

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Michael Diamond**  
**March 30, 1999**  
**RG-50.549.02\*0039**

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Michael Diamond, conducted by Katie Davis on March 30, 1999 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Chantilly, Virginia and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

Interview with Michael Diamond  
March 30, 1999

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jeff and Toby Herr collection.

This is an interview with Michael Diamond, conducted by Katie Davis, on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1999, in the home of Michael Diamond, in Chantilly, Virginia. This is a follow up interview to a USHMM videotaped interview, conducted with Michael Diamond on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1990. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible. This is tape number one, side A. I -- I'd like to start and just get your exact birthdate.

Answer: I was -- I was born July 10, 1919. I will be 80 in July 10<sup>th</sup>.

Q: And can you tell us the full name of your mother and of your father?

A: My father was Anthony Diamond -- Diamant -- a -- a -- a-m-a-n-t. And my mother was Recka, R-e-c-k-a, Recka.

Q: And what was her maiden name?

A: Freed.

Q: And, do you know the names of your grandparents?

A: Not really, no. They died in World War One, my grandparents. But, my parents died in -- in Auschwitz, in the gas chambers.

Q: How did you find that out?

A: I didn't have to, I knew it right away, because they were taken already that time, in big ma-masses, to -- to Auschwitz, especially the older people, are going right away and the younger people were partly in -- in army camp, with the Slovak army, or -- or just hiding when -- on -- in the partisans, you know, the Russian underground.

Q: But was there ever a point when someone said to you, I saw your parents on a transport to Auschwitz, or I saw your parents in the camp?

A: No, no, no, not at all, but I knew, because of their age. And they are beautiful people, tha -- that's -- it was a big disappointment when I heard about them. It happened very suddenly. They just came at night and they took them out from bed and s -- loaded them up on trucks and I never saw them any more.

Q: Where, exactly, were your parents when they came, and who exactly came?

A: The -- The Slovak and the Germans. The Slovak police, the local police, under the control of the German military, or SS, whatever you want to call it. They came, but I was hiding.

Q: And where were your parents when they came?

A: Home, in the ghetto. We were that time already in the ghetto, and every night there were transports going. On the beginning we didn't know what it -- where we going and what will happen, but then it came out, slowly seeped through that they go, actually, to Auschwitz.

A: Now, in your first interview, you mentioned several times that you were in hiding. Do you know where you were in hiding at that point? Were you in the underground in the woods, or were you in that reservoir?

A: I was -- Yeah, that was just for a shol -- short while, in the reservoirs we were hiding. Then the -- a few weeks we were hiding in a small workshop, at a building place. And then I was in a -- in a house, private house, where the -- the woman made out of it, a little hotel, like a little inn, with food and everything. She knew that -- who we are. She -- She knew that we were Jews. She was from -- from Morava, it's a part of Czechoslovakia. Very decent old woman. She knew who we are, but she said, "I have papers that they are not Jews." We were on false papers, and we were hiding there, but not too long. They caught us there.

Q: Where was your sister -- well, first of all, please tell us your sister's name.

A: Frederica Diamant.

Q: And at that point -- well, where was your sister? Was she living with your parents in the ghetto?

A: No, no. My sister left in '39, for a -- for a -- for England. You know, as a -- as a domestic. That was the only way how -- how girls could disappear. And she was during the whole war there, during the blitz. And came back the first commercial airliner, she came back and took me to her -- with her to Prague. She came to Bratislava where we live and then she took us -- she took me to Prague with her, and we lived for five years in Prague.

Q: What -- Why -- Can you tell me a little bit about the decision of your parents to send your sister to England?

A: There was a young man who wanted to marry her, and he said if she comes to England, he will marry her. But she came to England and he didn't marry her. So, it was a big disappointment. He was a very good looking engineer and from a good house, but he changed very much, he was very selfish and he married then, much, much later, my cousin.

Q: So it wasn't -- Was there any thought about the trip, that it could prevent your sister from being caught up in the -- in the -- the war, in any way?

A: Nothing. No, no. She would have stayed, who knows what would have happened? The same as with all the others. One -- One young girl, a cousin, was -- was taken with her mother, and they never came back. My grandmother didn't never came back. My relatives, about 55 relatives with children, they never came back, not at all. And it was very hard. Then, I can start you to tell from -- from the concentration camps, when we got freed.

Q: Let's begin there, when you are -- I want to move into the post-war period. These are the last days or weeks of the war, and if you can remember the last concentration camp you were in, and what the Germans told you when you had to leave.

A: We were in the -- in the last concentration camp was Ber-Bergen-Belsen was the last one. It was a -- a nice, clean camp, but we didn't like it, because you didn't get food there. And then, when it came to get free, they make -- they made up appelles and told us

to -- to march in five rows, out from the camp. We saw that th-the Russians were ni -- near already, because we saw at night the flares, the red flares all over in the -- in the -- in the -- far. But still they w -- are far -- they were far enough that we couldn't be free right away. But then the Germans commanded us to go out of the camp, but before we went out from the camp, they took us to a le -- a warehouse where they had s -- piles of -- of -- of Care packages -- American ca -- packages, which they never gave us, they thr -- were meant for us and they never gave us these packages. But then they told us everyone has to take two packages on his back and marching out. So we're marching and marching and marching. We didn't know where we are going, we didn't know nothing, they didn't tell us. And then they stopped near a river, at lu -- at noon time and we were so thirsty and hungry that we run to the river and drank the water and th -- and the food from the packages. That was a big mistake, because we got all very sick. Very sick. And, well the rule was always, when we were marching, that the SS was in the back, and you know, who couldn't march, was shot. But we were there in this -- this river, near a village, and the Wehrmacht, the regular army came there, they heard that we have packages, Care packages, that we should give them cigarettes.

Q: The Wehrmacht is the regular German army?

A: The regular, yeah, yeah.

Q: The German army?

A: Right, not the SS.

Q: Right.

A: But the SS was wa -- was watching us and they were with us there and it was always their rule, who couldn't march will be shot dead. And me too, my feet were worn out from the marching. I had wooden soles and the top was -- was reenand [indecipherable]. And I was all bloody, my feet. But I had to march, otherwise they would have shot me dead. So the only rest was at this river. But from that water what I drank from the river, and -- and the food [indecipherable], I -- I was so sick that I couldn't get up any more. When they said, "March, march," the SS, I couldn't get up. No, I was counting really, that I will be dead soon. But, the last moment came this -- these Wehrmacht people with their carriage -- with a horse driven carriage and said to the SS, "No more shooting. This is the end of the war, there is no more shooting for you. You get lost." So they got lost. They marched everybody who could march, marched, Who not, stayed there. And they came, the Wehrmacht, with a -- with a -- a horse driven carriage, with tea and they gave everybody tea, who was there, the sick people. And then they told us they will arrange something with the village people, they should hide us or something. And we didn't believe it, but it was so. They took us to the village, on these horse driven carriage -- horse driven carriage and the -- they demanded we should give them soap, the peasants. And they put us in a pig pen overnight and then every morning we had to give them a piece of soap, as long as we had it. But then, when we ran out of soap, they told us, "Don't worry, don't worry, we will arrange something for you." What will be the arrangement? They are going, transports like ours, marching from other camps and on one, they were carrying these little carriages, the prisoners, they were the -- the -- all the



packages and everything, what they took with themselves, the kapos and the SS, they were pulling it. And this -- these peasants were so [indecipherable] that they told -- arranged really, to put me as a sick man on the carriage, that they will pull me, and I will give them only cigarettes. So they were pulling me, pulling me, I was very, very sick, sitting on -- on that pile of -- of -- of packages and every time they ask me, "Can I have a cigarette, can I have a cigarette?" So I gave them always some cigarettes, as long as I had them. I remember it was Chesterfields and -- and Lucky Strikes and -- and they were crazy about it. That was like -- like money. And then, suddenly I was so sick that I lost my consciousness. And I think so I was in a coma. And when I woke up, I was lying in a ditch near the -- near the road. And I felt very bad, I could not -- I couldn't get up. So I was lying there and lying there and I had all kind of visions. [indecipherable] with I am dying and I see a tunnel, a white tunnel and on the end is -- is very white light and I will get to that tunnel, to the end of the tunnel, I will be gone. So I kept back and I didn't let myself go and waited. So, just to get out from this ditch, I -- they were evacuating the Germans from all over, with peasants with carriages and so on, with horse driven carriages and I wanted to stop them, they should take me with -- with them. No, nothing. Then on the end everything trickled out already, no more refugees there, because the Russians were -- were far -- a few kilometers away, just. So, I said, "I will try something." I picked myself up and ran on this -- the road and [indecipherable] the horse at the [indecipherable]. And they were crying, the Germans. A old cappel said, "I cannot take you with me, the -- the horse will not take us." I says, "You have to take me to that -- at least to the next

village. I don't want to die here in this -- in this ditch." So, they agreed and I was sitting in the back and they took me really to the next village. The next village on the road, on the main road, there was the SS just digging out, and -- and the prisoners like me, they're just looking around beca -- SS and everybody. So, then I saw that they are -- they were starting to run, the -- the Germans, yeah. Th-The SS. And they left us there.

Q: At what moment did you begin to realize that you were free?

A: That moment already, that -- that's why I was lying there in the -- in the ditch, I knew. But I was so, so weak, that I -- I didn't want to believe it, you know? That it can happen. There, at the -- at the roads -- the SS run away and left us there, and mostly -- there was a big, old restaurant, a inn. Very old one, at the road. And everybody around into that -- into that restaurant and the women from concentration camps already, they were cooking themselves there, on a big, big stove, yeah, a -- a wooden stove. And I was very cold, I sit down to this -- to the stove and wan-wanted to warm me up a little bit at the stove. And a woman said to the other woman, "Give this old man a little warm soup." I was 22 - 23, you know? So, I got the soup, it was very good, it warmed me up a little bit and they -- they took me to -- to the big ballroom, where the ballroom was like a hospital, where all around, th-the edges around the whole ballroom was straw, and on the straw, people are lying there. Who can walk, walked, who couldn't walk, died there. It was terrible. And so the women came there, they saw me sick, they brought me soup and then we see [indecipherable]. Then, after awhile, they heard th-the bombing, the Russians. So they run away further, yeah? After the -- the SS, they run. Wherever they could run, they were

running. And I was there, sick, and I couldn't move. And I -- I heard all of these Russians were very close. They were bombing already. And I knew if I stay in that restaurant there, it was right on the road, that will not be good. They will demolish that. So, I picked myself up, on m-my four, and crawled about 150 feet or so, deeper into the village. And th-there was a peasant place and they were not there, the peasants, it was empty. I went into a room, I saw a big bed, with a big down cover. I lied down into the bed, covered my-myself completely over my head with that big down, and forget about everything. I was in a coma, right away. I don't know how long I was lying there. And -- But suddenly, I hear somebody's in the room. And I look up, I see the -- the ceiling was on my bed, yeah, and an old woman was crawling around there. And when she saw me, she got scared and ran. I told her that, "You don't have to run." I knew she was German, yeah, and a peasant. I told her, "You don't have to run. I am a sick man, I can't even move." "Oh, I didn't know. I am sorry, I am sorry. I will -- I will give you food, I will give you everything. Just leave me alone, yeah?" I said to her, "All right, I -- I am not doing you nothing." "I will c-cure you," she said. I'll -- I tell you something, she did. She did. She gave me certain things to eat what really started to bring me to my feet. But, it was a long time until I really got to my feet. And in st -- meantime, the rations came in and I was again in a coma, covered up, and suddenly he pulls -- a Russian soldier pulls the cover from me and holds the -- the carashneeko on me. So, I said to him, "What do you want from me? I am a -- I am a old man, a sick one." And he looks at me. "Where are you, where are you? How -- What are you? Who are you?" I said, "I am from -- from the camp

out, I am from Czechoslovakia.” “Oh, we are old friends, we are good friends, Czechoslovakia with Russia, yeah?” So, he leave -- he left me alone, luckily. What that happens -- Every day happens something else with the Russians. For instance, a officer took a room next me and he told me -- he brought one -- one night, a whole bunch of bottles with wine -- wine bottles, and told me, “You don’t let nobody in. If a soldier comes, tell him the officer said nobody can come into his room.” But, I was just a sick man, I couldn’t just give him the message, whoever came, right? Then, right away, a plain soldier came, half drunk already and -- and went into his room. I yell at him, “Don’t go there, th-the officer says nobody is supposed to go there.” “Oh, you will tell a Russian soldier, yeah?” And went down and took all his bottle. And when the -- when the officer came home, saw what happened, yeah, he took out his [indecipherable] and put it here, to me, yeah. Said to him, “Look, what [indecipherable] what would I have done? I couldn’t stop him.” Yeah. But I think so he caught him. And I don’t know what he -- what happened then. For instance, one day they brought me a bicycle. Yeah, a good boy, a Czechslovak, yeah, yeah, you’re our friend. He brought me a bicycle. Next day he comes, “Can I borrow it?” Never saw it any more. Or, he brought me -- One brought me a movie projector, a very nice one. And one days they took, you know, everything and he wanted to -- I should show him how that works, but we had no electricity, so I couldn’t.

Q: Did you feel protected by the Russians, or apprehensive about them?

A: I was apprehensive, because -- because I didn’t know -- I couldn’t figure them out. For instance there was -- Then, it came out that in the -- during this -- this whole time, they

were hiding this German family. There were three women, young women and six children, little children. And when I saw this, I couldn't be bad to them, I couldn't -- I couldn't -- I could have gone to the German -- to the Russians and tell them, "Take them away. I want to live here, or so I want this for myself." I would have gotten it, because not just that, we -- later, a Russian officer came to me and asked me my profession and so on. And he sa -- he told me, "If you stay here, I will make you the director of the electric plant of this area." I told myself I don't know. I was very leery about that.

Q: Just a couple more clarifications. Do you remember the date, about, when this was happening? What time of year, the date? And also, where -- where were you, exactly?

A: I was -- The village, it was a little village called Wiperov. Should I spell it?

Q: Yes.

A: W-i-p-e-r-o-v. And that was the nearest big town. The hospital was in Rerbel. Was called -- Th-The -- The town was called Rerbel. And when I started with him to wa -- to talk, with this officer, he gave me a prescription to that hospital, they should check me out. And he said when the -- When they will check me out all right, he will put me as the director of the area hosp -- no, puwr -- power plant.

Q: S-So this is in Germany?

A: Yeah, that's was all in Germany.

Q: And do you remember when it was?

A: That was on the end of the war, '45 already, yeah. I think so, in Ma -- March or A-April, something like that. But I stayed about two -- two or three months more, because I

was too weak. But I got ra-rations from the Russians. And I could coo -- practically go to -- to them and -- and whatever food I wanted, I could confiscate it. They -- They met -- gave me certain papers, that I could do anything.

Q: And why -- Why were there -- Tell me a little bit more about the German family that these certain Russians were hiding. Were -- Were all Germans supposed to be rounded up at that point? I mean, wa -- who di -- who were they hiding them from?

A: From the soldier, from the plain soldiers, they were the most dangerous, because they had no -- no cur -- scruples to rape the women and everything. There was a wo-woman with me there, ya -- a young woman, very pretty, she had just a baby, and the Russian come and -- the [indecipherable] drunk Russian comes in at night and wants to rape her. I -- I tell him -- I spoke a little bit Slavic, so I told him, "What do you want from this lil -- from this woman? She is sick, she's just had a baby." "Oh, you don't tell a -- a Russian soldier what he [indecipherable]. We will come and we will hang you." You never argue with them. They came -- They came one day, as I say, "You are a co -- collaborating with the Germans." I said to him, "I am collaborating with the Germans?" I says, "You must arrive by accident, yeah?" So -- But they were really very nice to me. They knew everything and -- and the children were loving me. Uncle Franz. Uncle Franz, because I - - I was still going on my false papers. Now I was -- My papers were Frantisha Pleshko. Yeah, Franz Pleshko, and they called me Uncle Franz, Uncle Franz. They love me, because I brought them -- I went out and I brought candy or something, always something I brought them. And then, in the village, the -- the bakery was done -- was

with the Russians collaborating, and the -- they guy -- the head baker was a Slovak from my hometown and because of that, he gave me every day, two, three pieces of -- of fresh bread, which was there, like gold, that time. So I could buy anything and everything I wanted for food. And --

Q: What was that like, finally, to be able to eat enough food every day? There'd been years that you hadn't been able to.

A: There were -- They were, later, sure. But, for instance, there were two teenagers hiding in a -- in a attic, and what could I do? I wouldn't tell the Russians, yeah, that they are hiding there, so I supply them with food. Two young girls, Germans, yeah. So, naturally, if -- if -- if the Russians found out, they wou -- could have killed me. But I couldn't do otherwise. I -- We were always talking in the camps, "Oh, when we come out from the -- from the camp, we will kill all the Russians. Ah, that's just talking."

Q: [indecipherable] the Germans.

A: Yeah, the Germans, I mean. Sorry. That we will kill the -- the Germans. It doesn't work like that. You cannot do it, you -- it's not in you, yeah? So --

Q: Did that surprise you, that -- that you didn't want revenge, ri-right after liberation, that -- that these Germans actually were people to you?

A: No, it didn't, because, as I came out, I felt like a human being, and -- a sick human being. There was one nurse who helped me on my feet, too. And she was sick too. By accident, she came there, too. And then, there -- there came trucks and buses from Czechoslovakia. They were going through, they were picking up all the -- all the refugees

and that guy in -- in the bakery, yeah, the -- told me, "I will send you back with the next transport." I said, "Okay, sure. I want to go home." "You just tell my parents that I -- that you've met me, that I am here, I am all right." He had a pretty good life there, with the river Russians. With those, they -- they needed him, he was a -- a -- the most important man in the town. The baker, right? So, I -- One night, a bus came through, a repatriation bus from Prague. And he came running and told me I should -- I should go. I was always packed. So I run, said good-bye th-the famil --

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

A: -- and high boots, I -- I looked like a monster, you know, from another age, or something. No, then, the -- the -- the -- that super gave me a materads, I can sleep in a empty apartment, whats -- the materads we gave him before we left, an-and -- and apartment was my grandmother's apartment, yeah. Used to be.

Q: And it was empty?

A: Yeah. Empty, because the -- the so -- it wasn't too elegant, not elegant enough for the -- for the Slovaks, yeah? It came out -- well, I don't know if you know the history what -- how -- what happened with Czechoslovakia that time. Yeah, the Slovaks [indecipherable] their own president, their own autonomy. And the Czechs had their autonomy and Hitler was in between, yeah. The Slovak president was Kissel. He was the best -- He was a priest, a high priest, and he was best friends with Hitler, uh-huh. And, in Prague, there was -- there were the [indecipherable] the president was Gotowards. So, the whole thing



was mixed up. Besides, I had already after me, the military, working camps and everything. But that make me just stronger, because we had there food. That was in the -- that way, but we had to work very hard, then we got food there. But, yeah, when I came to Bratislava, I want to just -- to go further. He gave me something to eat, the -- the super --

Q: This is the superintendent of your building?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Gave me something to eat. My favorite, favorite food. I don't know how he even knew. It was noodles with -- with walnuts -- crushed walnuts and -- and su-sugar. I was crazy for sugar. That -- I don't know, that's something had to do with -- with my system. I was crazy everything was sw -- wa-was sweet. But, that was not the main point, just saying that was my first night called home, but it wasn't home. Then I went to --

Q: But -- But it wasn't home?

A: It wasn't home, just for a -- for a night. For a night there. They told me -- the superintendent tells me, "You have to look for your -- for your family. They may be here, I heard that they are here." Huh? So, where can I go? I went to the Jewish dis -- no, to the Jewish bureau where they had the names and -- and listed everybody who came home. So, I found out that two of my cousins, girls, are here and the -- their address. So, I came to them, they were happy to see me, and I knew that their father was killed by the Germans. I didn't want to tell them. I just said I didn't know where they are, what wa -- I

know, because it happened in -- in my camp, in -- in -- yeah. And one of my -- my good friends from Bratislava, he was with them, so he told me that. But he was luckily -- he survived. Lucky.

Q: So -- So you consciously decided, I don't think I will tell them this right now, the cousins?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: You decided -- You didn't tell them what happened, you decided that it -- it wouldn't be good idea right then?

A: Right, right. I didn't want to take nobody who I knew that they are -- wa -- were killed. I didn't want to tell nobody, so maybe they had some hopes, at least for awhile, they had some hopes. I knew my parents will never come back. But then, I got a letter from my sister there. She was in London still, and she had a very good job. She was the secretary of the UNRRA.

Q: The United Nations --

A: Right. Relief.

Q: Relief, mm-hm.

A: Yeah. In London. And she came with him, home to Prague. H-He was very well-to-do. He was a -- He had a publishing company in Prague, but --

Q: She worked for a British UNRRA official, or a Czech --

A: No, no, Czech.

Q: -- UNRRA official?

A: Czech.

Q: Okay.

A: And she worked for him, and in Prague, or -- or anywhere, was very hard to get a apartment. He got her a apartment and she could take me in. So I was in Prague for awhile.

Q: Was it difficult to leave Bratislava? Did -- Did you want to stay there, since that was home?

A: It was home, and it wasn't any more, home, because my parents were not there, nobody was there. Eight -- 80 -- no, 55 relatives were gone. My grandmother -- We had a beautiful, big family there, with children and everything. That's all gone. My favorite cousin is gone, yeah? A beautiful girl, and -- and my only wa -- my own cousin was left, he was in the British navy. He got out in '39, too. He got to Israel with a Yugen allia. I don't know how you know -- how you say that. Young people allia.

Q: They go -- They make a choice to go to Israel, is that it?

A: No, no, no, they didn't give them a choice, but they -- they just made it before it got --

Q: Okay.

A: -- closed up. So, he was a young boy, 16, when he left home, in a kibbutz. And when - - when my sister came to Bratislava, I didn't recognize her. She was beautiful. She was like a real English lady, dressed up good. What I didn't see for a long time, yeah. And she took me with her to Prague, in her apartment and I lived in Prague. I found a job as a electrician and a maintenance man in a big department store. And, it was all right, but I

was still sick, and weak. So one of my -- my -- my relatives, had a farm in Slovakia, not far from Bratislava. She took me in and [indecipherable] you have to cure yourself, first. You have to be healthy. I think so -- She has two daughters, I think so she had -- she told [indecipherable] match. But it -- She was very nice -- very nice people and the best food you can imagine, for sick people. [indecipherable] Yeah, country food.

Q: Before we go on, I just want to take you back for a minute. Can you remember -- Tell us a little bit about what that meeting was like with your sister, for the first time in so long?

A: Well, it was crying, it was more crying than anything else. My sister was -- was thinking all the time she was in London, about her family. She had a big crate with -- with all the saved up materials for -- for suits, for wa -- her father, for me, for -- for the mother, for everybody, she had all kinds of save ups, and the whole sewing machine, and for me, a bicycle, and -- and things like that. Nobody did that. She was so for her family. She lived only for the family. And what -- She was pretty much alone in Prague, so that's why she took me there. And I found a job, but not for long. My cousin from -- came from Israel. He was in the British navy during the war, and he came and demanded from the Slovak government, his -- his sl -- father's store, yeah. Th -- Because they were all -- all in -- in Slovak hands, and when the Jews came back, this -- whoever came back, had to give -- they had to give back that store. So, we had the -- Then my cousins couldn't stay there and take over the store, so he -- he gave me the full -- this --

Q: Control?

A: Yeah, the fi-fi -- the full fla -- freedom to do whatever is necessary for the store and be th-the storekeeper. It was a very beautiful store. It was a wholesale electr -- electronic and electric, and we had about 15 employees. So it was a quiet, nice thing. And it was in the same house what belongs to my cousin. It was the -- the -- the -- built for it. So I -- I had a idea about these line, so I took over. And they wouldn't have given that -- that -- nobody, only me, because they liked me. Just me, I don't know why. They told me, "You cousin, we will not l -- l -- give back this store, only to you." I had a idea why, because it was too soft, probably, o-on them. So, I had a pretty good time that -- from that on, because I had a very good salary, and every two weeks I was traveling to Prague, and contacts with -- with -- with big companies. I bought materials, and -- and -- and radios and all -- all kind of things. So, it came very goo -- very good. I had pre-war contacts and I had a pre-war -- after the war contract with -- with the Czechs, with -- in certain factories.

Q: Here's a question. What was the atmosphere like for y -- for a Jew? Had things calmed back down? And what -- what were relations like with the Slovaks, who had helped the Germans?

A: Ha, ha. They didn't like it at all. They didn't like the Jews at all, because they were afraid that the Jew take everything back, what they had, because they stole anything and everything during the war. They had furnitures, they have paintings, they have all what -- what the Jews had, they are -- they were hiding. So, naturally, they were very disappointed when the Jew came home. But, for the Jew, the most important was to get

back on their feet, yeah. So they didn't know that. So when I came, for instance, to the -- to the store the first time, they were very apprehending, what the hell you call that.

Q: Apprehensive?

A: Yeah. Ver-Very much so, and one -- one of the girls, secretaries, said, "Hawahow -- Why did you come back? Why didn't you stay there?" Yeah? I says, "Next, you could go there." I told her, "Next, you should be there." Ah, well. We had fighting and fighting and on the end, she fall in love with a Jew, yeah. And my secretary fall in love with me, yeah. I was -- What happens, these girls were -- were all engaged to doctors, and all -- all kind of things, in other towns. And they didn't go -- because of us, they didn't want to get married, because they had a pretty good life with us, yeah. I had plenty money, I could -- I could take them out to restaurants, [indecipherable] so -- so you have company, always.

Q: Were you ever afraid? Were you ever afraid again, the way you had been during the war, that -- that something bad could happen to you, simply because you were Jewish?

A: No, no. I wasn't afraid. They just didn't like us, and if they could have killed us, maybe they would have killed us, too. But, no, we were home there. We made a life. We were born there, we were home there. These -- These bastards, they didn't even --even a pension. Nothing in a pension. I worked for years there and I -- not even a pension, nothing, nothing, nothing.

Q: Who didn't give you a pension?

A: No.

Q: Who?

A: The Slovaks, Slovaks. I went there to school. My parents were living there for -- for -- for centuries, yeah. And -- And no reparation, any kind, from the Slovaks. I heard that some -- some got now pension, 30 dollars a wee -- a month or so. I didn't even -- even ask for it.

Q: At this point, as you're beginning to get back on your feet, are -- are you ever thinking about the camps, or things that you saw? Are you watching for -- listening, for instance, to the Nuremberg Trials?

A: Oh sure, sure. We knew -- We knew everything. We were very -- very good informed, always. Even during the war, we were -- we were watching that NBC, or what was that, yeah, London.

Q: BBC.

A: And, we were listening. Every night. I remember even when we were to -- to -- taken already to the ghetto, we were listening in the coal bu-bunker of the store. We had a little radio and so we -- so we knew what's going on, but we were just praying they should bomb them out good. And then they bombed at us, later, but a little bit too late. But, in meantime, after the war, we started to -- I started to have a pretty good life. I was a -- the busine -- business manager there and I made trip [indecipherable] to my sister in Prague and -- and bought materials and that wa -- that time was the Black Market, I could sell very good, I could bring food. If I got -- If I brought food from Slovakia, which was easy, they had everything, I got a radi -- a few radios for it. And bartering, all kinds of bartering was going on. But then, afterwards, when I lived in Bratislava, slowly, all the

young boys and girls came together. Because mostly we don't -- we didn't have any more parents, and not even relatives, mostly. So we started to do our own life. Well, everybody was working, everybody was doing something and most of them have pretty good jobs, because they were experts, very good experts. I -- I had a very good friend, he was in the store, a electronic engineer, a -- a genius, yeah. So, we had a good life. We went from one restaurant to the other, because where else can we go, right? And then, we got a couple of girls together too, so we were a nice company always. Every night you have -- you going somewhere every night. We went to the -- together for dinners and one day si -- two of -- of these girls were our secretaries th -- later. The -- The other girls, right, the first ones what I was tal -- talking about, they went back and married the doctors. Smart. I remember my -- my girlfriend that time, she went to -- to the -- to that Tatra mountains, there was sanitoriums, and yeah, and she married a very well-to-do doctor. And the other one, who was very good with my cousin, and my cousin came home, she married there, too, a dentist, I think. So my -- my cousin wanted to marry, but he picked the wrong girl. I told him not to marry that girl, because she was twice or three times married. And I told him, "You don't need that." Yeah. So, he listened to me that time, [indecipherable] he made other mistake. So, we were there, living pretty good, going out a lot and I met my wife, yeah. She was from the same town as most of these girls, these secretaries, and I liked her right away.

Q: What was her name?

A: What? What was?



Q: What was her name?

A: It was -- It was Vas, V-a-s. Ilsa. She was young and pretty and I wanted to marry, because I saw what's going on in the -- in the -- the country, everything turns Communist. So, instead -- instead of Fascists, we had Communists. So what's -- what's the difference? I saw what's coming, what's going. I wanted to get out. So everybody tried to get out, but not everybody could make it. So, a lot of people -- a lot of friends went to Australia. Few friends went to Canada. And my wife wanted to go, before she met me, she wanted to go to America, she had here a aunt. And -- But the -- the aunt, that time, you had to had a affidavit. You had to have some money to let you in, and that we didn't have, so -- no dollars. So, but she found a doctor from the same town what my wife live, but he lived in America and had already a practice, so he got affidavit for them -- for my wife. But, until we got that -- until she got it, wel -- that time, I wasn't married yet, until s-she got it, they didn't -- it was closed, the -- the Czech border was closed. No -- No possibility for nobody to get out. So, she married me, and I told her -- sh -- she says she will marry me if -- if I go out. I says I wanted to go out, because even illegally, I would have gone out, that -- that time with the Hagannah, to Israel, because that was the only place where I could go without -- without any -- any papers. So, she [indecipherable] and we will go to -- to Israel. But my sister and her mother, who lived in -- in -- in Lucheness, that [indecipherable] town, didn't want we should go in the war to Israel. That was in '48. We shouldn't go to -- to there. So, we should wait at least a year til -- til the war will be finished. So we both -- my sister took us in, we married and my

sister took us into her apartment and we lived there a year together, until we went to Israel.

Q: At this point then, did you leave the s -- the store, your cousin's store?

A: Yeah, because the Communists took it over.

Q: Oh.

A: The Communists took over the stores, all the stores, and they wanted to make me a manager of the store, but I didn't want it any more. I didn't want to, I knew that will not last there. But then, for one year, they took out -- they took the store, the Communists and because I didn't want to, I had to leave the store, yeah. So, I went to Prague and through my old connections, I found a factory and I was working -- I got the job there, from a old director was there, I -- I got a pretty good job as a -- as a designer -- mechanical designer. And the wa -- the -- that was -- the plant was already under the [indecipherable]. The head -- head honcho was -- was a old Fascist. [indecipherable] Fascist, he was a Communist. He was a -- the commissar, yeah.

Q: What -- What made you feel that you didn't -- you no longer had a future in your country?

A: Oh, when the Communists came in. I -- I see the wa -- I don't want to be again a Communist. And if you want to stay there, you have to be a Communist, because it came to me, right? I was there about a year and -- and they send out forms -- forms to fill out, I want to be in the party, I want to be a Communist and yeah, all kind of. And the -- this -- this other friends there, in the company, he knew -- they knew me, they said to me, "Why

do you want to be a Communist?" "We have to be it, because we have our families here and children, everything. But you don't need it, get out. Why don't you get out?" And then I -- I took applications and got out.

Q: T-Tell us more about that.

A: Illegally or legally to Israel. It was simple. I'll tell you, was simple. Yeah. Now, during the time when we were already planning to go to Israel, my wife was -- was trying to put together the papers. It wasn't easy. If you wanted to take -- Every item you wanted to take to Israel, you had to have a -- a paper, [indecipherable] to -- to have it knowledged yeah, from the government. And all our money what we had -- what we could get together, we wanted to buy all kind of things what we could use in Israel. Like for instance, a work -- a workshop. I wanted [indecipherable] tools, things like that, that I will use, something to do in Israel. And that was going on for months. She was going every morning in -- standing in line, standing in line. And then her mother and -- and my sister, they were still there. Well, we said to them, her mother, that we will bring her out to Israel. My sister didn't want to go. She has a good job with the director. Even -- Even there, he was then -- then working for the government, I don't know what job, and she still was his secretary. And, he had a wife who was a -- a publisher. They were -- were very rich people, even after the war. Had a beautiful apartment and everything, but he found them a very good apartment for -- that -- I used that apartment sometime, I was a bachelor, I had -- from here, a apartment. He -- He was take caring, you know, was a take care for -- for all these apartments where -- where the Nazis were go -- where they were

collaborating with the Nazis, other people. For instance, there -- there was a -- a countess who was collaborating with the Germans and they put her in jail after the war. And he was in charge of this -- of this apartment. He let me one use, and that was the countess. Geez, I had a terrific time, and a beautiful ho-house, beautiful house, a -- where the consulates were, all the consulates were there. And we had parties there with all my friends, and food. We had friends who -- who had friends in the -- in the -- in the country, yet, so they had food and everything. So we had a pretty good time in Prague, too. But, as I say, that was already later, and my wife was already married with me, that -- that was already gone. But she was trying to get the papers. And we got together a crate, a big crate of very important things --

End of Tape One, Side B

### Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: Okay. This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Michael Diamond. This is tape number two, side A.

A: Yeah. So we got together a big crate of very important tools, and the -- that was sent ahead to Israel. And then a few bags of -- of o -- o -- of other important things, what we can take with us on the way. So, there was a big transport to Israel. We tried to get on it, it was one of the last real transports to Israel. The tr -- We were going to the border with a special train and then down to Naple, and -- and a ship to Israel. On the border, on the Czechoslovak border, we had to stop with the train and there was a finance control, everybody, all the papers, everything. When we were standing there, the -- there c -- there came a finance policeman and asked the papers from us, what we are taking, if we have the -- the okay for it. So, showed him the papers, he looked at me and he said, "You have here things what is -- you cannot take to Israel." I said, "I have the papers for it." Yeah, because those were new things, new -- new tools. Yeah, it was new tools, but I had the papers on it. Spent a lot of money for that. He -- He didn't say nothing, he just turned, puts -- puts the -- the paper in his -- his pocket in his uniform and -- and left. He didn't say nothing, but we were standing there, the whole train was standing there, yeah, and -- and everybody was checked out. And then -- then suddenly they call me down to the -- to the station that, "How come you -- you have this and this materials taking with you? That's not legal." I said, "I have the papers, and I wouldn't have bought it if I wouldn't have known that that's not legal. Everything is legal if they let you -- let you use it." So,

“Y-You cannot go nowhere.” The whole str -- The whole train had to s-stay there and wait. I don’t know for what we was waiting. Finally, I got the idea. I said, “Oh, I remember, that fa -- that finance, that policeman, he puts these -- these papers into my -- into his pocket, and he left, he didn’t tell me nothing.” And said, “He’s not here, he’s not here,” they said. I said, “Where does he live?” “In the village.” I said, “Can I go to the village and find him and -- and ask fo -- for these papers?” “Okay.” But I had to pay him, yeah. So I went, in the [indecipherable] I found him and -- and a -- we were standing there about two hours, the whole train, waiting just for me. Can you imagine that? And Ilisa, my wife, was on the train and she was shaking, yeah, over what will happen. She didn’t see me, she didn’t know what happened to me for two hours there. Now, that finally we got through that, we did after -- after that, and we are going down to Italy.

Q: Did the guy give you the paper?

A: Yeah, yeah. We found the paper. We found. I -- It cost money, too. Everywhere we went to -- to -- to shmeat. And we are going through Vienna. In Vienna we were already thinking, now it doesn’t look so -- so well. Too many people, too much travel. Maybe it would be better to stay in Vienna and they should put us in a -- in a camp, you know, for refugees, refugee camp. But, Ilisa was afraid, Ilisa was so afraid from camps. She has Auschwitz behind, yeah. So, she was 16 years al -- old when she was taken from Auschwit -- from -- from her town to Auschwitz, yeah. And I didn’t want to stay then there. Besides, the crate with -- with our all possession was going already, yeah, with us. So, we stayed on the train, we stopped in Florence, we s -- yeah. And we were -- we still

could have gotten out, but the Italian didn't want to let us out. It was closed, the whole train was closed. Finally, after I don't know how many days we were on that train [indecipherable] already, we s -- we were going to Naples, we were going the ship to Israel. Oh, we go -- the train was going into the port, right almost to the -- to the ship, but when we came there, we saw far, a big -- this cruise ship, a big one, a beautiful cruise ship. Ah, we were glad, ah, we will go with this cruise ship, we will go to Israel. Suddenly they tell -- tell us, everybody out, [indecipherable] down -- were stairs down. "What? Where are we going?" It was standing there, a tiny, little ship, a tiny little boat, it used to be a yacht for 16 people and -- a steamboat, a old steamboat, you know? A yacht. And we were 250. 250. When we saw that, we were really scared stiff, all of us. In this we will go on the -- on the big ocean? We were afraid, na -- but we are there already, we couldn't turn back. Nothing was -- could any more be done. So, we couldn't find a place where to sit down on that ship. There was nothing where you could -- could wash yourself. Toilets were fi -- overflowed. There was just one, big room downstairs, like a -- like a student room, with bunks. But nobody could stand it down, there was no air, there was the toilets overflowed. I couldn't stay there, no. I said, "Let's get up, back. We will be outdoors on the ship, wherever we can." And what we did, we found a boat, you know, a -- a rescue boat, and we made there our apartment. That was our apartment. We are one year married, one year married. So -- But we had good friends there still. We're -- We're -- We're far now from everything, like young people, you know, we had fun. And we had food with us, so it wasn't bad, because the food, the general food in Israel was

terrible. That's -- That's the national food is -- is lebadia and sh -- and black o-olives, yeah. That's the national food. So, you have on the ship, going, I think so about five day or -- or seven days, we were supposed to go with the ship. Luckily, the weather was good. It was in July, July '49. So, on the ship we were with friends and -- and -- but the trouble was, we couldn't wash, we couldn't go to toilets and anything. So, luckily there -- there was a young man [indecipherable] who was a engineer, he was the ship's engineer. Very intelligent, German speaking, yeah, from Jewish parents, from Israel. He wa -- He had the technion, and he was a professional engineer, a ship's engineer. The captain was a very good looking young man, he was a Armenian, yeah. And Armenians don't have the best -- best reputations. So one day they -- they call us, we should come up to the captain, one -- one evening. Well, well, what does the captain want with us? So, we come up and he said to me, the captain, "You leave your wife here, and you just disappear, or if you don't want t-to -- to get lost, we will drop you overboard." Yeah, the captain said to me. So, they had a party there and they wa-wanted to -- Ilsa, not me, yeah. Not me, they wanted Ilsa there. Luckily, this German young man, the engineer, he was there too, and he saw what's going on. He said to me, "You just get out, you get out. Don't worry about Ilsa. I will arrange [indecipherable]." Oh, okay, I went out and he really, he -- he pushed her out, too. So, we -- we -- everything was all right. And he was so nice now that we gave him always something to eat, that engineer. Salamis, we had good stuff, good cheeses with us. So we gave him and he let us always to use his -- his cuvina. He had his own [indecipherable] there. So, washing [indecipherable] wash ourselves, I was there



always. He was very nice. Now, we come finally, after so many days, I don't know how many, I was sick, yeah. Because that [indecipherable], it was nothing. A old, Greek ship. A old, Greek ship, and something -- what was already in mothball, you know, where they throw out already. And we came to Haifa. Now, thank God we are in Haifa, yeah? Israel, Israel, Israel. People st -- they came out, they kissed the earth. I was very cautious about. I had too bad -- too many bad experiences. So, there came trucks, and everybody go on the trucks. Fill up the trucks, we have hand packages and -- and so on, and -- but the -- the main things were already there, you know, the crates. So, everybody was going on the trucks and they were going one after the other. As they were filled up, the other one, the next one. And I didn't want to go on these trucks, because I had a agreement with my cousin who -- who was a Israeli, yeah, who was there, that he will pick me up and he will arrange everything for us, now that we don't have to be in a camp or something like that. I wait, we wait, we wait til the last truck -- they didn't let us stay there any more [inaudible]. We go on the truck and we go. Where are we going? To a curranteen, to a camp. We were very upset, were very upset, especially Ilsa. "What? Again to a camp? We just came out wa -- from camps, and again to a camp?" "Nah," I said to her, "don't worry, it will be different. It's not -- that's a Jewish camp." Yeah, okay. So we were going, and on the way, on the street, on the main street in Haifa, my cousin is running after the truck, I see him. When we stopped at the red light, he came to us and said, "Don't worry about nothing. I will pick you up. I will pick you up from the camp." Okay. At least he knew I am there and he knew he was late. So, we came to Kiriat Eliaza. That's

a camp near Haifa, very close to Haifa, all -- outskirts of Haifa. That was a old army camp, the British, with a round roof -- a rounded up roof, with -- with a steel roof, you know, and the barracks, one after the other. Came there, and when we saw that, we were very upset. And that was good, because they put us into a regular barrack. Most of the people who were there longer, they were already in tents. And the heat baking on us, naturally. But somehow took it, because we had there friends, and we have together fun. We made fun from everything. It's just like in the army, in the army too, we were making fun from everything, from the saddest things. And so we stayed there about a few days and my cousin came and said he cannot take us out, yeah. Maybe for one night he can take us out. He took us out, he got some paper, he took us out from the camp and he took us to a restaurant. He wanted to show that in Israel, they have everything, yeah. Good restaurants and this and that, yeah. And entertainment, except I couldn't sleep in his apartment. We couldn't sleep in his apartment. His landlady said if he -- if we will sleep there, she will throw him out.

Q: Why?

A: I-In -- In Haifa.

Q: But why?

A: Because they ar-are afraid about -- that somebody who would -- who would confiscate their house, their apartment. It was very, very few apartments available, only -- only a lot of money.

Q: But why wouldn't the landlady want you to be there?

A: Because we are strangers. He -- He and me -- He -- That was his apartment, he paid for it, and a lot of money, but she -- he couldn't have friends or -- or relatives with him in that apartment. They were afraid we will confiscate it or something will happen, you know? So, one night we were there, illegally. The house -- The housekeeper didn't know. So I saw that that's -- this makes no sense, the whole thing, get me a job. [indecipherable] look for a job, I didn't hear nothing. Now, in the camp was -- around the camp was a fence, a wire fence. And people cut out their holes an-and everybody who was looking for a job went with the bus, yeah, through this hole out and with a bus to Haifa, to look for jobs, but there are no jobs. Finally my cousin comes up with a job for -- a three day job. Yeah, as a electronic engineer, yeah. Three days after that, the -- the -- the manufacturer, who -- who was that other foreman said that, "We cannot keep you here longer than three days, because the others, we have to give some work, too." Yeah, so they give them the work. And then I met a -- his place, he had electro -- a radio and -- and appliances, he had a store, a small one. And there was a friend from Bratislava and he said to me, "You want the apartment, I know about the apartment, what is out in the country, in Afula. It's called Mercavia, a village." It was a village there and a -- and a nice, big kibbutz there, Mercarvia. So, I said to my -- "I rather go out somewhere, but have a apartment," because if you stay longer in -- in the camp there, then they send you to a steady camp for unemployed people, somewhere in the -- in the -- in the Negev, or where, yeah, and -- in a tent, and you can stay there, as the guest of the government. So we didn't want that, so I said, "I'd rather go to a village and do whatever I can do, but be

free.” So, one day we picked ourselves up and went to the village and we had five da -- five pounds with us, that was all, that we paid out for the crate a-and they brought us the crate and my cousin gave -- borrowed me 30 pounds for the -- for a one year, I had the apartment. It was a old farmhouse, which belonged to a old Jewish woman, who lives on the Carmel, but for us that was good enough that village there. We had an apartment of -- consisting of s -- seven windows and two doors. A outhouse, was far out. Water was there, with showers and everything, was in the backyard, which was very dangerous, with -- full of -- with snakes, yeah, and then -- and wild f -- wild things, yeah. So we didn’t even go there. Then, the neighbors were very nice. Those were young people and they told Ilisa the ropes. She sh --She told them -- told Ilisa, th -- the wife, Dolly, I remember what -- how to do everything, yeah, in Israel.

Q: So she taught Ilisa her job?

A: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. We didn’t have money, we didn’t have a penny. But she arranged, for instance, a loan in the food store, in that [indecipherable], that we got whatever we -- we needed, yeah. And she -- they guaranteed it. So -- And Ilisa made her a few dresses, Ilisa is a seamstress, so she made few dresses for her.

Q: When you got to Israel, and as you began to get settled, how -- how were you received? Did people know that you were survivors of concentration camp? Did they ever ask you about it?

A: They were not much interested. Everybody wa -- has his own story and they were not much interested because most everybody was somewhere, yeah. Everybody had a story.

So, they were just interested thr -- to make a living. That was the most important, to make a living. And that was very hard in Israel. That's not finished yet, what I want to tell you.

Q: Okay.

A: So we -- we -- when I -- The only thing is, to look for a job. That -- That's the -- the basic, always. I couldn't get a job. Then, we have, for instance, delivered ice, because there were no refrigerators, that was too expensive, so we had a icebox. And -- And we got, every second day, delivered a piece of ice, because that's you need there, because it was too warm to keep the food. And the -- the -- the iceman was a Romanian, and I speak with him Hungarian, he spoke Hungarian. So I asked him if he knows a job for me. He said, yes, he heard they need a electrician in the hospital in Afula. And she said, well, it's four miles from where we were. "Oh, very good." So, I told it -- When we told it to Dolly, our neighbor, she said, "Oh, I know the director of that -- the hospital, the personnel department in the hospital. But, I give you some tips." She said -- She said to me, "You take Is-Ilsa with you, first of all." But she didn't say why, what. We were so naïve that time, ah, terribly. And [indecipherable] she says, "When you go there, look for a job, take Ilsa with you." That's all. So I -- We were going one morning to that hospital, and came to a man, we were talking. He said, "Oh, I have a job for you." "All right." And he said, "And I have a job for Ilsa too. Ilsa can sew here dresses for -- for the -- for the nurses." "Oh, okay, very fine." And really, we did that, yeah. I was electrician. I -- It was a very hard job because I cou -- they -- I had to be there in emergencies and at night and any time of the day and -- and -- and any time. So -- And Ilsa was working for the nurses.

And then he had a wife, who wanted dresses, too, [indecipherable] but they -- he wanted first of all, we should stay there as steady, we should live in the camp -- in the -- in the dormitories, you know?

Q: Of the hospital?

A: Yeah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: We should stay there. I would, but Dolly -- Dolly told us he is the biggest skirt chaser in the world, that man. He wa -- Don't trust him at all. So, [indecipherable] was that. Now, when he saw that he cannot get us, then he just cha -- switched to a other man -- friend of his, gave him the job and I was out of job, yeah. Wa -- One way it was good, because it was a very hard job. I -- Wa -- The bicycle what I got in the crane, I had to use to go to work, over fields, open fields and they were full with hyenas, and they were running sometimes after me and I had to kick them in the -- and push them around. And they were very ugly anyways, because --

Q: Hyenas?

A: Yeah, hyenas. And -- Because that was a shortcut, I had to go there, near the -- near the garbage pail, you know, from the hospital. And they had there what to eat, so they were full with -- with hyenas there. So I had to really be careful how I got to the hospital. Every night, every -- every morning. It was terrible. So, finally, the job was over. I didn't have what to do. So, I -- I asked in the village if they have something to do for me. And there was a man from Czechoslovakia, a [indecipherable] man. I had [indecipherable]

him, he was a very nice man, very nice people, very noble people, I -- I heard about them. A-And he said, "I can give you only one job what I have. To -- To repair these machines on -- and so on, for -- for the farm -- the farm machines, to repair." I said, "All right, I will try. What can happen?" I tried. There wa -- The workshop was in -- in one of the silos, you know, the -- where they -- they put the corn and everything. The workshop was in one of the silos and there was full with rice. Full with rice, the whole -- the whole silo. And I had to work that time that I used to throw the -- the -- the tools into the -- into the rats. I -- I saw that will not last too long. But in meantime, I still worked it, and fixed up a old tractor, a very old tractor, who was already obsolete. I fixed it up and -- and they used it. So, they liked it very much and they right away they had other jobs for me. But I -- I said -- I saw that that's going to not work out. So I -- In meantime, I hads works -- I had work done in two fields. An apartment in Haifa and -- and to get out on my quota, to America. Because that's -- we did already in Czechoslovakia, we just didn't pursue it, because we -- it's -- there was no quota. When we came to Israel, right away, Israel. So what's going on? I wanted to try again. I went to the consulate in -- in Tel Aviv

[indecipherable]

Q: What do you mean, when you saw what was going on?

A: What -- What's a --

Q: You said, "When we got to Israel, and we saw what was going on."

A: Yeah, I mean, what's going on, there are sha -- ho -- hard life is in Israel, and -- and wa -- what's trouble you can have and no f -- no -- no jobs or nothing. We were not the

only one. A lot of people ca-came from all over and they didn't have jobs and the government stil -- wasn't prepared for that. So, it was -- it was very hard for everybody. So -- But I got, first of all, through a friend, I got a apartment from the government. It was one room, one -- one room, one bathroom and a little kitchen. So that was already terrific. It was in the Haifa Bay. It was from Haifa, about -- about one hour or so with the bus. And we had in Haifa my cousin there, and some other friends, so that was already ger -- big things, yeah. We got the apartment, finally, with a key. When I came home, you know, there was [indecipherable] heaven, I remember. Oh, and -- and -- and we came there to work. Again, we need some jobs. My sister had about hundred dollars in America, whi -- some friend owed her or something. So she wrote a letter that she would send it to me. About hundred dollars.

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is tape number two, side B.

A: So, we got the apartment, bu-but we didn't have the jobs again. So, my do -- my sister had in America, somebody who was sending us hundred dollars, and for that, I had a idea what to do, to produce s-some children's bicycles. I -- I like the --that to do and I had for that the skills and the tools. So, I started to manufacture them, but it didn't work out, because there were other companies, there were too many for a little job. The people didn't have the ta -- money to buy a bicycle for a kid. So, it didn't work out. Ilsa was in meantime working already like a seamstress, because in these places, there were no



ready-made things, clothing, only khakis, yeah. O-Or -- Or you have a seamstress to do it, from material. So Ilsa was pretty handy, she really kept us going, and I found a friend who was just leaving for Australia. He had it. He was there a longer time and he -- he -- he didn't want to stay in Israel. So, then I got in company with him. He had tools and he knew how to work mechanical. He was a -- He was a locksmith and he knew a lot of technical things. So we made a company to make steel windows, to produce steel windows. We did that for awhile, but again, bad luck, because they g -- the materials were very, very expensive, and there was only with governments, these -- only the government could -- could give you materials. So, we were too small to get materials from the -- from the manu -- fr-from the government, so you couldn't get material otherwise, so we had to drop it. He went to Australia, and I stayed there, again [indecipherable] a job, but I was looking to work at my cousin's there. He had this store there and once in while, to help him out. So, then, what happened? After that, I got always from Ilsa, the -- the information that's -- that going to America will be a possibility, but we have to work a lot on this. And I couldn't, because I had to look for a job, to make a living. Finally I found a old friend from Bratislava, who is leaving for Australia, and he said to me, "I can give you my job." "What job?" "I am working in the - in the electric plant in Haifa, in the head office, I -- I -- as a designer, mechanical designer. Can you do it?" I said, "Sure, I can." Came in, was a beautiful, big office. The - When they heard that I can speak German, their -- their -- their chief doctor -- engineer, was a German Jew, right away he took me, just because I spoke German and because I

knew the -- the work, too. So I got a job for six years. Good benefits, everything. It was a normal job, yeah. And I -- I -- A lot of privileges, very good, very good job. But that time already we have worked so far with the American exit, that we almost had already the -- the quota filled up, almost. But the papers were going up and down, up and down and one paper, on the end already, we had already everything done, they stopped us, because they found on my -- my -- no, wha -- the doctor found something with -- with my lung, something on my lung, just a spot. And that time, they were very exact about these things, so they se -- had to send it to Paris, my x-rays. All over, the whole body x-rays. And it was two or three months until I got back the papers, okay. We got okay, and we looked for the next ship, yeah, to go.

Q: A-At that point, you had a good job.

A: Yeah.

Q: W-Why did you still both want to go to the United States?

A: Because I rather would have gone to United States than to stay in America -- I mean, Israel.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I have a -- We had, first of all Ilsa. Ilsa beat everything, she wanted very badly to come to America. I didn't, because I had nobody here, only Ilsa. I didn't even dream to come to America, only Ilsa always dreamed to go. She wanted to go first here to school. She wanted to be here. She had very good -- Her mother is here, her sister, yeah. And the mother wanted to come here. Mother came to Israel with us, and her -- f-first of all, and

then, before -- she left sooner, so the mother was already here and -- and the aunt and e-  
everything. So they wanted us, we have to come out, we have to come out. So, came out.  
First of all, I was very disappointed because they always told me America is everything  
straight and good. And I saw that a lot of people came to America without sweating it  
out, and they came to America and -- and were not the best people, the best material what  
America should have taken in. Yeah, they were all kinds of things. I -- I knew that time,  
that there is not everybody perfect. A lot of Communists they took in that time, too. And  
so, we went fi-finally to America. We had already one daughter, Nomy, three years old,  
and s-so we packed up everything. We sold whatever we could se-sell. I remember I  
bought a camera, a Leica, that was my idea always and I -- I don't know, some -- some  
money we took with us, but not much. But, nothing we -- was missing. We came on a  
beautiful ship. We had a -- a stormy ocean, and we all were very sick, but otherwise, it  
was luxury already. I don't know, I was running with -- with Nomy on the bo -- deck of  
the ship, because I don't -- didn't want her to be sick. And Ilisa was so sick that she was  
laying in bed day and night without moving. So, finally we got to America. When we saw  
the Statue of Liberty, we were all excited and -- and -- and crying and everything.  
Everybody on the ship, that was a real immigrant ship, oh, that was a ship, yeah. And  
finally, we came to America, my a -- my aunt took us in and then they rented apartment.

Q: Your aunt?

A: No, Ilisa's aunt.

Q: Ilisa's, okay, mm-hm.

A: I had nobody here.

Q: Right, right, just checking.

A: Yeah, and her mother, they were living together already. And they were both seamstresses on Fifth Avenue and -- and -- and Park Avenue there, they always working, and they wanted Ilsa should work there with them. So Ilsa worked as a seamstress too, for -- for a -- quite awhile, even then, in New York. We came to New York. And me, I got a job in two weeks. I didn't speak English. I got a job because the company where -- where they hired me, there was some old engineers who spoke German. I spoke German, but I spoke -- I knew the technical word in English because -- because I worked in the -- in Haifa, in the head office, yeah. So I had to know all the technical language and everything. So I was there. In two weeks, I got a job, 75 dollars a week. But I tell you something, for us that was money. And the second or the third week, I got already 140 dollars a week. And so on and so on. In one year, I had triple those, or four times as much as -- as from the beginning. And I have all the companies here what I work. It was really some resume, if you would see that resume. Then, the last job -- yeah, the last job was in the World's Trade Center, on wa -- 94<sup>th</sup> floor, Hayward Robinson, yeah. And I worked a lot in field, too. And I worked there for over 10 years, 94<sup>th</sup> floor. It's the suda -- the same building as -- as that bomb scare was, what was bombed.

Q: You -- Were you there then?

A: No, luckily [indecipherable] was here already, I was retired. I retired there after 10 years, and when the children wanted we should come over here, we should si -- retire

here, we came and we stayed. We had a very nice house in the Poconos, in Pennsylvania, but we sold it and bought here this apartment.

Q: Can you talk a little bit about the importance of work? I mean, of course work is important, you have to provide for your family, but I wonder if it didn't have another importance as you were putting your life back together?

A: What do you mean?

Q: Th-Tha-That actually having a job and working, was a way to get back on your feet literally, but also emotionally.

A: Yes, yes, right, right. Ev-Every time I got a job, it was emotional, and -- and was very important. That puts me I -- actually on my feet. I love to work and -- and especially if I could work in my line, it was very important and I really appreciate that -- first of all that -- that there were available jobs here, and that you could make a living here. Nowhere in the world you can make a living like right here. Any-Anybody -- Anybody with any skills, because you have every sk -- every skill here. So it was really very important to come here. I would have never achieved that in -- in Israel, never. Couldn't have -- Couldn't buy a refrigerator, I remember, yeah. When my -- my -- I mean Ilisa's mother came to Israel, we didn't have where to put her down, so what we did, we built, illegally, a little -- little room for her and the kid. It was so small and hot, my God, this -- this -- the sand, that's was -- our first apartment in Israel was in the sand, in the -- in the desert, really. And -- And we were at the beach, at the -- at the water, at the bay and I -- [indecipherable] once almost we drowned [indecipherable] with Ilisa.

Q: Even when you got to Israel, there was still this feeling that you weren't settled, because you wanted to come to the United States.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you remember a time when, after you had gotten to the United States, that you looked around and you thought, okay, I'm finally settled?

A: We -- We had no choice -- We would have no choice. We would have settled in Israel, if not -- if not these -- came by that we got the okay to go to America. E-Everybody who had something like that was jumping on it, because it was very nice if you were a idealist. I was a idealist once upon a time, but when you have a family and when you want something more of your life and I thought I had enough of -- o-of bad things in my life. I want already a normal -- normal, good life. That's all. I had the skills, I had the know-how, everything, and my wife, too. So why shouldn't we have finally a little normal life, yeah? We had terrible lives, because it's not just what I am telling you now, but in between and before that and all that, that's -- it -- it's unbelievable what -- what people go through.

Q: Can you talk a little bit about when you got to the United States, when and if you decided to become a citizen?

A: Yeah. Well, it's -- that was -- naturally, we wanted to be citizens. We were -- The first thing was a gr-green card, and -- and to be a full-fledged citizen. We didn't wait to -- We didn't wait to ge-get to do it. And m-my mother-in-law and -- and the aunts, they were all for it, naturally. They -- They wanted right away we should be citizens as soon as

possible. And we didn't speak English and they will know I don't speak -- speak good, but Ilsa was speaking much better and -- and faster. And -- But we -- we found our way. In New York, you have to find your way. And then I helped even more, when the Russian immigrants came. I helped them a lot, in my office.

Q: How?

A: They -- They were engineers who -- who were -- was engineer. They didn't know American standards and things, so I had to show them everything, and I helped them, a lot of them. A lot of them I helped. But --

Q: Did you -- mm-hm?

A: Was -- I had a very nice life because I have pictures where I was looking -- overlooking all New York, yeah, 94<sup>th</sup> floor. It was right -- straight with the -- with the Empire State Building. So, it was really ideal place, or we were looking down at the port, we saw the -- the ships, yeah, and the cruise -- the cruisers going. It was really a beautiful place to work. And a lot of restaurants and things. I remember one anniversary, we were on the 107<sup>th</sup> floor in the -- in the World's Trade Center, with Ilsa, having a nice dinner. It was really freedom, what we were looking for. And even today, we cannot complain. Our children are nice to us, and have a comfortable house, so I cannot complain, really.

Q: You married a survivor. How important was that to you, that -- that your wife be someone who'd had an experience similar to yours?

A: Right, right. I -- I looked for it.

Q: You did?

A: I looked for it. I could have married -- I had girlfriends in Prague, they would have married me, not -- not Jewish and they would have married me, but I kept it ri -- ri -- reserve, always, that I have t -- I owed something to life, because I was saved, so I -- I have to save somebody. Ilsa would have married, very easily. She was pretty, and -- and - - and intelligent. But, it came out all right, thank God.

Q: You said that you kept -- that you had to save someone. Could you speak a little more about that? Did -- Did you feel that you and Ilsa saved each other in some way?

A: No, you don't feel like that, but that time, I felt like that, that I have to do that. And I owed something to life that I should marry a nice, Jewish girl. She wasn't even Jewish, re -- Ilsa is not so strict Jewish, that -- that -- that would have matter -- mattered that she wouldn't have, saved -- married a Jewish boy. But you see, somehow the feeling, they stay with you. And I felt that -- that I -- it -- it would be proper. I lost so many -- so many relatives, so many children, yeah. I should be productive, [indecipherable] should be doing the right thing. That's what I thought, doing the right thing.

Q: What is that? What is doing the right thing?

A: That's what I'm saying, that I married her and not somebody else. I could have married 10 girls. Firs -- First of all, she was ideal for me, the background and everything. I knew it, I had enough experience t-to to [indecipherable] it so, I knew that will -- that will work, and she knew it e -- too. Then you have the feeling what's right and what's not right.



Q: When you had your two daughters, and as you raised them, how and when did you begin to tell them about your experiences in the Holocaust, particularly in the camps?

A: Well, they knew that, they knew that. They heard it long time before, yeah. Even in Israel, so everybody in Israel was some kind of a -- a refugee from something. But she was a little -- a little girl and when we came here, no connection any more, yeah, with these things. She -- They know that we -- what's our background, but they have a different life, they have a normal life. Why would they want to know that? Nomy doesn't want to see even that tape, doesn't want to see.

Q: No?

A: No. No. And I don't know why. Because she's afraid, she's afraid. She knows. She knows everything, but she's afraid. And Karen, my -- my younger daughter, she's not -- not really Jewish, what I wanted to be [indecipherable]. She made her own life. First of all, she married a non-Jew, and -- and I was brought up that way, so I was a Jew. So, but I couldn't tell her what -- whom she should marry. And it didn't work out. If she would have done what I told her to do, and whom to marry, sh -- it would have worked out, I'm quite sure. But, she's not unhappy, and that's -- that's fine with me. Everybody makes his own life. I didn't -- I wouldn't like to get through again, all these things what I went through, not any more. Even if I would be with twen -- 30 or for -- 40 years younger, I wouldn't like to go through that. No, you can't, because that started long time before. Such a beautiful country where I come from. Life was very good there, except -- except --

Q: Except what?

A: Like this -- people -- people were bad. There you have the Hungarians, there you have the -- the Slovaks, there you have the Poles, bad, bad. I don't know why, makes no sense. They just drink it with the mother's milk, yeah. Why, I don't know. An-And the Catholics, they didn't have right to do that, what they did. They should have stopped it. Did you hear something like that, the priest should be [indecipherable] of a -- of a Fascist country, friend of a -- of the biggest Fascist in the world, yeah. Well, there are such abnormal things in this life, unbelievable. And then the -- But there were always some people who were really nice, really nice. You didn't have something like that, for instance, this old woman, when I was hiding underground, that -- that she would protect you. Was a old woman alone, she protected us, a whole bunch of -- of -- of boys. That we wa -- got caught, that's a different story, you know. I -- I think so, I told -- I -- I told it --

Q: Yeah, you did tell that story.

A: Yeah.

Q: What are your thoughts about what is happening in Yugoslavia now? For instance, even this week, we're seeing the United -- well, NATO, along with United States, bombing, and -- and there's ethnic cleansing going on. What -- What kinds of thoughts does that bring up for you?

A: The same thing, the same thing, the same -- it's a holocaust, it's a holocaust, except shorter. Th-The Germans stretched it too long, yeah. This here, he doesn't wait, he just rounds them up and then kills them off. I don't know how the world can look at it. They shouldn't let it go. Everybody who is not helping us to do that, to stop them is -- is -- is

guilty, cause that's a sin, really. It's the biggest sin. People with the children, and old people there is, yeah. And what will be next? Next, if -- if they -- the -- they win it, will be the same thing. Same thing. I'm just afraid whoever wins this war, will do the same to the other guy, always.

Q: S-So what lessons can be learned from your experience with the Holocaust? What lessons did you learn?

A: If people don't change it, th-th-th-th -- that history repeats itself. But [indecipherable] good, not good. Even the children, they -- they change, yeah. They can have today the holocaust a-and have children, everything, and then they will do it to the others ones. They -- They do it to each other. They don't think about it from one day to the other, that today you do it to me, I do it to you. And that's what is happening. That's what happening with the World War One. You do -- It -- It started to roll, it couldn't be stopped.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Michael Diamond. This is tape number three, side A. Following on the question we were just speaking about, Yugoslavia and Kosovo, and lessons to be learned from the Holocaust, but did you yourself, personally, learn anything from your experience, when you think back over it and you think back about how it shaped you? What -- What did you learn?

A: I can see ahead of time things coming and going. I know -- I see the consequences of everything. E-Even -- Even this whole thing is a -- the consequence of World War Two. And who -- whoever is stronger, wins, not who is right or wrong, who is stronger. If -- If a guy like that Milosevitch can tell -- tell us, the whole world, yeah, he will do what he wants to do, and he is doing what he wants to do, so there is no -- there is no way to -- to stop somebody. And s -- it's -- it -- the other thing, it's like Hitler was. But there we can ha -- we can have an excuse, we didn't know. Well, they da -- see what's going on, and they are not together, all these countries. That time, there was no allies, really, when Hitler started. That came just mu-much later, when everything was ra -- was finished already. Here they have it, a long time, he should be long time branded as a -- as a murderer. A long time. I wonder that the whole world can look at it and -- and not decide, really, to -- to hit him on the [indecipherable]. And the Russian, I don't know about the Russians [indecipherable]. They just don't like that like that we are -- have the allies. I

think so that's -- that's most of ho -- of it. But otherwise, they know what -- what -- what it was, they had it.

Q: A-After you left Israel, and then came here, have you ever gone back to ches -- Czechoslovakia?

A: No. I wouldn't go. I couldn't look at their eyes, these people. Because they hate me ag -- still they hate me, no matter what. I never did them nothing, an-and they hate me, so what can I tell you? I have there some friends now, who went back, but they don't like it. Nobody likes it, still. Still the same thing. People don't change.

Q: What about here, in the United States? Do you ever experience anti-Semitism here?

A: No, no. I don't expect nothing, yeah, but I didn't, no. I mean, I know people are not hundred percent, but I -- I don't feel bad. I -- I don't feel bad. I feel pretty comfortable. Not everything is hundred percent, as I say. Sometimes I am -- I am very angry if -- if people -- if -- you know, o-our religion, th -- if -- if they don't behave like they should. But I cannot -- Everybody had his own nature.

Q: What would be an example of that, when you're angry?

A: If, let's say, a -- things like -- like this Monica, yeah.

Q: Monica Lewinsky?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, okay.

A: That makes me angry, yeah. Why a little Jewish girl, stupid, can do something like that and is doing something like that. If I was to be her parent, I would give her a good

[indecipherable], believe me. Couldn't do it to me. And then I -- I get angry at politicians, if they stick their noses in things what's not their business, and so on, I don't like it. I don't to -- like -- like to be pushy. I never was. I had -- And there are some people who think they have to dominate the whole world. So, that's all. I can see one thing, the less you -- less you push around, better you owe -- you have a quiet, reasonable life. That's what I dreamed o-of, always. I made it. Nobody made it for me, I had to do it you -- ourself. So my wife.

Q: You know, one thing that we didn't ask you about in the first interview, was the role of religion in your household when you were growing up, and I wonder if you could talk a little bit about that, when you were younger, and then perhaps, maybe now?

A: No, the religion didn't count much, that much. But, they -- they made us to suffer. They made us suffer. We -- We Jews had one -- this family and a ra -- a normal life, and everybody else tried to squeeze us. That was always in Europe. In every -- every -- every religion. There's always a religion, but it shouldn't have been. Some were very bad, some were really very bad anti-Semites. I don't know why, where they took it from. The relig -  
- The Jews didn't give them even a reasons, because they were doing their own business. But jealousy, and all these things bring out the worst from people.

Q: So now, you say that religion wasn't -- didn't have a big role when you were young, but what about when you got married, or now even. Does it -- Does your faith play a big role in your life?

A: No, no. I feel very comfortable. And so Ilsa. We have no -- no feelings for -- for -- that we would be cheated or -- or that we would be hated, no. We feel very comfortable. I cannot say nothing. Some people are really very nice. Like here, we have neighbors who will help you if you need them. I fi -- We try not to use nobody, yeah, but if you need them, they are here. They're nice. And those are simple people here, nothing -- nothing overwhelming.

Q: I want you to think back to the -- that whole period when you were on the run, this is when you -- before you were captured, you were in hiding and then you were in concentration camp. And you talked a lot about that you had an instinct for survival.

A: Yeah.

Q: That you would -- you would --

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: -- rip a root out of the ground and eat it.

A: Yeah, yeah, right.

Q: When you think ba-back on that, where did that come from?

A: Good -- Good background. Good background, very s -- very strong background, a healthy background. I was, at least. If that wouldn't have come, I would be t-today a young man, if that not -- this is -- this lousy sicknesses and things wheth-whether -- I had t-to go through. I would be much stronger, and so Ilsa. Ilsa has had edema. You know what's edema? The water. She -- Through -- Through her arm, she almost died, yeah. A young girl, 16 years old, and she ca -- and she was cold, and her mother, I ha -- a real

hero, you know, her mother. She pulled them -- one pulled the -- out the other. They were both in -- in Auschwitz. And she was so sick, she was a dead -- she almost died. Now, I was there too, I know. It wa -- I -- I was as -- how can I say it? Like on the -- on the string. Just -- Just a hair, like a hair string. Very, very dangerous situations. And somehow, I wasn't upset, I wasn't afraid or something. Somehow I felt that -- had always the feeling I will survive it. I remember I told my parents, when they were worrying about the children, yeah, my sister and me, I always told them, I have the feeling we will survive it. And I was smart enough to survive it. But it was a -- as I say, you had to think what you are doing, too. It was not easy to survive.

Q: In your every day life now, how often do you think about that time, or what makes you think of it?

A: The news, the television. I watch carefully the news and I have perfect knowledge of their intentions, of intentions and -- and -- and history. Actually, I lived history, you can say -- you could say that, yeah. I didn't want to stay with the Communists, I could have stayed with the Communists. All our -- my friends, many friends stayed there, but they told me, "You will stay here for the -- for a -- other centuries? Y-You stupid, you do that. You have no sense." I said to him, "Why are you staying?" "Ah, my mother, my wife, my children." Well, well, weet -- weet. To do something, to -- you have to have a will. You cannot just let [indecipherable]. You have to have a will. I was hiding, for instance, yeah, when I tha -- jumped to -- out from the window, yeah. I remember the next time I was caught, a young girl came to me and said, "I know you, you jumped last time also, in the



window. If you save me, I will be your -- your slave," she said to me, "if you save me, if you help me to get out." I said, "I cannot get out myself, how could I he-he-help you?" Beautiful youn -- young girl. We were there, rounded up. [indecipherable] there. SS guy walking up and down there, up and down there, yeah. Apartment house, yeah.

Q: D-Do you have nightmares about your experiences?

A: Sometimes, yeah. I don't know, most my -- my -- my dreams are from a old, big city, in an old, big city. I am looking for somebody, I am -- I am fighting with somebody. The trouble is, sometimes I hit my wife. It can happen. Once in awhile, it happens. I fight. And -- And now it's a little better, but it used to be that I broke the table, yeah, the night table I broke. Fell down from bed, all kinds of things. Here I have a gash. I remember I fell. I was fighting with the -- with the table, with the night table, and fell down and fell on this, I have here, a -- a little this [indecipherable]

Q: Oh, yeah.

A: And this, that cut me very bad, a very deep, deep gash.

Q: I want to go back to probably, I guess you got here in 1956 - '57, to the United States?

A: '56.

Q: Okay. D-Do you remember some of the reactions you had to what was going on in the United States? For instance, in the 50's, Joseph McCarthy was ig --

A: Yeah. I heard about it, sure I know.

Q: What -- What -- What did you think of that?

A: Crazy, crazy. He -- He hated the Communists, okay, you hate the Communists, but he was making Communists out of people who were -- who were not and didn't have to become Communists. It was ridiculous. Now -- Now you have that Starr, doing the same, yeah. I mean, you can always compare, [indecipherable]. I had experiences with -- with the Hungarians when they came, you know, when they had that revolution. But again, they -- they were not -- not good. I protected them, I -- I hired them, yeah. They ask me, the company, if they have enough education, if -- if they are -- well, I said "Yes, they have good education, but I didn't [indecipherable] you they are bad." They took, for instance, money from the company and -- and disappeared, yeah. Or advance money the company wanted to give them, things like that, all right. That's what I know their character. They are very talented with the character, yeah. S -- Always depends on the character, not even on -- on -- on -- on money, nothing. Money cannot buy character.

Q: I-In the McCarthy era, y-you thought it was crazy, were you ever worried or concerned that -- that you could become a target of that kind of investigation? I mean, or -- you know, wrongly or rightly so, you could be thought, "Well, he's a foreigner, he probably has Communist ties."

A: Yeah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Yes, I -- I was thinking about it, many times, and I was afraid it shouldn't escalate, because that was not normal what he was doing, was really abnormal. And the whole world was laughing at it. It was a -- It was a show, it was a show. I don't know.

They are always find somebody, somebody comes up, which you cannot control. I mean, it's all -- it's a free country and something can happen like that? Can a -- Can a prosecutor just do what he wants, yeah? In this country -- there are a lot of things what I don't like in this country. But, if you compare it with other countries, it's heaven -- it's heaven. Everybody has a possibility to live -- to make a living. I see these young immigrants come in here, with no education, with nothing, and they are making a living, so the -- so the -- so what's wrong with this country, yeah? I -- I would say they should be more selective, they live somebody here. I -- I remember it was so hard for me to come here, I will never forget it, very hard. And, if I would have paid off some lawyer, I would have been long time ago here, already, not suffered, because it was suffering. Every -- Every evening when news, it came from -- from Tel Aviv, yeah I was waiting for what -- what's going on? What's this a -- still missing this, still missing that, still missing [indecipherable] I -- it was so hard. And then, when I -- when we got it already, I was really in seventh heaven, because I knew it was America, at least I -- I thought I knew. I won't say it's perfect, but it cannot be perfect, people are not perfect.

Q: A-At what point did you begin to feel safe and at home here?

A: Right away. Right away, except the language. The language, I -- it took me three months to learn it -- so far -- I mean a kitchen language, but I didn't worry about it, yeah. I didn't feel bad about it. I -- you know, it will come the time, I will get to everything. The main point, I have a job, and that's what everybody's looking everywhere, yeah. The Communist people, they have no idea about English and they will

never speak English, yeah, and get a job, whatever job what makes a living, yeah. I don't know how is that possible. No other country can do that. It's very, very funny, to think that -- that you can get a job any time you want. Look, you can see it written out, job. If I would have had that in Israel, I would have probably stayed there, right away, if I would have had it, okay. Nobody has it right away in Israel. It's very hard to -- to -- to have jobs, a good job in Israel. No, these Russians are coming, there are millions of Russians, they want to come to Israel. It will not be easy, because they -- they -- they think themselves superior, first of all, and they -- that's -- that jobs are coming to them, that their apartment is coming to them because they are sup -- used from the Communists, yeah, that they get everything. But, what little [indecipherable] that you get it, that's it. Not only they come to Israel, they want all -- all jobs and they want a -- a apartment. But when I came there, what I got? A blue eye. Yeah, it wasn't easy, but there were nice people in the -- I can say, some people were. They helped us, our neighbors there [indecipherable]. It was a -- this -- for-foreman, a -- construction business. And she was a housewife, very nice, very pretty. And they had two little children, I -- I remember -- I -- I was [indecipherable] save the little child from a snake. That's -- It's a li-little child, yeah, like that, she wanted to grab the -- the -- the snake, on -- on the porch. On the porch. Then I came on the porch, and that was a poisonous snake. Then I kill it. I could s-save her.

Q: Mr. Diamond, is -- is there anything you'd like to say that I haven't asked you about?

A: No, I think so [indecipherable] that's it. I am sorry, I don't know what -- would you like to --

Q: No, I just -- I always ask that. I -- I will ask one -- one more question, I guess it's this. As people who actually lived through the Holocaust get older, th-there will be a time when we won't be able to sit and talk with people who actually experienced this.

A: Ye-Yeah.

Q: What do you want people to take away, and to remember. Wh-What do you want?

A: They shouldn't -- They just shouldn't forget it, there exists something like that.

Because people like to -- tend to -- to forget about everything what's not pleasant. I see it right now, where I go -- we go in sometimes to the Jewish -- how do you call it? For the sin -- seniors. For the seniors. We go sometimes and -- and they don't want to -- even to talk about it. Not interested. I don't know, if they are not interested in that, then what -- what are they interested in? [indecipherable], it can happen to them. You never know.

Nobody is safe from that, nobody is safe. Okay, so they are right, they are here in -- in America and they don't have to -- to d-do anything they don't want to, but I wouldn't like them to forget it. It's very important, especially the kids. The kids, because if the old ones don't -- don't want to remember, don't want to know, they don't want to know, that's all. I think the children, you can only expect them to go to these places and see on their own eyes, that -- that -- what horror was this. Can you imagine my parents? If I think about it, beautiful people, very good. I -- I have pictures from everything. Beautiful, elegant people, really a gentry, my father was, and my mother was 50 years old, beautiful

woman, talented, everything, yeah. So, to make life so cheap, yeah, that shows you tha -- doesn't mean nothing. You see -- You see it on the pictures here, life doesn't mean nothing, right? It's just, it's a horror, what's going on with people. Little, beautiful children, nice, nice race, everything. You expect something like that, let's say, somewhere -- somewhere deep in Africa, over there. But you don't expect in the civilized world, something like that. They're supposed to be civilized. You see what nice housing - - what nice -- how nice roads and everything they had, they are civilized, but you cannot, with something like that. You don't mean nothing, you are a fly. It's very, very humiliating, it's very humiliating that what can happen to -- to the rest -- to a -- to a -- to a people.

Q: Wh-When you're treated like that, like you're nothing, like you're a fly, after it was over, how did you regain your dignity, your feeling that you were worth something?

A: Yes, I felt it, but only for myself. I didn't want to -- to tell it to nobody. I -- I had the -- the power, the will.

Q: You had -- You never lost it?

A: Yeah. No, that's it. And that's all my background, first my -- first the background from home, second, I -- I had some rough experiences, and I knew that you have to go through with it. Now, for instance, like that army there, that was some place, too, yeah. Working in high snow, in -- in -- in -- in -- on the roads, in the high mountains, was minus 30, minus 40. Yeah, was always terrible. I-I live. I will find ways to survive. You

see, if I wouldn't have picked myself up and caught that -- that horse by -- by the -- by the [indecipherable] I would le -- I wouldn't survive. I wouldn't survive at all.

End of Tape Three, Side A

Conclusion of Interview

