy did or, I don't think so. He went to performing arts school, to the great chagrin of his father and his mother who really wanted him to be a lawyer or a doctor, a teacher, something, not an artist. Little did they know that he'd be really famous. And so they are now very proud of him. His name is Moshelle(ph) Leiser. And he keeps his, Moshelle, this is how he appears in records he's made and everything he stages, he keeps his Hebrew name. He doesn't have another one. And my other uncle, the youngest one, his name is Myer(ph), okay, so my uncle Heim and his wife recently moved to Israel. He's not getting old and not, he's not well my uncle, and so his daughters wanted him to move near them. And so he did, I mean they both. And I think they are quite happy. They have done the move. My uncle Myer is the youngest one, he's married to a woman Sarah(ph) and they have four children. And all four live in Israel. And one is a _____ graduate, which is the MIT of Israel. And doesn't practice his, went back to diamonds. But very smart. The other one is chairman of a psychology department in Israel University. And the two daughters are in special education, they each have a slew of kids. I don't know, four or five, I don't know.

Q: Are they orthodox?

A: Three are and one isn't, the oldest isn't. My uncle Heim's kids are not at all. Completely non-religious. And he is, it's very painful for him, to see that.

Q: Change the tape again so we don't run out in the middle.

End of Tape 1.

Tape 2

A: ...Kleinhaus.

Q: Now, when all this happened, all these people have moved in, there's liberation, you're back with your father, your orthodox father.

A: Right, very orthodox father.

Q: You had been going to Catholic church.

A: That's right.

Q: What were your religious feelings at this point? Did you just suddenly say, okay, I don't have to do this anymore, I'm Jewish and my name is Anny.

A: Yeah, I said, I don't have to do any of this anymore. Not this, not the other. And that's where, you know, some of the fights started with my dad. My grandfather was extremely orthodox, too, so the entire household became, in fact, being Catholic was easy because there's nothing you have to do. You could eat whatever you want, you'd go to church, but it's, you know, an act of presence, I mean you show up, that's it, doesn't matter much. But here all of a sudden, there are all these rules and you can't do this and you can't do that and Friday night you have to rush and take your bath, and in turns, eight people, there is no tub, so you're just washing in some kind of the zinc tubs, you know. I mean, I hated this. And my mother, you know, being under such pressure to finish it all on time and that made me crazy, that she had to rush and I would then drag it out, you know, as long as possible to make everybody angry, you know. And the pressure, the tension was just unbearable in the household, you know, until they lit those candles and everybody sort of sigh of relief, you know. It's all done. And then, of course, the only person who had to continue working through this was my mother because she had to serve the food and wash the dishes. Finally, after perhaps a year, we hired somebody to come and do the dishes Friday night and to clean the house, things started improving and after they all got married, we moved to a different place. We moved to an apartment which, at the time, well, there were other feelings, there were feelings of jealousy for people, my friends, Leon(ph) and Regine(ph) and their parents, who had, we had been together for part of the war, but they had made it to Switzerland. And so they came back and they hadn't gone through the rest of it and they were much better off financially because the father hadn't been in concentration camp and they didn't have to take in the entire family, they just took in my mother's friend's mother and so, they moved to a very nice place with hot water and a bathtub and I was extremely jealous. I was so jealous. And I kept saying, you know, if we didn't have all these people here, maybe we could move and have a nicer life. And I mean, I made no bones about that, as I said, I was not charitable in the least. And then when they moved out, we

did move to a better place. It was not as nice as what these people had, but at least I had the semblance of my own room and we had a tub, one bathroom for the, for the four of us, the five of us, my father, my grandfather, my mom, my dad and my brother and I, but that was a tremendous improvement over what had been. And at that time, all these people still used to come for most Friday nights with their spouses and they used to come for all the holidays. And in reality it was very nice, even though it was a lot of work, but then we had help, I mean we had a cleaning woman and my mother had hired, by then my brother was, you know, maybe four or five or something, she had hired sort of a nanny, not really a nanny, but she would come every afternoon and pick him up from kindergarten and, you know, come home and feed him a snack and she would stay til dinnertime, she wouldn't stay til after, but she would stay until dinnertime. And she'd come Friday nights and do the dishes when we had 20 people for dinner and she'd do them on Saturday. And all the Saders(ph) and all that stuff was all with my mother, everything. And when the babies started appearing, those families, it was all still with us. But I didn't resent it any, you know, it was, I think it was controlled. You know, it was just for holidays and things like that, so I, I actually, I began to like them, I began to babysit for their kids.

Q: Did you go to services, then, Friday night and Saturday morning?

A: No Friday night orthodox people don't go, only men. Women don't go. So my father used to go. Saturday morning, no. Actually, orthodox women don't go Sabbath either. They only go on the high holidays and all the other holidays were, they don't really, there's some, very few women go to services in the orthodox community. What they do is usually they go pick up their husband as he comes out. So they get all dressed up and they go pick up their husband and then they'd go for a walk in the park. There's a park in Antwerp, just the central park of Antwerp, and you'd see everybody parading in their new hats and new clothes. And I hated that. I absolutely hated it. And at that point, somewhere around the age of nine or ten, I told my mother that I wasn't going to be like her. I was going to be entirely independent and I wasn't going to have a man give me money every week. Which is what happened. My mother would get an allowance, essentially, to run the household and there were numerous arguments about that. And she always got what she wanted, and she would lie because she gave a lot of it to charity, but see, he didn't know that. So she would say, well, I bought myself a dress for, you know, a thousand dollars or something ridiculous and he could say, "What! You know, where did you have an idea that you could afford a dress for a thousand dollars?" And she would say, "Well, you know, I needed it". Or something like that, and then they would argue like crazy and then he would give her, I'm making up a number, she probably never bought a dress for a thousand dollars, but the equivalent now, let's say, and he would sort of shake his head and, you know, couldn't believe it. But she would give the money away, you know, she would send it to this relative and that

relative and she would give it away locally, I mean, so and I told her that I was never, never in a million years, going to be like, in that situation. At age nine or ten. And I said on top of that I would never get married because that just didn't look right to me. None of this looked right to me. And I remember my mother's friend saying, "Well, it's, you know, you just have to know how to work that situation". You know, they were all in the same situation and they had really nice husbands, but they all had to argue to get the money so, you know, whatever the husbands evaluated the expenses to be, they kind of doubled or tripled them, for whatever reasons. And they'd have their own little, you know, savings aside that they had accumulated from their husband's weekly allowance. And I'll tell you, when I got married, my mother-in-law told me to do this. But I wasn't in that framework at all. But she told me, you know, put away money of your own, just don't tell him, just put it away. We were both students, there was no way that anybody had any money to put away. But it was such a strange concept, you know, that I just couldn't go along with that.

Q: But your mother had been so independent.

A: Right.

Q: You'd said that she had to fence watches and...

A: Right.

Q: And hidden people, done all sorts of things. For her, to go to a subordinate position, really.

A: But she really wasn't, you see, that was the point, the only place where she didn't have the independence was financial because she told not to work for pay. And probably she couldn't have, I mean first of all, she wasn't trained in anything particular. Although, she could have been anything she had wanted to had she had a formal education because she was really brilliant. But, she didn't have it and she considered her role to be the social worker, essentially. And that's what she was. And she was that for the entire community, I mean she, she passed away in January and I went, well, I was there a lot before that, but I went back in March, they had a memorial service for her. The Vitsa(ph) organization, which is the sort of like the Haddasah(ph), it's a similar, she had been president of that, organized a memorial in March. And had very prominent people come and speak and made incredible speeches about, and I found out things about her that I didn't even know. Things that she did and things she contributed to. And so I know that she didn't give up her spiritual independence and she also didn't give up her physical independence, that she did these things, and my father was fully aware. The only thing he expected us to have dinner on the table, lunch, it was lunch, 1:00, had to be lunch. And 7:00 had to be dinner. And what she did in between, he couldn't care less. I mean, he simply,

he would never, you know, check with her, I mean she ran the household extremely well and he knew that and he didn't care, I mean he just wanted his meals at a certain time. And that was that. That's all he really demanded from her. And not demanding, but he was extremely compulsive and things had to be done just so and it had to be just at a particular time and his time was one and seven. And everything, everything ran around those two, you know, landmarks during the day, I mean there was nothing, she could go and do whatever, but she had to be back and have the meal on the table for these two hours.

Q: Your father was a diamond cutter?

A: Yeah, he was, he learned how to do several of the cutting, that, cutting and I don't know what the other word is.

Q: _____?

A: Yeah, polishing and various parts of the, til you get to the finished product. Cleaving, also, he knew all of that. But in the end, he was mostly buying rough diamonds and sorting them according to size and category and what they could become, basically.

Q: So he was a diamond merchant?

A: Yes, he was a merchant. I mean, he was first was a worker and then became a merchant, so that's what he was.

Q: Okay. So back you your life, you're being a terrible kid, you're going to this school where you're the model student.

A: Model student, but a monster as far as discipline.

Q: And you were in that school until you were how old?

A: I was in that school not for very long, for I think, probably three years because I started fifth grade, or fourth, fourth, fifth and sixth. And so I never did the previous years, I didn't do the, so I'm lacking. My elementary education was a little fragmented.

Q: So you don't color between the lines?

A: No, the only think I knew and that's why I got pushed to my, and even above my age, was I could read extremely well. And that fooled everybody. Perhaps I didn't understand everything I read, but I could just read very fast and because that, see that was one thing which now tells me I still am addicted to books, I mean I'm really addicted. I, I mean I do terrible things, I will read through the night and I know that kills my next day and I just cannot stop. So it's really an addiction, it's nothing else

but an addiction, and that I picked up, I think, was a real escape as, in those years where I could just totally ignore what was going on around me and pretend it wasn't so and just immerse myself in those books, but it was, I don't even know, because the first book I read I think was Forever Amber and this was so inappropriate. I couldn't have possibly understood what was going on, but I just stuck to it and then was Gone With the Wind or stuff like that. I mean, as a six year old, you know, and it's totally inappropriate, but because of that I really knew how to read extremely well and that was why they placed me, so they didn't check on anything else and I knew nothing else. I just knew nothing, I mean I could barely write, but I was up there, I was put in fourth grade. So I was in that school. And then, as I said, I had told my parents that I wasn't going to be, you know, married at 18, or I wasn't going to marry at all, basically, and I was going to become a doctor.

Q: You knew that then?

A: I knew that then.

Q: You were six? Nine?

A: Nine. I was nine. And so, because of that...

Q: Wait a second, hold it, hold it, you're skipping over this. How did you know that?

A: I don't know, I just knew I wanted to be something and doctor seemed extremely heroic, so I guess I was very impressed by the doctors I went to. You know, they seemed to have such power and, you know, everybody was very deferent to doctors. So, I don't think I was in it really to help people, I think I was in it more for interest. So, that's what I was going to be. And, so in order to do that, I couldn't stay in that, see that school was, as I said, in shambles, it was the remnants of a pre-war, very, very fine Jewish school, but because, so the system in Belgium was that if you went to public school, you could get into university after graduation, you didn't need to take a special test. But, if you went to private school, you had to take a very, very thorough sort of baccalaureate type of exam. So, and you had to, in order to get to university, at that point, Antwerp became a Flemish town, so you had to go to a public school in Flemish. I didn't know any Flemish, really not, I mean I just knew a few words to talk to the cleaning woman and I didn't have a lot of interaction with her because when she was there I was in school and I hardly ever saw her. So that was a bit of a problem because you had to have an admissions test in Flemish. So, I don't know, see people think maybe I'm lying, but I'm not, I mean I went and I took the test and a friend of mine came with me and she copied everything from me and she didn't get in. So, but I don't know, I mixed French and Flemish and whatever I could think of, you know, in the answers. I mean, the, I don't know what the questions were and I only had three years of elementary school and everything was, really, I knew nothing

really well except reading, that's all I really knew. Well, the rest I knew, math was terrible, because I didn't have the elementary stuff, you know, I was really bad. And so I got into this extremely, extremely difficult public school that had six years of studies. And in order to go to university, you had to take the classic tract, so the classic tract was Latin and Greek. Plus Flemish, of course, which was the main, plus six hours of math a week. I mean, this was really horrible, and my experience at that school was terrible, just terrible because there were only two Jewish girls in it and even though it was really a secular school, it was a public secular school, because in Belgium they have, as they have here, a Catholic system that is parallel to the public system, I obviously, so the people who came to the secular schools were not Catholic, or at least not practicing or not very serious about their religion since they chose the public school. But I still felt very alienated and really not welcome. I felt there was real anti-semitism there.

Q: In Antwerp in general it was this feeling at the time?

A: Well, I couldn't tell because the Jews really lived very much in the ghetto, even though they didn't live that much physically a ghetto, they lived spiritually and culturally in a ghetto, there was very little mixing. So the only traces of anti-semitism were, I have a friend who lives down in Boston, she's several years older, and we sometimes speak Flemish just kind of out of, you know, out of fun and there is one kind of joke we have, is if we haven't heard from each other for a long time, she'll greet me like in Flemish, [Flemish phrase], like, are you still alive? And she said that's how they greeted her when she came back to school, like, _____, gee, you know, I thought you were dead. So, that was the atmosphere among the Flemish, although many had been hiding Jews. They really then had a concerted effort to rescue Jewish children and hide them, but obviously, there were a fair number of people who, and you know, it's, I couldn't even say that it was vicious, it was like having no clue and say, oh, you know, well, we thought you were dead, kind of a thing. But just imagine, when you have survived something like this, you don't feel that great. And the other thing that contributed to my feeling pretty bad was that we had school on Saturdays and my father didn't let me go. And so, I was already really, you know, culturally deprived, I mean I was, I don't know how I managed to do well in school because I did, but it was strictly grabbing things here and there and putting them together, but not having a coherent view of things. It was, I missed, you know, a sixth of math every week, which was algebra and going on to, you know, higher math and I, I really, I had a lot of trouble catching up and staying afloat. Missing one hour of Latin and one hour of Greek every week, and trying to make up, whereas the six hours, I mean the five hours that we had were hard enough, you know, to try then every week, by the time you catch on, there you go, you're missing three or four or five hours of really important work. And then I had to go after Sabbath, pick up the work from these people who weren't very friendly, they let me in their

house, but like barely, and try and copy it over. I mean, it was hell. And then, when the Jewish holidays came on Monday and Tuesday, so now here we go, I miss Saturday, of course, Sunday no school. Sunday I can't go pick up the notes because Sunday the holiday starts early and we have to go through that routine of bathing and getting ready and whatever. And so by Wednesday, I mean you can imagine how I felt when I got to school. I mean, the people were talking about things I had absolutely no clue about and the teacher said, "Well, you know, you want to observe your religion, that's okay with me, but I'm not going to help you. You'll just whatever, you know, do it yourself". So we did, this girl and myself, and we had six miserable years. But somewhere in between, in 1951, I believe it was, my father's immigration papers, he had applied to come to this country in 1933, and of course, the Americans had no intention of saving a single Jew so they made sure he didn't get the papers and they figured by, like _____, in '51, he'd be dead. But in '51, his number came up, and so this was in sort of the middle of the Korean war and there was big panic in Europe that this was going to turn up to be World War III. And so my father said, "I'm not going to survive another war, I just, I will not be able to do that". So we all left and we came here.

Q: All, meaning...

A: My mother, my brother, myself, my grandfather and that's it. I mean, the other people were married and on their own and they weren't on his quota. I mean, they did, they couldn't have come even if he had wanted them to. And, so we came and my mother had a brother who lived in Borough(ph) Park, and his name was _____ Blitz(ph), and he had escaped just before the war, on the last boat to Brazil and came then that route, with his wife and three children. And so he was living in Borough Park and he helped us get a place and I hated it. Because Borough Park was even more orthodox than what I had seen and my mother hated it. Because my mother could go along with the Antwerp orthodoxy because she, but that was just too much for her. She really hated it.

Q: In '51, did you fly, take a boat, how did you...

A: Took a boat. We took the Queen Elizabeth. And it was a fun trip, I mean, but we came as immigrants with the suitcases and the, we left our apartment in Antwerp, actually we didn't vacate it, because my mother really wasn't sure that this was going to work out, and so she thought we better stick it out and see what happens. And, because by then she had established herself, she was happy in Antwerp, she had all her fingers into, her tentacles really, into all sorts of pots and she was really a leader of the community. And she had friends, they had a social life, they played cards with other people. She and I used to skip away occasionally for a weekend to Paris, you know, go to the theater because she loved the theater. And we'd go to movies together and we just had a good time, basically, she and I. My father was pretty

much on the side, he didn't participate much in these, but he didn't mind, you know, that they occurred. So...

Q: You said you had fun on the ship, you were a teenager, you might have had a really lot of fun.

A: Yeah, I had fun, I mean I...

Q: What did you do?

A: But I wasn't a teenager, the American teenager, we were very different. We were really entirely different. So, first of all, we weren't dating as teenagers. Not at all. We, most of my friends, and that's another thing, there were two, two sets of people, there was one set like my friend Regine(ph), who, she belonged to a Jewish organization, like a youth movement. And they would meet on every Saturday, some Zionist group, they would learn about Israel and they would sing songs and it was like a bit of a, let's say, a scout type of experience. They'd go camping, but with a Zionist, strong Zionist feeling.

Q: What was it called?

A: That was the _____, and I think it's still ongoing, it was part of the _____ section. Then there were other youth movements that were very left wing which were _____, and they were very Socialist and I couldn't go to that because my father would have killed me and I didn't like the other one, so my friend and I kind of parted the ways, parted ways. And in fact, I think I was also not much of a, I wasn't functioning very well in a group, I was really an individualist, too, I couldn't function, I got bored. I just got bored. I went with Regine just to be with her for awhile, and I really couldn't, I just couldn't do it. So I went to a couple of camping trips, you know, for the summer where we, and I had a very good time, I, on those trips because that was sort of further away from home and there was less control. And then, if you're with a bunch of young people camping, there isn't that much you can do on a Saturday that you, you know, that you could or couldn't do, we'd go for hikes and we'd do all these things, so it was actually a lot of fun. And so we came here and...

Q: You said you had fun on the ship and I'm just curious.

A: I don't even know, I mean I guess first it was very luxurious and I'd go to movies and I'd go run around the cabins and read, there was a very good library. You know, we played games like shuffleboard and things like that, you know. I don't think I met anyone on the boat, I didn't go dancing or, it was just luxury, I think that's what attracted me.

Q: What was your sense about going to America?

A: I wasn't sure, you know, I wasn't sure because, but I wasn't that happy over at home. I wasn't having a great social life really, I had a pretty miserable social life because my school mates were not Jewish, except for this one girl, and so we didn't do a lot of socializing with them.

Q: Just because they weren't Jewish or...

A: Yeah, I think we were, they weren't Jewish and we had all these restrictions, you know, on going this and going that, and so it was very hard and they didn't understand any of it. I mean they simply couldn't understand what we were talking about. There were two, actually, I think that our first year of high school, I think we were somewhere near 60, divided in three groups, one that wasn't planning to go to university, so they were not the Latin, Greek types and I think two who were going to university, so out of 40, nine graduated. And out of those nine, there was these two Jewish girls, Nelsie(ph) and myself. And two other girls that we have, that we did become friends with over the years. And in fact, I think the Nelsie might still be in touch with at least one of them. And I know where they are at least, you know, so it's not like they're totally lost. But it took a long time, until something gelled. And at the time that I left, it was about, I was beginning to feel a bit better and I knew Flemish by then, and I was, I was really doing very well. And so it was a little difficult to leave. But on the other hand, it was like a big adventure going to America, you know, it was something terribly attractive. And I did adjust, really, I mean I hated Borough Park.

Q: Wait a minute. So, you're on the boat, you were, did you identify, you said there you were with your suitcases, did you identify with the concept, refugee?

A: Only when I got here. Not at all when I was traveling, but only when we got here.

Q: So the boat is ready to land.

A: And the people who came to pick us up were, so my grandfather, I don't know, he had a number of siblings that, unfortunately, I only met one or two of them and I don't really know, I think there may have been six or eight, I don't really know. One of them came here in early 1900's, and in fact, my grandfather came as well. But he went back to Poland, he's one of those people who came, had a pushcart and just figured, this is really not for me, so he learned English, it was very funny, my grandfather knew English. And he went back to Poland, but one brother and a sister, I think, stayed here. So those people came to meet us at the boat. Now, these people had been transplanted from Poland to Borough Park, essentially, or the Bronx, I can't, yeah, those I think might have been in the Bronx. And they, okay.

[end of side 1 of tape 2].

A: So we landed with our trunks and not only did we have our stuff, but my mother in her usual generosity, took things to deliver to, I don't know, I really don't know how many people, it was incredible. Vases and this, and I mean it was just, really it was ridiculous. And my father was yelling at her. And I was yelling at her. But, she was always on the side of the, you know, the loser and the underdog and the, you know, you have to do this, you must do this, and what's the big deal, so we have one more suitcase. Yes, ma, now 10 more suitcases. And who's going to drag this? And then you get here and you go, first of all immigration treats you like shit, that's number one. I mean, really awful. And you land on this pier and these people appear who are primitive, in my view, because, see, even though my parents didn't have a formal education, my mother was anything but primitive, and the people who they associated with, again, had no education, but were very, they were street wise and they were, they had a veneer of worldliness about them because most of them had been, they'd been to South America and America or Switzerland, so they, they had a better, they had a much wider experience. And they had to adjust very quickly, so many of them learned Spanish and then they learned French and then they learned German and they learned just to be able to stay alive and to function in those societies, so they had a veneer of worldliness, you know, and they had sort of, and they were very elegant, they had beautiful apartments. These people here lived in these buildings with the, you know, the fire escapes. And I had a totally different vision of America, which had been fed to me by the movies of the early 50's, you know, with these Hollywood apartments and the little maids with the little white things. And I took a look at this, I said, "My God, you know, this is awful". I mean, I'd much rather be in Antwerp because that's really not me at all. And the first thing these people would ask you is, "How do you like America?" You know, and having been just treated like garbage, I would say, "I hate America". And my mother was furious. And I mean, it was just a bad experience. So we moved to Borough Park and there is where my brother, my mother's brother, had got us a place. And he got us a place off some rabbi who was going to Florida for the winter because we came in the winter. It happens that the rabbi's travel plans didn't work out quite as predicted, so here we come, four people and the rabbi and his wife with the wig, the little girl, you know, snotty nose, white socks, I mean, just, you know, from the ghetto, from Poland, this is how it looked to me. And we have to spend two nights with them in the same apartment. And there were roaches there and we had left our apartment, which was not luxurious, but compared to that, it was clearly Trump Tower. And so, I felt very bad about this whole thing and when they left, you know, at least we got, the place was ours and it became a little easier. And in fact, then I started having a good time because my mother's brother who left, I told you, with his three _____, he left with his three kids on that last boat, his daughter is about two years older than I am and she's wonderful, a really wonderful person. And so she was really very welcoming to me and she took me with her friends, although it seemed to me she

was from Mars. We had, we really, we took a liking to each other immediately, but we, we were so different, so completely different that I couldn't understand any of the stuff she did. I mean, she would, on Saturday night if she didn't have a date, she would not dare put her nose out the house and I would, "Look Renee(ph), let's go to the movies". And she says, "No, we can't". And I said, "Why not?" And she wouldn't tell me, you know, because I was still maybe a little too young for her to, and she would have a bunch of friends, they'd come to the house and they would do their hair and they would do all these stupid things and they wouldn't, and I couldn't, I was just, I couldn't understand, but I liked her a lot and so I had fun, I think it was almost like an anthropological study at that time, like what are these people thinking? And then we had to move to, so my mother didn't like it there in Borough Park and we moved to Manhattan.

Q: Were you in school at all during this time?

A: Well, this is, I'm coming to this. So after about a month, they figured, you know, I'm in the middle of high school, I got to go to school. So my cousin was at Ramaz(ph), the Jewish day school. In fact, my husband was there, too.

Q: At Camp Ramaz?

A: No, not the camp.

Q: The school.

A: The school, Ramaz, it's called. My husband was there, too, at the same time. I didn't know him then. But, so, my father wanted to send me there because it was a Hebrew school, but they wouldn't take me because I hadn't gone to Hebrew school all these years and I was very far, far behind. So then another recent immigrant told him about the Julia Richmond(ph) High School in Manhattan, which at the time was apparently a very, a very good public school. And so I went there. And although I was, I had finished the third year of high school there in, their high school is six, I mean in Belgium, because of all my Latin and Greek and stuff, they didn't know what to do with me. So they put me in the graduating class. So again, I was like disconnected from having a coherent education. And, and I didn't know English, I knew just a little bit from, you know, a little high school English, I mean after three years of high school, how much English do you know? That's all I knew. And so it was again, a struggle to just know what was going on in class, but it was really simple. I mean, it was not hard.

Q: What year was it that your family left, I know you said...

A: '51.

Q: It was '51?

A: '50, '51, something like that. So again, you know, I was like at sea, but at least I didn't have school on Saturday. And in my view, they always had no school because I would go to school from eight to six. And here we'd go, the graduate, the seniors in high school, I don't know, you know, from ten to one or from, so I started enjoying this, I said, "This is a lot of fun". I'm graduating, I don't know anything, but I'm going to college at, you know, 16 because I'm through, you know. And I mean, I knew it was going to be a problem because I really didn't, I didn't know anything. I mean, I knew nothing, I just, I don't know, I just sort of skimmed by and managed to learn enough English to be able to read and I was here til about May. At which point my mother decided that it's not for her. My father was not well, my father was a sick man, all throughout.

Q: You were living in Manhattan at this time?

A: Yes, that, we were living in one of those efficiency type apartments on West 72nd, I don't remember what it was called, it had a name, it was a sort of hotel, apartment hotel. And it was fine, I mean it was much better than Borough Park and, and I met a very nice young woman at Julia Richmond and she, she wanted absolutely to have me date, so she would introduce me. She thought I was this incredible kid, you know, because I was very different from everybody else. And she used to introduce me, these guys who were much older, who were, you know, from Yashiva(ph) University types. And I didn't want Yashiva University types. The hat and the thing, but I mean, I dated a couple of times, you know, and I was very uncomfortable. The dating situation was, wasn't me at all. And then my mother said, you know, my father was having horrible headaches and he wasn't feeling well and she just couldn't get used to the anonymity and sort of lack of interaction and the fact that her brother was in Borough Park and it became a whole hassle just to go to Borough Park, you know, everything was a hassle. In Antwerp, you can walk to most of your friend's and everything, you know, you can walk to downtown and you can do all your shopping on foot. I mean, there is public transportation and people use it, but it's not like the noisy subway and, you know, all of that. There's not that many, it's not crowded and noisy and filthy and, you know, scary. So we, we returned, we went back. And that was, so, I think we got here probably around February and I started school at the end of February and I was to graduate in June, but that would have been a real mistake. And went back in May, and of course, I had missed four months of Latin and Greek and trigonometry and I mean, horrors. And so they said, "Look, you can repeat a year or you can try and cram". So I said I'd try and cram. And I did, I crammed. And I failed only one subject and that was hist, not history, geography. So they let me take a makeup and then that was it. So I made it to my grade level and continued til the end and graduated in, can't remember what year, '55 I think. Somewhere around there.

Q: And then what happened? What was it like going back to Antwerp, first?

A: Well, yeah, by the time we left, I actually like it because, hey, as I said, I was graduating, I knew I didn't really know anything, but I thought I could fake it. And I was dating, although I didn't like the scene, there was something kind of nice about it. And I was becoming more independent. So I don't think I was looking forward to going back to Antwerp at all. I think I was, by that time, beginning to open up to the possibilities of much more freedom. And the possibility of meeting a lot more people in my age group. In Antwerp it was extremely restricted and, as I said, there were some that were going to these religious things which I wasn't going to go into. There were some that were going to the non-religious one, I mean still the organized Zionist group, I couldn't join that because my father wouldn't let me and besides, as I said, I'm not sure I was that type. And then there was a group of very rich kids, or at least acted as they were, as if they were very rich, and they were very sophisticated and had their hair done in nice places and we couldn't afford that. So I wasn't really comfortable with them either. So I was quite isolated and had just, and then the pressure was on to just get married. In all those groups, you know, and I mean I couldn't deal with this at all. I simply couldn't deal with this. So I had two or three friends, girlfriends mostly, til the end of high school. And we'd just meet in each other's houses and commiserate, basically. Complain about how terrible life was in Antwerp. And so that's how it was until I graduated high school. And a time, about, when I was studying for my big finals in high school, it was around the holiday of Pentecost, you know, _____, my, one of my uncles, Myer, you know, who had lived with us, and his wife had taken an apartment for the month of June at the seashore and they invited me to come for that holiday. So I came and I brought all my books to study my final exams. And I was studying on the beach because it, it was the month of June and it was not high season yet, there were just families with young children. And this one guy, you know, approached me and he was a young man from Antwerp, but just a few years older than I was. And we started dating. So then I had sort of a good time for awhile except that he wanted to get married. And I just didn't want to. I mean, I just did not. You know, I just knew that I had to hang onto what I had said and I wasn't going to cave in. And so that, didn't have a nice ending, but I started medical school.

Q: In Antwerp?

A: In Brussels. There was no medical school in Antwerp, there is one now, there wasn't one. And again, that was really a mistake because I wasn't ready. I mean, I was 17 and in Europe, to this day, medical school is right after high school, so there is, there is no college to kind of buffer. And medical school is seven years, so you do all the science courses that you would normally do in college, you do in the first year of medical school, all together. And in addition, you do anatomy. And the

cadavers and me, that just didn't work out very well. Not at all, I couldn't take it. So in fact, I became anorectic again, but again, it wasn't like, you know, I thought I was fat and I wasn't going to eat, but I stopped eating because, just the odor would pursue me and I really think that that had a connotation with the concentration camps and with having seen those horrible pictures and having seen my father the way he looked when he came back. And every time I'd go, it would just sort of flash. And I would get sick, I mean I simply couldn't deal with it. So I was in medical school for two years, but I quit. I couldn't do it. And I lost maybe 10 pounds, 15 pounds, 20 pounds, I was really disintegrating. So that was one problem. My other problem is, the school was in Brussels and my father wouldn't let me live in the dorms, which means I had to commute, which means I had to get up every morning at five, be on the train at seven and be awake in class at eight. And come back at 7:00 at night. So that was one very difficult, and the other thing about that was that that first year was, you know, math and physics and chemistry and these were things that I just didn't know. I mean, I faked my way through high school, basically, but I didn't know it. And I didn't know it enough to jump to calculus, for instance. I mean, I just, so I was really struggling and I gave it up. I mean, I just couldn't handle it.

Q: Were there other women in your class?

A: Some.

Q: Other Jews?

A: Yeah, actually, I traveled on the train with a bunch of, I think there we were four or five. But that university, we went to Brussels and Brussels is a very anti-clerical university. It was actually erected as a reaction to Catholicism. So they were very free thinkers, I mean that was, so I think that the Jewish aspect was less of a problem there. The people there were truly secular. And I don't recall feeling, you know, no, in fact, I made a lot of friends. Mostly men, though. And that was very bad because Antwerp still is, you know, a small gossip town. And for the daughter of Natan(ph) Leiser to be seen with a non-Jew was close to prostitution. I mean, I think they equated that essentially with prostitution. So I had a really bad reputation in Antwerp and my father was shattered that I would do such a thing. And there was no talking sense into him, you know, there was just no talking sense into him about that it meant nothing and, and besides, I was going to be friends with whoever I was going to be friends with. And it was bad enough that I couldn't stay in town, you know, that I had to do this horrible thing. And I had a good time, I mean with all the difficulties, one of the fellows was Jewish and is actually now a cardiologist, had, was a good mathematician, so we, he would train me in math on the train at seven in the morning. And he managed to make me pass which was a feat, I must tell you, this was a feat. And another friend, I mean he's, this man is a cardiologist and is very, you know, good reputation, is at the University of Brussels. The other fellow is the medical

director of the chief university hospital in Antwerp. We're still in contact, not frequent, but in contact. And the other one was a woman and she's a pathologist and she's divorced and she has only one child. And I think that was our little group on the train. Four or five of us. And then there were non-Jews and we were friendly with them and, in fact, my friends, particularly _____ who is the medical director of the Middleham(ph) Hospital in Antwerp, he's still friends with these people that we studied together, so I think the religion was not important there. At that point it became completely, just irrelevant. These people were really very free thinkers and educated and it was no longer a problem. And I don't think, at that point, that I considered it as much as a problem as I did, you know, before where I, I felt diminished and I felt inferior. I did feel inferior. And I was struggling, you know, just to keep afloat. And there, I was struggling, but it had no longer to do with not going to school on holidays as much as it had to do with my really lack of preparation in very serious subjects and then my inability, inability to deal with dead bodies. I mean that was a serious, but it had nothing to do with being Jewish per se, you know.

Q: When you say it reminded you of pictures you'd seen of cadavers and of your father, it reminds me of when you said that you and your father and mother would be in the same bed and you'd wake up with your own nightmares. Do remember any of those nightmares?

A: Well, yeah, the nightmares were just terror, plain terror because, see when my mother was away, well first of all, the terror when we fled and we were followed by the, you know, in these woods and we were running and hearing the German Shepherds, I mean until, until maybe 10 years ago, if I even saw a dog five miles away, I would, I would just disintegrate, I mean I couldn't deal with a dog.

Q: So that's what you would have nightmares about?

A: I would have nightmares about fleeing, I had a nightmare about being caught, I had nightmares about bombs because we, frequently as my mother was away, when she was fencing those watches and going to Switzerland, I was alone at night. And there were alarms, you know, for bombs and I'd run with the people in the house, but I had to make it out of my own apartment first. You know, at age seven, eight, you know, and it's, the sirens are going and it's like, and you heard the bombs falling and you never knew if you were going to be next. So that's the kind of nightmares. And then I also had nightmares about, that home I had been, because that was far from being fun and I had nightmares about having lice, which I had had, and I think I said that on my tape about cutting off the hair, that was just the worst, the worst.

Q: Do you still have a thing about hair?

A: I love my hair, but I mean I don't know that, I mean I'm lucky that it's nice, but I'm not, maybe I have a thing about hair, I don't know, I mean I've made my hair in a lot of different ways and I've colored it red and every possible way, so maybe, but I don't know. I don't know if it's different from any woman really that has nice hair. And as you get older, the rest of you becomes not so nice, so I hang onto a few things that are still reasonably looking. My hair is one of them, so I don't know if there's something more than what you would expect, you know, to favor the things that are still nice about you. You know, as you're kind of getting into the twilight.

Q: What did your father look like?

A: Well, he looked like a skeleton, he looked awful and his teeth were moving, his hair had fallen out, he had, his feet were huge, I mean his legs were swollen from, you know, when you don't eat protein and you sort of, everything turns into water, so he had swollen legs. And he weighted 80 pounds, you know, I mean, and he was taller than I am. And I'm not very tall, but I weigh 100 pounds and I'm really not that fat, so considering a man who was, you know, five six, he wasn't tall, but I mean he was five six, five seven or somewhere around there, to weight 80 pounds, that's pathetic. I mean, his cheeks were sunken and he could barely breathe, you know, he was every, you know, inhaling was like you'd heard noises and it was terrible. It was scary. I mean, it was really, really scary and then he had these nightmares and then he was very irritable, extremely irritable, and he'd get angry and he'd yell and I had never saw him like, I didn't remember him this way. I mean, he wasn't that way. So, it was very hard. Very hard.

Q: So to jump in our flashback sequence further close to the present, you dropped out of medical school?

A: Dropped out of medical school and didn't really know what to do with myself. But I knew I wanted to study, you know, I just figured this is like a break. And I, I went and worked for a year or so.

Q: What did you do?

A: Well, again, you know, I was sort of an, essentially because I was a con artist, you know, and like I faked my way through school, I faked my way through elementary school, I more or less faked my way through high school, faked my way through, you know, to graduate here, I mean it was all, I knew enough to put together something that looked fine, but it was really not fine in depth. And so, this one person I knew who is now in Boston, Mimi(ph), she, she lost her father during the war and she and her brother and mother lived in Antwerp and Mimi is still a very strong individual and she decided there was no future for them at all in Antwerp and so they were going to immigrate to the States. And they did. And she worked as an office manager for a

man who is American who had this business in scrap plastics, so he'd buy plastics from factories and he would sell them all over Europe and I guess they would recycle them essentially. And so he was a German Jew who lived in the States and he would come every summer to Antwerp to sort of oversee his business, the rest of the time, she was running the office. So, I took that job. I knew nothing. He could only speak German, this man, and we'd correspond in German and, or some English, but mostly German. I needed to do accounting and I didn't know anything about it. I needed to sell stuff and quibble over the price and I hate, I mean I was 19, you know, I had no idea. But somehow she trained me in a couple of months to, again, present a credible picture, not, not really knowing what I was doing but enough to, and I remember clearly, clients coming in and they were looking for the boss, you know. I said, "Well, I represent him". And they were like, "Oh, my God, you know, what is this?" Because I looked very, very young, very young. I mean now maybe, I look my age, but then I didn't, I really, I looked 15 at the most, at the most, and that was stretching it because I couldn't get into movies where you had to be 17 without ID, I mean they wouldn't let me in at all. And so, but I, I really did an okay job, you know, I didn't lose the man any money, maybe I didn't do as well as someone who really knew what they were doing, but I managed the office and there was two secretaries and there was a like chief accountant, but I had to present the stuff in the way that this person could, and I was their boss, which was really laughable. But I did it, I did it for a year and then I said this is clearly not my avocation. And I told my mother that I was going to go to Switzerland to study because I couldn't do it in Belgium because I wasn't going to be able to, this commuting business wasn't for me. And she supported me, you know, she supported me. And I left for Switzerland, not knowing at all what I was going to do, not knowing anybody there.

Q: You'd been accepted into med school?

A: No, I didn't go to med school, I wasn't accepted into anything, I just took my luggage, I went on a night train, I got to Geneva at six in the morning with coffers and coffers, you know, because my mother had packed God knows what, and stood there and had no idea where to go. And finally managed to get a cab and there was a Jewish _____, as I've figured, well, I'll go there. At least somewhere to park my stuff. And I did, went there, and put my stuff and immediately figured that I didn't want to stay there for very long because it was one of these orthodox things again and I said, "That's really lovely, I'll stay a couple of nights, but I'm not staying". And so there were some other students there, obviously, and they helped me find a, you know, they helped me through the ropes of getting a newspaper and finding a place to stay. And I found a room to stay. And then I went to register and, honestly, I didn't know for what. I really didn't know. And I'm standing on line, you know, in front of the register, you know, the teller essentially. And there was these two Swiss girls and they're talking and we started talking, I asked them what are you registering for,

and they said, "Oh, we're going for a degree in biology". I said, "Okay, I'll do that, too". I mean, it sounds really idiotic, but that's how it happened. So I went and I got a degree in biology.

End of Tape 2.

Tape 3

A: And so we registered, the three of us, and we became really good friends, in fact, I'm still friends with them now. Once every two or three months, she'll give me a call, just out of the blue, one of them, the other, then I hear from this, from the second one, _____, just Christiana(ph) is the one that I've kept in touch with, but I always hear about Christiana. And that's how I started a biology degree and somewhere in the midst of all of that I met my husband. I met one woman who is an Israeli and I'm still very friendly with her, in fact, she called me on Saturday. And she was in the interpreter school, oh yeah, that's the other thing, all the girls who went to school to Switzerland were in interpreters. I didn't want to do that because I still had my views on a real job, you know. And something that I was interested in. So biology was just, just great. My friend that I met, Elana(ph), was an Israeli woman who was just a lot of fun, she's a great gal. And she was in interpreter school, so we became really good friends and I had these two Swiss girls, Christiana and Josiana(ph), and we became good friends. So immediately I had a group of friends. And so, of course, my parents were very worried about, is she ever going to get married. And I said, "Look, I'm going to study, I don't know what I'm going to study, but I'm going to study something and I'm not getting married". So they were very upset because there had been several candidates in between that I didn't mention from this fellow whom I met at age 17. There was a bunch of them and I didn't like any of them, I always had an excuse. And one was even a physician and, because I said, well this is uneducated, this is this, this is that, what's with the doctor? You know. I said, "I just don't love him. That's it. I don't love him. I'm not marrying somebody I don't love and that's that". So, they were getting really concerned and by that time I was 21, 22, and this is really getting to be the old maid. So everybody was concocting, you know, to have me meet men. So unbeknownst to me, there were relatives of his in Antwerp who, he had relatives there who he used to come and visit for holidays and so on. They told him about me, about this nice Jewish girl and, you know, when you're 22 and somebody tells you, nice Jewish girl, you say, oh, yeah, right. The same family told me about him and I said, "Anybody who needs to be introduced by his uncle, I don't even want to know about". So, but I didn't say anything, I said, "Oh yeah, really". And I knew some of, there were a lot of American students studying medicine in Geneva at the time. Those who were essentially there because they were Jews because there was clearly a quota of not admitting Jews to medical school in the United States. So they came to Switzerland and he was one of them.

Q: So he's American?

A: Well, he was born in Belgium, came here during the war, went back with his family, of course, in 1946, but for some reason or other, his parents couldn't get used to Antwerp again, they went back to the States. So he was essentially raised here from

the age of four on. Went to Columbia College, did extremely well, but for the quota reason didn't make it into medical school right away, they wanted him to wait another year, it was very complicated, he said, screw you, I'm going to Switzerland. So he came to Switzerland. And so this is how people were kind of planning to get us together. So I knew some of the other medical students who were there and I told, so I must say, I had seen Sylvan(ph) and I didn't know who he was, but he was really handsome. And I said, gee, and he looked totally non-Jewish, blue eyes, light hair, just what I needed. And so I really wanted to meet him. And I told someone, "Do you know this guy Sylvan Kleinhaus?" He said, "Yeah, he's in, you know, my medical". I said, "Just point him out to me because I want to make sure that I don't meet him". So next time we are in the cafeteria together, he says, "That's him". I says, "No". So he said, "Yes," he said, "Why no?" I said, "Oh, that's a long story, I'm not telling you why". So we met and interestingly enough, he knew my friend Elana, separately, independently. And so we became really, the three of us, you know, very close and she was dating another medical student at the time. And so we met and we started to date and we got married about a year later. Even though I said, I'm not getting married.

Q: Did you have a religious ceremony?

A: Yeah. Well, that I didn't mind, you know, that I, see I will go for the form, I still, I'll go, I go to synagogue now and I attend on the high holidays and I bitch throughout the entire thing, but it's, but I am, it's an ethnic identification. I feel in some ways, extremely Jewish, I have very, very strong feelings for Israel, my brother lives there and his family. My brother who was born in 1946, with his children and I love his family. And all, practically all the cousins that were born to these people who lived with us, as I told you, they all live in Israel. And, and I went there for one summer after I graduated high school, so I really took a love for this country. For a variety of reasons. And I think that's probably where the war has marked me the most, is that I feel so strongly identified as a Jew and I cannot stand it when anybody makes any kind of comment, you know, about Israel or Jews or, it just makes me completely crazy, even though I don't agree with everything that the Israeli government does and it's not like I'm a totally right wing fanatic, not at all, but I just can't stand criticism from people who aren't Jewish, I just cannot. I always feel that it's tainted, that is' not strictly on political grounds. So to that extent maybe I have a certain amount of paranoia that I can trace back to the war. I mean, maybe that's where it's most visible.

Q: You went to Israel after high school?

A: Yes.

Q: You didn't tell me this part.

A: Well, there's so much, you know. I went to Israel as a, essentially, a graduation present because one of my father's sisters who had, had gone to Israel in 1933. So when my father came to Belgium, she, or shortly thereafter, maybe '36 or so, went to Israel as a pioneer essentially, went to kibbutz. She was clearly not orthodox, or became not orthodox, I don't know what she had been at home. And so she was living there, she married there, she had two children there and so my father sent me to her for the summer after I graduated.

Q: So this was the early 50's?

A: Yeah, '55 or so.

Q: The height of Zionism.

A: Yes. And height of poverty, height of rationing, height of really primitive conditions. I mean, my aunt and her three, the three other members of her family lived in two rooms, essentially.

Q: Where was this in Israel?

A: It was in Tel Aviv. And I went there and I have a cousin who is about approximately a year younger or so, I can't, I don't know exactly, we're certainly the same generation except that she was a Sabra(ph) and I was born under different circumstances. And unfortunately, when I came there, she was quite ill, she had kidney stones and so, she's suffered from that since then, she's never been entirely well, although she's had, you know, a fairly normal life, but she's had health problems throughout. And she knew only Hebrew and I didn't know any, or you know, again, three years of elementary school, that was not exactly sufficient to, so I was in a sort of desperate state because I wanted to meet people. So I just really by force learned Hebrew, you know, just kept asking her, what's this, what's that, I mean just continuously and the dictionary. And by the end of the three months, I was fluent. Really fluent. Don't know how to write, still to this day, I write terribly and I read very slowly, but when I speak, people think I'm a native from those three months there. So, and I made a lot of friends. And it was just lovely because my aunt wasn't religious. And so Friday night we'd go to parties and, you know, it was just a completely different, and then, whereas in Belgium, you know, you felt Jewish because you were ghettoized and because of my experience in high school, over there, it was just a wonderful feeling. And at the time, the country was just so safe. You just could go anywhere. And I would hitchhike across the whole country and nobody thought anything about it, you know, it was just a normal thing to do. Nobody locked their doors, it was just wonderful. So I did that before I started medical school, so that was my graduation from high school. And I met a fellow there who also became a boyfriend and who dragged in my life for several years on and off because he was in Israel and he was

a painter. He's dead now, unfortunately, because several years ago I went back to Israel actually looking for him and someone told me he had died. So...

Q: You were in school in biology, you graduated and got married, after graduation, before graduation?

A: Before graduation. Yeah, we, because I got married a year after I started school. And so I was 23. And I moved into his place, he had a little studio, and he was in medical school, so we got married in April and...

Q: Of what year?

A: 1960. A long time ago. And we, the summer, we came here because he had wanted to transfer to an American medical school. And he got several interviews. His parents lived on West 96th and Central, not Central, Riverside Drive. And we were married in April and I did not want to go live with his parents. And they couldn't understand it. So we, domineering people, particularly the father, and I insisted that we move to our own place. I said, "I don't care if it's a hole, but a place of our own". And we did, they did get us a place in the Windermere (ph) Hotel, which was west something or other, 90, 91st, I'm not sure, and Broadway, I think it was. Or, yeah, I think it was Broadway. But we, it was very difficult. I came here, he started to do some externships (ph) and interviewing in medical school and then I said, I wasn't, I didn't finish, I mean I was still, had I think a year or two to go. And I started looking at various colleges to see how I could continue what I was doing. And it looked extremely difficult because the curriculum wasn't the same and over there it was only science, but here in college, you needed all these core courses of English, literature and so on and I, really had already lost two years of medical school, one year of working, I didn't want to start, I was on the track and I just didn't want to get off it now. So we had some difficult times right after we got married because to him it was certainly much more enticing to transfer to a medical school, get an American degree and have not to deal with any of this foreign business. But to me, it was hell. And also, I must tell you that Geneva was, and perhaps still is, but it was paradise on earth, it was just beautiful. Just, just beautiful. And we had, you took in life, you know, we were very much in love, we loved what we were doing, the surroundings were beautiful, you know, I mean we'd go to the lake, Lake, now I hear it's totally polluted, but you know, lunchtime we'd go and swim, we'd take boat rides, we'd go up in the mountains. I mean, his parents were very wealthy so he had a car and I mean, we just had a life, the best life, you know, no responsibilities except to our studies. And really enjoy life, for me, almost I would say for the first time, really, really enjoying my life. I mean, I had had moments, you know, that I had a good time and when I was in Brussels I had a good time and when I went to Israel I had a good time and here and there I had a good time, but I had mostly I was somber, you know.

Q: When did you stop being nasty?

A: I think probably by the time I got to Geneva I sort of had that straightened out. I became, you know, happy and I stopped, maybe I, I still, I'm still nasty to people I don't like. I mean, I have a certain level of tolerance, but once that's exceeded I, I think I'll go absolutely through fire for people that I love, I mean I will leave no stone unturned and I will, you know, even harm myself, but I will not, I have very little tolerance for people that I don't tolerate, so, when they reach the point where I can't take them any more, there is almost no, there's almost no return. So I'm not tolerant, I'm very intolerant. But I'm not nasty. Not anymore, I don't think I'm, I don't think people think I'm nasty, but I am not very tolerant.

Q: Okay, so you're at sea here, your husband has these externships...

A: My in-laws are a big pain in the neck. Big pain in the neck because they want to control us and I didn't want to be controlled. Never did I want to be controlled, and the last thing I wanted to be controlled by is my in-laws. Because I must say that, as soon as I got married, I mean okay, my parents, you know, my mother supported me going to Switzerland, my father did not put up a fight. I mean, he sort of gave in and supported me financially. And from that moment on, except trying to, you know, manipulate me to getting married, they became extremely non-meddling in my life. You know, and I, once I get married, they totally unmeddled. I mean, completely and remarkably so for my father. He said nothing, he knew that we didn't observe the Sabbath, he said, he never said a word anymore. Never. Which was, in retrospect, really remarkable. With my in-laws, it was just the opposite. And I really couldn't take it, I could not take that acting, they wanted me to be a certain way and I was nothing like it. My mother-in-law never did anything outside of the house, she was a, pretty much a slave to her husband. And they expected me to be that way, you know, and I really had told Sylvan when we met and we started dating that I was going to have a career and I wasn't quite clear yet as to what it would be and how I would manage it, because I had no model, you know, to go by. But I would do that. I was not going to be a housewife, under any circumstance was I going to be a housewife. So, and even though he came from a really different picture, I think he just loved me enough to agree with it in principle, maybe he didn't know exactly what it would entail, but at least he was able to say, "Yes, I'll go along with it". And he did, I mean he really did. But, his parents were up in arms. So while we were still there, one professor from an American university, so we went back to Switzerland because I really didn't want to stay. And reluctantly he agreed to come back. And we went back to Geneva and we were there for another three years. And while I finished my degree, I got a job as a teaching assistant.

Q: Where was this?

A: In Geneva, in the department of physiology.

Q: At?

A: The University of Geneva, it's called. And I got two jobs, two part-time jobs which turned out to be two full-time jobs. You know, I was just wanted, by that time I was really interested in science. And the professor who had taught us physiology was just amazing and I wanted to work of him in the worst possible way. And it was also one of the plumb jobs, was to work for this, to be an assistant to Professor _____ was like. I can't even describe it to you. And I managed to get a job like that. Because normally he would only give it to medical students, but I impressed him enough, I took his course and I got the maximum in all three parts of the test, so he said, "Okay, I'll take you". So I worked there and I worked in the Department of Biology part-time. And while I was there, a man came from the States, he was a professor of pharmacology at Downstate(ph) Medical Center in Brooklyn, he was there on sabbatical. And I asked him if he would take me as a graduate student. And this was completely against all rules because you had to take GRE's and you had to have this and that and the other, so I really kind of manipulated him and finally he just said okay, you know. So he was staying another six months when we went, we came to the States, Sylvan got an internship.

Q: When was this?

A: And that was 1963. He got an internship and I was admitted to the Ph.D. program at Downstate on this man's word, no papers, no nothing corresponding to what the requirements were here. And he said, "But, you better do well, because really, I'm putting my head on the block for you, so you better do well". So with this admonition, I started graduate school. Again, I had really a language problem because the only English I had learned was for those three months when I was at Julia Richmond High and that was very hard to study, you know, science in that language. I mean, I really, so it was an adjustment period again, but I mean that was, I knew some English, I wasn't totally, it's not like when the first time I came.

Q: This was your third time.

A: Yeah, it was. So I came, but the second time I was doing nothing because I was depressed, what I did that summer, we were here for that summer, I went every single day to the _____, which is, that, you know, that, I don't know if you know that movie house, because they were showing foreign films. And I would just go in there as soon as they opened and I would stay til dinnertime. And I couldn't care less about anything else. Saw a lot of very good movies. And I was sometimes alone in the movie, you know. And I'd come home and we'd go and have dinner at his folk's house because we had to have dinner at his parent's house every night. And I was,

I cannot say how miserable. So essentially, you know, I pretty much put an ultimatum, you know, if we go back, we go back, if not, I'm not staying married. Because I can't, I can't deal with this whole scene and not being able to really finish college within a year, you know, having to do all these extra things, I didn't want to do that at all. So as I said, we went back and I met Professor Firchcot(ph) and managed to convince him to take me on to school, which he did. And I came to graduate school and studied for five years in Brooklyn and in the meantime, those five years were terrible, terrible years again because he was an intern so, and then he became a surgeon, resident in surgery, which was every other night on call, every other night, every other weekend away from home. Brooklyn compared to Geneva was, I mean it's like moving to, you know, Haiti or something, coming from, you know, let's say coming from I don't know a fancy town, let's say Monterey, California going to, you know, Haiti or something, you know, Port Au Prince where the colored folks live, I mean that's what Brooklyn was, it was awful. Awful. And, but, and I was alone, I had no friends, studying was really tough because I had, on top of that, this fear of having to do well. You know, this absolute panic of having to really, you know, perform, to not put this man to shame. So, and I made friends there, I mean it, but the intolerable was that, that Brooklyn is horrible and I was alone a lot and I made friends and the friends, I was also an oddity, you know, they used to call me this cute little French girl, you know, that was the, and everybody was attracted to me because I was different. You know, I was a completely different type of person, different background, different everything.

Q: But you let people think you were French?

A: Well, they didn't know the difference. Belgium, they had no idea what that was, so French was fine, I looked French, you know, according to their idea, just as, you know, the Bronx didn't look to me like Hollywood, in their view I looked French because, you know, I did, I mean Belgium and France aren't that different and the clothing was French and the haircut was French and my demeanor I suppose was much more French than it was American. You know, if you took it this way. And I made some good friends there that I'm still, well, at least one of them I'm still in touch with. And others I'm occasionally in touch with, but, and here and there I run into some of the men. But I was friendly with two women and the others were all men and we were very friendly, but I was the only married one, so it was a bit different because I couldn't really date anyone and I couldn't really, but I did go out with a bunch of people and we used to hang out in the village. I must say that over all it was pretty bad, but it wasn't, there were some good moments. I mean, I enjoyed what I was doing, I enjoyed my research and I enjoyed my friends, but I didn't like my loneliness and, and then I had a child.

Q: When was this?

A: That was 1964. So, July, 1964, and his name is Jean Pierre and he's now 32. And made it much more difficult for me to continue, but I said I was going to do it, and I'm going to do it. And so my mother sent me an au pair from Belgium. And essentially, kept me going with help until my youngest child was about, I think when Brian was six, I think, so for about 10 years.

Q: So you had one child in '64, next one?

A: Was '67 and the third one was '71.

Q: So, Jeane Pierre.

A: Karin(ph), she's 28 and she's a medical student, she's finishing next year and, so, Jeane Pierre is married, he's the only one married so far and he's in business, he's in the diamond business. Brilliant kid, but extremely rebellious, so didn't want to finish college. Karin is very, very, very, smart, but she's also smart on the human level, very sensitive, very clever about human relations and all of that and a very good student. And then Brian is 25, so he's doing a master's in one branch of geology, he's, he lives in Boulder now until he's done.

Q: (ph) the au pair?

A: She sent me au pairs and we've had ups and downs with them. There were good ones, there were bad ones. There was one who left us. The arrangement was that we paid for their trip and we paid them a salary which was not a high salary, but it was a salary, you know, enough, and of course, room and board, and air ticket. So we changed every year and one year, we had one who, so she came with us, we used to go, every summer we used to go home, to my parents. And my parents rented a house at the beach and we all went and it was just wonderful because my mother was just, I mean we'd come there and she rented these gorgeous homes, something like this type of home. And in fact, some of the furniture I have is reminiscent of that type of furniture. And she's always have, by that time they were doing well and so she had full-time help, and she would just absolve me of any responsibility of any kind and we'd come and we'd each have our rooms and in each room there was new things hanging, clothes for me, clothes for the kids, I mean it was just amazing. And so, of course, I loved going back. And so we would hire, I mean she would hire somebody, she would, the person would spend the month of August with us there and then come back with us and the plan was that they would come back in August. One of them quit in May, she just disappeared. She left for the weekend and she never came back, which was a terrible thing for me. My son Jeane Pierre was two at the time.

Q: You were still in school?

A: I was in school. And well, my mother-in-law didn't want to take care of him. So I flew home with my kid, left him to my mother and came back.

Q: You had money.

A: Well, I didn't have money, she did, my mother had, she paid for it. Just flew for the weekend back and forth, dropped off the child, came back to school. No, I had very little money, we were making a grand total of \$4,000 between the two of us. So, not even enough to pay the rent, but our parents were helping us out. They really were, so both, I mean his parents helped very nicely financially, but there were strings attached to it. And it was difficult. I mean, that relationship remained difficult for a long time.

Q: So when you had kids, let me turn this over. [end of side 1 of tape 3] Did you give your kids a religious education?

A: Yeah, in the sense that I put them in Jewish school. And, but I didn't, I mean we observed all the holidays, I mean I lit, and I still do, light candles Friday night, but I thought that this was sort of a nice family thing to do. I never told them that there was a God or that they had to believe in God. It was all sort of for, really, tradition. And ethnic identification. So I never forced them to do anything, so but, we did observe the holidays because I thought they were nice. I mean, I made the Seder and Roshhosana(ph) and all these holidays, I mean we always made big dinners, I still do when I can and invite lots of people just as it had been at home. But, I mean, I, they, none of my kids are religious. None of them are, so, and I really don't think they feel any guilt towards it at all, you know.

Q: When you give a Seder, do you do it traditionally?

A: Yeah. We do it traditionally, but the truth is, we usually, it's tradition, but it's, we laugh a lot, you know, we joke around the things that are being said, I mean when the kids were younger we did it more authentic because they were learning the stuff in school and so they wanted to read parts of it, etcetera, etcetera. And so we did it, but now we do it and we go through the whole thing and usually we do it, you know, some of the kids come home, some of our friend's kids, I mean there are a little bit everywhere, some are married, some aren't, we try and do it together with some of the people that we've always done it.

Q: So then go back to school, you graduated from, you got your doctorate?

A: I got my doctorate.

Q: In what?

A: In pharmacology. From Brooklyn. And by the time I got my, well, what happened is this, I was writing my thesis, being pregnant with my second child, and Sylvan finished all his residencies in general surgery and decided to do a specialization in children's surgery. So there were several possible places where he could do it and I said, we have to get out of this country. I mean, Brooklyn was such a bad experience that I equated all of America to Brooklyn and I said, "I got to get out of here". So we went to Montreal. And he did a specialty training, sub-specialty training in a Catholic hospital there, a French one.

Q: This was when?

A: That was, well, Karin was born 1967, Jeane Pierre in 1964, he was, I think it was '66, starting '66.

Q: So you're in Montreal.

A: Montreal and I went there pregnant with the second child, starting a post-doctoral fellowship, but not having really defended my thesis. So I continue writing and we keep sending back and forth between my sponsor, back and forth, and, but I started to work as a post-doctoral like this. Which was a terrible thing, too, because when I went for the interview I didn't tell them that I had a child because at that time, to be a woman was really not a plus. To be married was even less of a plus, to have one child was pretty much lethal and to be pregnant with a second was, you were, had zero chances of getting any kind of position in science, none, zero. So I didn't tell them I was pregnant. But then, you know, comes _____ where it 's kind of hard. I don't know, I was so panicky. When I got there I said, "Look, you know, I wasn't forthright, but I've got one child and the second one is on the way. But, I promise you I will work, I will continue to work". And he was not pleased, the man was not pleased at all. But, I had gotten an MRC Fellowship which was also quite prestigious and I had gotten that really based on recommendations from the people who had trained me. So he necess, he really didn't have to pay me, I was getting it from the Canadian government, so he figured, okay, I'm not wasting that much resources on this person. And so, I went to McGill(ph) and he went to San Tristine(ph), which is the French hospital, but since he spoke French, having studied in Switzerland, there was no problem and they were very grateful to have an American who spoke French. That was a nice touch to it. And, so we were in McGill, I mean Canada, and then Karin was born over there. I went back to work five days after she was born. And, because I, you know, I felt that I had to, I just felt that I had to do this. And I read the last draft of my thesis in the hospital, having had the baby. And flew to New York to defend my thesis six weeks after I gave birth, and it was very funny because I couldn't sit, you know, I was really torn and I mean it was, I stood the entire flight and when I got to Brooklyn, I had to defend a thesis. And my thesis director wanted to do me a big favor and requested from the committee that I

should be allowed to sit. Because I had just given birth. And I said, "No way. I'm not sitting". I said, "I sat on the plane, I just want to stand". You know, and all men, of course. And, so I defended the thesis and that was fine and we went back to Montreal and we were there until 1971 where he finished his training and I kind of finished my doctorate, my post-doctorate fellowship, but I didn't have a job coming back. So I figured I have to get a job after he gets his because, obviously, he's going to be making much more money than I am. And my job would never be that reliable as a scientist. So he got the job and we came back, we bought a house, actually his father bought us a house because we certainly couldn't afford a house, and his father died right after. It was terrible. By that time, I was pregnant with the third one, so...

Q: Where was the house?

A: The house was in New Rochelle. And Sylvan was working at Montefiore(ph) and that's where he got, he's been working there ever since. So I, well, things kind of fell apart in that, again, I was moved to a place where I didn't know anyone. Now I'm two and a half children, a mother-in-law who is in total depression. And she became like a burden, she just wouldn't do anything and she'd come every weekend and we'd have to pick her up and bring her home. And on the weekend I didn't have help because this one lady that we had hired came when Karin was six, six months old, by the time we came back she was three, we came back, and she followed us. So she came from Belgium to Montreal and she came with us to the States, so she seemed like she was going to be there for awhile and that was a big help. But on the weekends she was off and so I was overwhelmed, I literally was overwhelmed. Between my mother-in-law and the kids and the pregnancy and not knowing anybody and it was not a good time. And, you know, the mourning of my father-in-law. And, so, but decided that I wasn't going to look for a job being pregnant because with three this clearly wasn't going to work. So I didn't, I stayed home for about eight months. And towards the end of my pregnancy, I started sending letters to people who had been my professors in graduate school and who had now moved on to being chair, you know, chairmen in big, big departments like Columbia and so on and so forth. And I said that they have to help me in the letter, and at least grant me an interview. So, one or two of them did, and one in particular, I told him, "Look, everybody says that it's no point, there is no point training women because they have children and they don't work. I'm trained, I have children, but I want to work. So, are you going to help me or not?" So he could say, he couldn't say no, so he got me a job as a research associate for, at Rockefeller University which is, obviously, very prestigious. And I was there for about a year and then started sending out all my CV's(ph) and landed a job at Yale. So I started working there in the Department of Neurology and became the assistant professor. And worked at Yale from about 1973 til '89. And sort of rose through the ranks, made it, I didn't make it to full professor, but I made it to research professor because I was in a clinical department and so I

couldn't really become, not having the MD degree, I couldn't become a real professor, full professor. And I commuted from New Rochelle to Yale which was 125 miles a day and did quite well, you know, established a reputation and, you know, raised the kids, I mean all kinds of good and bad things, you know, with the kids as usual. And that's it. In 1989, I moved to New York Medical College where I am now a full professor and have my own lab, teach medical students, _____. That's it, my kids, you know as I said, Jeane Pierre is married, is business, he looks very happy and I really like his wife. And more than that, I think she likes me which is a rare occurrence because I, I know exactly what not to do. And I also know what to do. And Karin is in medical school and she's going to be, become an obstetrician. And Brian is sort of getting his master's, but he's a little bit in limbo as to what he wants to do with it. But, I'm sure he'll find a job. And so there I, there I am.

Q: _____.

A: Hmmm?

Q: Did you remember any more songs?

A: Songs? No, that one that I sang to you, I know it had to do with _____, but now I cannot remember it, I simply can't. Funny because, you know, my mother died in January, she was 84 years old, she remembered those songs. She remembered the songs that I had sang to her coming back from that home.

Q: Do you ever have times when you kind of go back in your head and you wake up and you're another name, you're another nationality or another identity?

A: No. But, I don't feel any allegiance to any nationality. You know, we lived in Switzerland, we lived in the States, we lived in Canada, I went, in between my two jobs, I went to Israel for six months, did a sabbatical. Between Yale and this, and felt very much at home, so I think I'm really, truly multi-cultural and, but of a certain type of culture. I mean, I'm not, I don't think I would do very well in Africa, that's not me. But, in let's say, again you know, you could say I'm elitist, but among civilized peoples, or so-called civilized people, I manage extremely well. All over the world.

Q: Are there any images from the past that continue to trouble you?

A: Well, I have a picture, for instance, I have a picture of when I was in France in Exleba, sitting on my bed with my teeth falling out, you know, this really ugly duckling. And I'm, you know, I'm smiling and I'm saying to myself, "That's really not how I felt". You know, when I think back, it's not how I felt. And I have pictures of being this terrified little girl in the shelter at night, that comes back. You know, this unbelievably helpless kid that, that comes back frequently, and then anger comes up. That's why, as I said, when I read things about Israel and, I mean I just, I really lose it, I can't deal

with that very well at all. And something which, you know, is maybe anti-_____, if you wish, is that, I don't have a lot of sympathy for the, you know, the demands that the blacks make on us because I feel that I've had it so much worse, I feel absolutely no responsibility for their plight. Zero. And I'm personally, you know, touched when they say something about Jews. I mean, that just kills me. And I had a very, very liberal attitude when I first came to this country and I, among the graduate students, there was one black fellow and I was the only one who was friendly with him. You know, really friendly, I mean I, and I didn't even know that there was a problem. But, what I've heard in this country and the evolution of the black movement, you know, blaming the Jews and this has just turned me off completely. And the failure to take, you know, responsibility for their own lives, I think is really entirely their failure and I think I'm a prime example of why terrible things in childhood do not necessarily lead to, you know, becoming a criminal or a drug addict or anything, you know, so dysfunctional. I mean, I know that I was a dysfunctional child, for sure, I mean I was not normal, definitely wasn't normal. And I had real anger and real, I mean you know, they say these kids grow up with drive-by shootings and stuff, but who is shooting? Their own is shooting. I was terrified with bombs were falling and they were aimed in my country, towards me. And for reasons I couldn't understand at all. There was absolutely nothing that made, gave that any kind of logic, you know, I didn't look any different, I did very well at church, you know, I mean I could pass for one, it wasn't hard at all. And I knew, though, that if somebody found out, I would be dead. And so that was really, it was petrifying and I knew that I didn't function, you know, like a normal child should function. And, you know, I definitely didn't eat. I could go days without eating at all. And I didn't miss the food.

Q: Do you think of yourself as a survivor?

A: Oh, definitely. Definitely. Because, for instance, when I left Yale it wasn't all sweet, a new chairman came in and he essentially wanted to change the whole tenant of the department, and he gave me a really tough time, others as well. But the others were MD's and they were geographically mobile. And I had to go find a job and I was 50 years old at that time, and a woman scientist, again, not a great pedigree. I mean, I had a good pedigree in terms of, you know, I had proven myself. But still, and I managed to land one, you know, just by never giving up. I just never give up, I mean I don't give up. So I know I'm a survivor, for sure. I mean, absolutely. And you know, I live in luxury, but I went for six months to Israel on this sabbatical and I really lived in a dump and I was very happy. It just didn't matter. I don't have attachment to money, I mean, I spend a lot of money, but it's, I have it, I spend it, I don't have it, okay. You know, it doesn't mean anything. I have no attachment to Belgium, no, I mean everywhere I go, I feel at home.

Q: _____, sorry.

A: Some facet of me feels at home. You know, I go to France and they think I'm French. I go to Belgium and they think I'm Belgian. I'm here and people think I'm American. I mean, nobody ever thinks I'm not. I do have some accent, but I mean, I met a guy from Seattle and he heard me speak French and German and whatever, to a bunch of people, he said, "Jesus, you're really the only American I know who speaks that many languages". I said, "Well, I'm not American". Then _____. I said, "Don't you hear?" He said, "No, I thought you were from the East". Because there are so many different people in the States that you can't really identify and I speak well enough that you cannot say that this is not my native tongue. And so, I can pass everywhere. I'm transparent, you know. I mean, I'm a little bit like a chameleon in, at least, outwardly. I can sit with people and, in the Catholic environment, they talk about certain things and I know exactly what they're talking about. You know, I feel it, I know what it's like. And the same, I can be among extremely orthodox Jews, I mean I speak Yiddish very well and they have a certain way of putting things and I know exactly, and I know, I can respond in kind. See, I can just play the game, I can play any game you want me to play. So, I don't have a problem knowing who I am inside of me, as a person, but as far as the superficial stuff, it doesn't matter much. I think I'm a Jew, I mean that's really clear to me. But I can camouflage that under anything else that needs to be, you know, that's appropriate.

Q: What's your citizenship?

A: Well, it's still Belgian. For many reasons, one is, I don't feel any allegiance to this country at all, now this might land me in jail, but I don't care. And I never wanted to deal with bureaucracy, I cannot stand bureaucracy. The little that I had to do with the immigration service here has told me that I don't want to have anything further to do with them. Now I must tell you that, in truthfulness, I might actually become a citizen now because of only inheritance laws, that's the only reason. So I don't feel Belgian, I mean the Belgian passport is actually a European passport, so I like to hang on to that because it gives you free passage through Europe, it's much nicer than an American citizen's. And second of all, my mom lived there until, as I said, a few months ago and I used to go back several times a year to visit. And it was just so easy and I just fit right in, you know. And I didn't see the advantage of being American, I mean I, see this is where the immigrants that came before really fouled, you know, but I'm resentful to this country for actually wanting my father to die. So I have no respect, I think it's hypocritical, hypocritical, like no other place on earth. And really, really reactionary with putting in religion, pretending that it's separate, but then the Congress opens with prayers. I mean, I think the hypocrisy here is what gets me the most.

Q: Do you think you might move again?

A: I would move again, I don't think I'll move again during my working life, but I think I'll certainly move when, if I live long enough to retire, I'll move.

Q: To Europe?

A: Well, I'll tell you, see that's the thing, I would prefer to live in Israel than in Europe. I feel that there I'm at peace, in fact, I moved my mother's body there and moved my father's remains after 22 years to be next to her. This July, a month ago. So, to me, it's like the end of the road and I will be happy there in spite of all the difficulties. I'm very family oriented and socially, I'm very social. I love my friends, I really love to spend time with them. I don't have a lot of time to spend with them, but I love the whole idea. And in Israel, life is much more social than here. And my brother is there and his wife and his kids. Sylvan's brother is there, wife and kids. About 17 cousins, and I'm not exaggerating, there's at least that many and they're all much younger than I am, but I am very good friends with a few of them, really friends. The six months that I spent in Jerusalem on sabbatical, I made dear friends, really dear friends, so I get there and I'm home. Do you know, more almost, than here.

Q: Have you experienced anti-semitism as an adult?

A: Not directly. Not directly, but for instance, I remember when I got hired at Yale I asked a fellow I was working with whether he thought I looked Jewish and he said, "No, you don't look Jewish, but you look foreign".

Q: Have you told many people of your history?

A: No. Not at all. No one knows except, no one knows, no. Except a few people maybe in the hidden children group that I attended for a few times.

Q: But your close friends don't know?

A: They know bits and pieces, but not the whole story.

Q: Why?

A: I don't know that it's relevant. I mean, I don't think they can understand, basically.

Q: And your kids?

A: Well, my youngest son read that book and he knows that it wasn't me, but it was close enough.

Q: Renee.

A: Renee, right.

Q: But you've never told your kids?

A: No, not really, I haven't, well, I tried to tell my daughter, but she didn't want to hear it. I told you, she just didn't want to hear it. My kids know, they know there was something pretty terrible, because my oldest son is definitely, he's completely anti-religious, I mean he, my daughter lives in Israel right now, she studies in Israel and she will go to synagogue, you know, she has her own, the way she does religion is very much her own thing. So she goes for various, but I don't know that she believes in God either, I mean I kind of don't think so. But she enjoys some of the traditions and some of the rituals, but she's extreme, extremely feminist, obviously. So she seeks out places where women get, you know, full participation. So she does that and she's definitely active, but I wouldn't say continuously. I mean, she'll have episodes or periods where she'll go and she'll go to pray on Sabbath and she'll eat kosher and then she'll just throw it to the wind. She'll come here and she'll order shrimp, you know, so it's clearly not totally settled, but I think she, she's very Jewish, I mean, she doesn't look Jewish either in the sense of, you know, the typical Jewish look, but she's very Jewish and she lives in Israel, I mean that's clearly...

Q: But you've not told her?

A: No, not really, not in detail, no.

Q: _____.

A: Hmmm?

Q: Is there anything I haven't asked you about that you want to say?

A: I don't know. I was just going to say, my youngest, my oldest son, who is very, he's a closed person, he's not an open person, the other two are very communicative at least with me, they tell me everything. You know, they can call at three in the morning if something bothers them. We have an excellent relationship. My oldest son, it's a bit more distant. And when he was a, and he's the one who didn't go to Jewish school, I mean he, he dropped out essentially, I can't remember, his fourth or fifth grade. He was just totally rebellious, wouldn't do anything in school, so we just had to take him out. The two others went straight through, 12 years of Jewish school. And Brian...

Q: Bar mitzvahed and all that?

A: Yeah, that they did, but for instance, Brian lives in Boulder, I mean I don't think he's gone to synagogue in the three years he's there, you know, so it's not very strong identification. But when we were in Israel during one of our trips with the kids, we went to _____, which is the local Holocaust museum, and Jean Pierre, who was, he might have been eight or nine at the time, just became hysterical, totally,

totally hysterical. And I had absolutely no idea that he had any feelings for this. So, and we've really not talked a lot about that because he's hard to talk to. I think, I, my youngest, Brian knows and he just cries, you know, so, I can't really talk to him much, but he knows. Having read that book. I think Karin just doesn't want to know, I think she knows, but she doesn't want to talk about it. She doesn't want to talk about it. And that's that, basically.

Q: Okay, let's just say nothing for a minute while I just get the sound of this room.
[Pause] And room tone, end interview.

Conclusion of interview.