

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Marsha Loen
July 11, 1999
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Marsha Loen, conducted by Regine Beyer on July 11, 1999 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview 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 Marsha Loen
July 11, 1999

Beginning Tape One, Side A

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

This is an interview with Marsha Loen, conducted by Regine Beyer, on July 11th, 1999, in Mrs. Loen's home. This is a follow up interview to a USHMM videotaped interview conducted with Marsha Loen, on November 5th, 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. So my first question is an easy one. Give us your name, and when were you bo -- or your names, and when you were born, and where.

Answer: My name is Marsha Loen, Marsh Supporzhnikov Loen. My maiden name was Supporzhnikov. I was born in Lithuania, Kolnos. In fact, the outskirts of Kolnos, Labotkia. And I was born in 1930, July 28.

Q: And when did liberation come for you, and what was it like? What state of mind, what physical health were you in, and where were you?

A: I was liberated in a silo after the last march called Chinno, that a lot of ki -- little camps out of Stutthof were concentrated. And the two typhuses broke out. And to tell you the honest truth, I don't remember when I was liberated. I thought they were burning down the silo, so I covered myself with straw, but there were people were left, the dead around me, and I woke up in a German house, with the Russian's doctor taking care of

me. I had the two typhuses. And then they shaved my head again, and they put a salve on it, and I looked like musselwoman. And I could hardly walk, or talk, or recognize anything. And after three days, or a week, I don't know exactly, they told us we have to leave that village, because the front is coming on. So we should walk to Lomborg. Lomborg is in Polmarin. And it was not far from Chinno. And as we were walking, I with a little friend of mine holding a hand, we saw two Russian soldiers, and I -- that I will never forget, and a two carriage -- two wheel carriage -- officers, and we asked them to take us to Lomborg, and you know we covered our head with -- with scarves, and we -- they shouldn't notice that we have typhus. And they said, "No, we cannot do it, because we are not allowed to." But they felt so sorry for the two youngsters, that they put us behind, in that little carriage, but they said, "The first house in Lomborg, you have to get out." So, as we came into Lomborg, the first house, they said in -- in Russian, out. So, we went out, and the first house we walked in. And all I can remember is everything was empty, except there was a big, big rug, maybe a Persian rug, I don't know, at that time I didn't know from Persian rug, or China rug, or anything else. And in the middle was standing a bottle, with blueberries. And I didn't know it was preserve, or something. There was no water in that house, nothing. And we were still sick, I and that little girl, we had a temperature little bit, and we were -- we were really out. And sh -- she said, "Shall we drink it?" I said, "I am afraid it may be poisoned." Left poison, there's that bottle standing there, there's no water, there's nothing. And then we couldn't stand it any more, and what happened is is we drank, and we ate those blueberries. And at that time I was so

young, I didn't know nothing. Later on I realized that we got up the next morning, and we felt so much better, that it was fermented. It was set up for wine, or something, and it helped the temperature. And our temperature dropped. We s -- we went around, and we looked around like scavengers for food, and we found some food, and then I recognized some people from my hometown, and they was already looking -- you know, after two weeks, three weeks, they're grown up people. And they saw me, it was like a lifesaver for them, because the Russians are going on the front to Lomborg, and they were raping the women. German, Jewish, it didn't matter. They were getting drunk and raping them. So what they did is they -- they dragged me and that little girl into their apartment where they lived, six women. And if you put a sign up that it's typhus, the Russians didn't care, they just tore it down and they came in, and they made hia -- chaos. And what happened is -- is that whenever a Russian came in, they took my scarf off my head, and they gave me a bottle with medicine, and they send me out in the front room, and turn on the light, and the Russians, as drunk as they were, they start running, because they know there was typhus in that -- I was over already, but still looked like a musselwoman, you know, sick with the salve on my head. They start running. And this is how I saved six women from being raped by the Russians. Then my hair start growing in a little bit, and I was going down the stairs, and there was a little pond near that apartment, and there wasn't that much water, and anything, and I thought I'll wash out my -- whatever I have, in that pond. And all of a sudden I looked up, and there were two big, black boots in front of me, and I looked up, and he said to me, in Russian -- at that time I was still speaking Russian.

He said, "Ateeja dofka." I mean, am -- am I Jewish. And I said yes. He said, "I am too, from Odessa, don't get scared." So I took him up into the apartment where the girls were. They saw us [indecipherable] they got so scared, they said, "Are you out of your mind?" You know, they dragged me back in the other room. And it so happened that it -- he was there for two weeks. He fall in love with me, he wanted to marry me. He gave me even a wedding band. And I wasn't even 15 years old yet. But nobody knew that. And he says to me he is going on the front, and he is going to write to his father, and his father will la -- his father is a doctor in the army, a big officer, and arrange to pick me up. And I thought to myself, "Let him talk." But -- but the mo -- wonderful thing was about it, for all two weeks he slept in the front room of our apartment, so nobody could get in. And when he left, we went to work in a hospital, to help the Russian soldiers. So we slept there, so nobody could touch us there either. And one day a man came up to me, and he said, "Akeem Marouskas Supporzhnikova?" Am I Marsha Supporzhniko -- Marouska -- ma -- Marioshka Supporzhnikov. And I said yes. "My son wrote a letter at home that you are here in Lomborg, and I was looking for you, and here I find you in the hospital. I would like to send you to Odessa. He wants to marry you." And I told him, I said, "I cannot do it. I have to go back home first. I have to see where my -- if I have any family left, I have anything," I said. He said, "Do you love my son?" I said, "I don't know him well enough. I don't know what love is." I s -- I -- he didn't know my age, he didn't know nothing. Nobody know nothing about anybody. And, you know, I was still scared to tell my age, because my two little sisters were killed because they were under 15. And I -- so even

after I was liberated, I was afraid to tell my age. So, even to that man that was the fa -- and I asked him, I said -- this may not be interested on the tape, but I asked him, I said, "Tell me, why are you, a officer in a different battalion, from a different town than your son is, and you're not even Jewish?" Everybody says Marshall Zou, or whatever his name was, I don't even remember, and he says, "You see, they took us, the Jewish officers, and doctors, and send us to different places, because when we were caught from the Germans, that the soldiers, the Russian soldiers shouldn't give us out that we are Jews on top of it." So this is my first lesson I learned, that I wasn't the only one that suffered, and there were other people as young as I was, at -- it concentrated, that answer concentrated into my mind. And we felt better, and we didn't know there was [indecipherable] existed. We didn't know about people not going back home or nothing. All I want is to go home, and see what's happened.

Q: Would you let me ask you just one quick question. Did you know anything about your family members at that point? Are -- you know your sist -- your two sisters -- you said your two sisters were --

A: My two little sister, my mother, was taken away in Stutthof. I didn't know if they are - - were dead, or alive, or nothing. I had a feeling that they were killed there. All taken to Theresienstadt. Now that I read the books about it, ther -- and then from there to Auschwitz. I don't know what happened to them. I can only tell you I lost them, about maybe a week after we were in Stutthof. But the only thing that bothered me is that they were taken out of the uniforms, the striped uniforms, and given civilian clothes when they

were taken away. And when I wanted to go with them, they left a big dog on me, this is all in my other tape. And all I wanted to go and see if anybody was left. I was -- my father was in Dachau. I know my grandfathers were taken away in the beginning, and -- and this -- I knew they were dead. My other family -- certain family members were all dead, because I know they were taken on the ninefort and killed in Kovno, of the Kovno ghetto. And anybody did nothing -- not many people escaped from the ninefort. But the thing is is, is -- what I want to tell you is that I wanted to go home. So they said yes, they'll s -- they'll s -- put us on trains, and they'll send us home. So they put us on big trucks, and they took us to a place, a good -- I don't know how to say it in English, a ranch, a big ranch in -- in Palmerton, it was near Nimitz, near -- not far from Stetlin, not far from Lomborg, Rigenwald, Lomborg, and so on. And they took us there, and there were some Russian girls, white Russian girls, they were playing the piano. And the Jewish girls, the one that went with the Germans -- and the Jewish girls, they put us to clean up stalls, and they put us to -- to -- to -- to -- to the dirtiest work in the world. They didn't give us enough food, the Russians. They didn't kill us, they didn't beat us, but there was a -- they -- we -- we -- we were always watched, we were always watched with guards, like in the [indecipherable]. The only difference was that we weren't beaten up, we weren't treated as dirty Jews, but we were treated different. There were about maybe 10 Jewish girls. And one day the captain asked me if I -- asked anybody if they would like to go to learn with veterinarian. There is a doctor in Rigenwald that will teach veterinarian, because what they were doing is taking the cows and the horses of the fields

that were running wild. And they opened a konzerr factory, and they open a cheese factory. And what they did is, they needed the cows to be healthy, to see if they're healthy, they take -- to take analysis from horses -- I found that out later, when I came back. I said, "I'm going." Like in German concentration camp, in those little camps, if they needed somebody to go to threshing, f -- harvesting or something, people were sent to s -- Auschwitz. I didn't care any more when they took away my mother, my two little sisters, and the rest of my family. So I was the first one, I -- he sa -- I said, "I am going to Rigenwald." We came to Rigenwald, the doctor that they sent to teach us, it must have been from different camps around that, but from our camp we went only one Russian girl, and two Jewish girls. And what happened is is that -- what's so amazing is that the doctor was a drunk. He was compl -- always drunk. And we learned some. We learned how to protect when a cow is slaughtered, to recognize if it has tuberculosis around the lungs. We learned how to take analysis from a horse's neck. We learned ho -- if they got this eye sickness, the horses, to get rid of them. We learned the cows, they had a certain thing on their skin, to put them -- what is the end of a -- of a match called? It's a certain chemical. Put them in a tent, and put them into the chemical. So get away the sickness shouldn't spread. We learned certain things in -- in about three weeks, but the most important thing for me was that I made friends with the put -- Polkolvnik's wife, with the main man's wife. I must have had in me pa-part of it of my father, like I said before. She went in a nightgown to the opera, and [indecipherable] others. I -- I told her that's not proper. I told her your hair doesn't look, let me comb it for you. We got to be the best of

friends, I and the Pot -- Polkolvnik's wife. And they treated me like a daughter the two weeks I was -- three weeks we were there. After three weeks we got a paper with a pitshot, you know, with the stamp, like the Russians always do. Akivia trinarn inyarz. I was a veterinarian nurse, believe it or not. We came into that village again, we worked. We worked with the horses, we worked this. Two weeks later, after we came back from Rigenwald, they put -- Polkovnik and his wife arrived in that good -- in that trench. There was a very, very ugly captain that run it, and he hated Jews, very anti-Semitic. And he said, "Akdere Marouska?" Where is marsh -- Marouska. And the captain said, "In her room with the other Jewish girl." He says, "In her room? You mean to tell me she doesn't have an apartment of her own?" And his wife got very mad. He said, "I want to call her immediately for dinner, to have dinner with us." Because there was dinner in the captain's house. It's a bi -- in the good -- you know, in the ranch, the big ranch house. So when he called me in, I had dinner with them, and he gave a order to the captain that I have to have my own apartment, that I have to be in charge of the cheese factory. I have to be sent to a different village. But in a couple of weeks, till they have everything prepared, and -- now, don't forget, in July atel -- I was liberated in March, and July atel 15. And what happened is is before I left for the other -- good for the other ranch, big ranch, the Jewish girls were playing a piano, and the Russian girls were cleaning the stalls. But what they did is, I was there to be heavily guarded, because they would have killed me, the Russian girls. So what happened is is when I went to that good, I arrived, and I was all of a sudden I was in charge of a milk factory -- cheese factory, and at night

the Russian soldiers from all around, from the good that I worked in, the ranch, from all the ranches they would come, and -- and Polish soldiers they would come, and I would give them all cheeses and milk, cause the Russian soldiers weren't fed either. They would cut around the tuberculosis, around the cows, and then they would make like a soup with potatoes, and every -- that all they had to eat all day. Everything was shipped to Russia. And what happened is is that they liked me very much the Russian soldiers, and the Polish soldiers came, and there came some fliers from Stettlin, and they would bring liquor and so on. But one thing would happen, when they would get too drunk, the woman that owned that ranch was a very, very wealthy woman. That's the first time I ate waffles in my life, because she had the stove that she moved waffles around. She was from Pullman. She was German, from Pullman, and she was like a mother to me. So the minute she saw that they got drunk, she lock me upstairs in one of the quarters, and nobody could get near me. But I did a lot of things in that camp that a child of my age wouldn't do. I was boar hunting, believe it or not. I was boar hunting with the Russians, with the Polish officers. I -- I did everything I wanted. I run that village. And I was ride out, with the guard of course, I would ride out to the fields, and check up on the pomeron women, and see the German women, and see how they milked the cows, if they are clean in the fields and so on.

Q: How did you know how to manage that?

A: I don't know. It just came natural to me. It just came natural to me. In the beginning I was very ver -- I said I was going to take revenge. In the beginning I was riding my

horse, I would see children on the street, I didn't care, I was ride -- dust, the dirt and everything. But then about a month later, I was taking them medicine, and food, I was stealing from the Russians, and giving to the poor German kids.

Q: So --

A: This is a Jewish heart. We're a very compassionate people.

Q: So when you got some compassion again, and could build yourself up, then you were able to --

A: Not very long -- didn't take me very long to build up, to feel sorry for those kids, and take them food, and take them medicine, and steal from the Russians. And one day the captain came to me, and that -- this is a really funny story. He came to me to my village. And he says, you know there was a befell -- was like when there's a order that the -- the Russians can take nothing away animal from the Germans. Absolutely nothing, no cows, no horses, nothing. And the eye sickness of the horses, I forgot how it was called. I was never a veterinarian, so I forgot it. Broke out and we lost seven horses, and they put -- Polkovnik was coming, and he said, "Your village is full of horses." He's talking to a grown up person, you know. "I need seven horses." I said, "Fine, I'll give you seven horses. You release seven see -- seven girls from the -- that you're holding. If you put them on the train, I'll give you seven." Said, "I can't do that many, but I'll release some." I said, "Okay." So how do I do it? I have to have a plan. So I sat down, and I talked to the German woman that took care of me, and I made myself a plan. I am -- I got a lot of fantastic liquor from those majors that came, from the -- the pilots from Stettlin. And I

invited seven officers from the Polish camp. And we got them so drunk that they were flat on the floor. We took off their uniforms, there were waiting seven Russian soldiers. We put the Polish uniform on the Russian soldier, and the Russian soldiers, they went out, they got the seven horses, came back, got them dressed back their uniform, dropped them on a cart, and took them back to their camp. The next thing the rumor was in the village that the Polish army stole seven horses. Now I had something over that captain. He was so afraid of me that you have no idea. Because God forbid he should go to the higher ups, and everything. So everything I wanted, I got. So when the soldiers from each camp, when I rode with them, wanted to come and eat at my camp, they came and eat. If they wanted to -- whatever they wanted to -- the Jewish girls lived the life of Riley, and he was afraid of me as hell. One day I was riding with a man from Georgia, I'll never forget, and a short Jewish man came up to me, and in Jewish says to me, "Are y -- do you know anybody by the name of Myashka Supporzhnikov?" And I said to him like that. I put my hand to my throat, my mouth, and I said, "Oh please don't say anything." And the Russian soldier understood what he said, or he had a feeling. He said, "Marouska, don't worry. Anything you want I'll do for you, because you saved my life, you got some medicine when I was sick. You brought food for me. I will help you with anything I can." A very, very lo -- I couldn't say low [indecipherable] because he was intelligent, with intelligent you have to be born. Very average person, you know? And I couldn't understand why he does it. And he said, you know what? So I tell him the story, that I found out from that man that my father is alive in Łódź, in Poland, and he came to pick

me up. So he said to me, "Not only will I take you -- let you go, but I'll take you to the train." And I want to tell you something. When we came into the villages, the houses were empty, but there was so much clothes, and jewelry, and cameras. With everything was in my apartment, when I was riding on that horse, I didn't even have a sweater on. I'll never forget, I had the silk, maroon blouse on. I remember now, I didn't remember before, riding boots, and -- and they're real good boots, because one of the officer, police officer, brought it to me, and riding pants. That's all I had with me, because I was going with him to check out the fields, how the milk is going, how everything is going. And I said, "Okay. You are taking me to the train, but I'm going to give you a letter. And when the captain does something to you, you tell him, 'I have a letter from Maroushka about the seven horses.' " I said, "At least I can do for you that you don't get punished, or put in jail, or anything like that." So what I did is I -- I still wrote Russian at that time, I sat down, and in no time I wrote him a letter. He took us to the train. And that man says to me, "Now remember, I am Polish, I speak very good Polish, your father send me, and I want you to be like you're -- you don't know how to speak, you don't know how to -- you're -- you're dumb. Whatever anybody says, you just move your head." Because at that time, the Polish Akar, the Polish fascists were killing the Jews like crazy, especially on trains, and so on. And I listened to him, and he might -- I don't even [indecipherable] I was freezing a little bit. And I went to -- we went with the train and we arrived in Łódź.

Q: When about -- when abouts was that [inaudible] time?

A: That was still in 1945, the end of 1945. I think it was the end of 1940 -- yes, the end of 1945. And I arrived in Łódź, and that's in Poland, and I met my father, and I met a lot of people from my town that were left ali -- not a lot, because you know, people that were left over, and of course, my father couldn't tell me something that I couldn't do. I was smoking, and he said, "You can't smoke." And I said, "What do you mean to tell me I can't smoke? I can smoke, I can do whatever I want to." If I thought to myself, maybe at that time -- I don't know if I thought to myself this way, if I can handle a Po-Polkovnik [indecipherable] I can handle my father, you know. If he tells me not to smoke, it's none of his business if I smoke or I don't smoke. And at that time my father was a tailor, a very good tailor. That what saved our life also in the Kovno ghetto. And he start work. He worked in -- in Łódź as a tailor, and he helped a lot of people from Lithuania, from Kovno that went through Łódź. He had a big apartment, and in -- the one -- that apartment, downstairs was a big room. I don't -- it was like a hole. And anybody that went through, went through my fa -- they said, "Go to Beryl Supporzhnikov." And they went through, and everybody knew him, because he was a very good looking man from Kovno, very well dressed, and always the best. And th-they came, and he would give them food, and he wouldn't let them go back to Lithuania, because he found out that it's not good there. You know, I found out later on that I have an older sister in Lithuania. This is how he found out that I am in that camp, from her. Somehow she found out from somebody that I am alive in that camp. Maybe somebody that escaped. And she let my father know it. People smuggled in things. So he know what was going on. The people

are trying to go out of Lithuania. So anybody that went through that wanted to go back to Kovno, to Lithuania, he wouldn't let them. He kept them there, he kept them till the kibbutz took them, and took them over to Bratislava, and then to displaced camps.

Because at that time Łódź wasn't yet Communistic as much, and --

Q: Actually, maybe we should --

A: Can we stop --

Q: -- take a little break --

A: -- at the end there?

Q: -- because this is the -- yeah, let me just -- I made my [indecipherable]

A: I have to go to the bathroom.

Q: Yeah. This is the end of tape one, side A, interview with Marsha Loen.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Marsha Loen. This is tape number one, side B. So you were in Łódź.

A: So I arrived in Łódź, and my father, and everybody, we were partying, and of course I was smoking, like I said, and my father said, "You can't smoke," and I said, "Yes I can."

And anyway, he did not have a big control over me, that I have to say. And it was very sad. And for one reason my father didn't have a big control over me, and I hate to say it, my father was a very selfish man, and I remembered him from ghetto, what he did to us.

And I really -- I loved my father, but I didn't like him. I'm sorry to say this, should rest in

peace. And what happened is is that in Łódź he says to me -- he -- he knew that my mother is dead, and he got himself a girlfriend, a friend of my mothers, that she lost her husband and two kids, also in the Kovno ghetto. And what happened is is that he says to me, "I have enough money to smuggle the border." Now he--here he helps all the strangers, and his only leftover child, he says, "I have enough money to smuggle the border for me and Rocholla. I don't have enough money for you." So what do I do? I went into the kibbutz, in -- to work in the hospital because I know how to give a injection, you know, I learned a little bit there at the Russian camp, by working with the animals, it's not that different to give a injection, and take a temperature, and so on. So I went into the kibbutz, and I stayed in the kibbutz, and I learned how to -- in Łódź -- and I worked in the hospital, and in Madrid the head of the kibbutz came to me, and he says, "Marsha," -- now, nobody knew my age. I -- I looked so much older than I am, thanks God, that why I was alive -- I don't know if it's thanks God or not. And he says to me, "You know what," he says, "you want to go -- get over on the other side?" I says, "Yes, I want to get away from Łódź," because I was engaged to a man that was 34 years old, and I was not -- I was 15. He gave a diamond watch to a friend of my fathers, to introduce us. And he was so jealous when I went away on business or something in Łódź, and when he came back and I wasn't home, he was running all over, looking for me. And I had already my wedding dress, because he impressed me so tremendously. You know, coming out of the concentration camps, coming out of that place, that Russian camp, and everything, and he brought me presents, and -- and he took me to places, but I could not speak

Jewish, and I could not speak any other language with him. So he said, "I will do the speaking, you keep quiet, Marouska." And that -- that was it. So he impressed me with all the diamonds, and all the sweaters, and -- and he was a very, very rich man.

Q: What nationality was he again?

A: He was a Jewish -- a Polish Jew.

Q: And what language did he want to speak with you?

A: He want to spea -- he couldn't speak, because the Akar are killing people in Łódź, in the bus stops, everywhere you went. Not many people could go to a movie in 1940s -- end of 1945, beginning of 1946. They couldn't go to a movie. They couldn't walk the streets and speak Yiddish. Absolutely not, Jewish. So what happened is is he impressed me with all those things, and I was going to marry him. Then -- and then I realized it, oh my gosh, I can't marry that man, that man is -- could -- is older -- practically as old as my father, he is jealous, I don't have no friends, I can't make any friends. Now this is me thinking, a youngster, a teenager. And I said, "I have to get away from him." So on our engagement party at this cousin's estate in Łódź, I dance with his best friend, a Jew from the Polish army, and I came back to the couch, and he doesn't want to talk to me. So I said to the friend, "Chaim, give me my cape." And I took my cape, and I went to my father's house. And I said, "Would you like to go to Bratislav right now," the next morning? And he was running after me, and he was yelling, and stop, and he came to the door, and that friend of his left, and I locked the door. He said, "Yes." I said, "Pack." And I run over -- from the other side, I run over to the kibbutz, and I told that man, I'm taking

-- that was the next day that that was -- he wanted me to take the transport. Everything -- you see, we were trained to take the transport over the border, people that wanted to do it. And that what -- why I went into the kibbutz. He said to me -- I said to him, "I'll take that transport. But my father and my stepmother go," -- I -- I mi -- I called her my stepmother, she wasn't yet -- "goes with me." He says, "Okay, it's arranged." Because it so happened that the people that were supposed to take me -- it, the couple don't feel so hot.

Q: The idea was to go to Palestine eventually?

A: Yeah. The ide -- I don't know. We had to get out of Łódź. Oh, yes, the idea to go to Palestine was from the beginning. To go to Palestine, that was my ideal thing. So here we are, we're ready, and everybody, I'm taking 25 people over the border to Bratislav. From Łódź to Bratislav, the Akar shooting after us. Now, I want to tell you, my stepmother Rocholla, was with me in the same camp, and I helped her stay behind, because she froze her feet up. My feet were frozen, too. They took off her fingers from one foot, in Łódź, and she couldn't walk that fast. They wanted to take some of my toes off, and I wouldn't let them, because the doctor said there's a chance that they can heal that. So I went for therapy, and what I did is, I washed floors, I did everything to pay the doctor. And the doctor gave me therapy, hot and cold baths, and salves, and everything, and it starts -- it looked like I had a fungus on my foot, but it start healing. And I could walk. And then when I went into the kibbutz, the kibbutz paid part of it. So, in about two and a half months, my feet were ready to go. And I had those -- they got me orthopedic shoes at the kibbutz, and I went. And as we were going, what I wanted to tell you, I run away from

that guy -- later on I heard he had a nervous breakdown, I don't know about that one. But I want to tell you the Akar, you couldn't go to a movie, you couldn't go to a restaurant if you were Jewish, if you spoke Jewish. They a -- every day they had something happen Jew in Łódź. One was shot in a -- in a bus stop, the other one was deesent, it was terrible. For me, it was a terrible thing, because as bad as the Russian was, they never beat us, they never hurt us, they never shot us. So I went and I took that transport. And the Akar was shooting after us. It was in the middle of the night. And I -- ed -- everybody slowed down, and they were mad at me because of my stepmother. It didn't take long we arrived in Bratislav. Arrived in Bratislav, my father never said thank you to me for taking him, and everything else, but they put us on trains to go to Germany, and to go -- and it so happened that we went through Austria with the train. And they said, "Who would like to stay in Austria?" And I saw those beautiful mountains, and that beautiful scenery, and like I told you, at the Russian camp I was boar hunting, and I was riding, and I loved sports. Even as a child, when I was eight years old, I was at the school Olympics, you know. So what happened is is that I was a daredevil. I was a -- like I'm a tomboy when I was a youngster. Because there was a certain branch out from my wer -- my grandfather from my mother's side was a very well-to-do man, and I was his angel. It's supposed to be a boy, but still he called me by a boyish name, Yankela. But I was his life. So what I mean is that I -- I -- from the beginning, you know, I wasn't in public school, I was thrown out when I was seven years old. I hit a teacher, accidentally, you know. Not accidentally, sh -- a man was putting ink in the back of my head, a boy. And I told her,

and she said -- and she didn't like it, because she knows I come from a better family. So she, "You keep quiet. You sit down." And it happened four times, I couldn't stand it any more. And you know the way they sit in Europe, you're a German, you know. The teacher sits in front before you go out the door. So I took my thing that I was writing in, my book -- my pad -- my notebook, and I took it and I hit it at her, and I said, "I am leaving." And accidentally I hit her nose. Anyway, that's a long story, I'm not going to get into it. I was thrown out of the school, and my grandfather had to pay a lot of money. He would have loved me to go to Hebrew school, but they -- they wouldn't take me in, so I went to komairts gimnasia, it was a Jewish private school. So I'm telling you, I was a daredevil from the beginning. So as we come to that beautiful country Austria, I said, "Papa, if you and Rocholla want to go on to Germany, go ahead. I'm staying in this country in. Because they told us they are taking us to places where they put us up, and from there we'll be able to go to Palestine, and so on.

Q: Who were -- who were they? I just wondered.

A: That was also the Bricha. But at that time I didn't know who they were. You understand what I mean? So I sat on the train, they stopped the train, we went off, and we went toward this place called Verkshide [indecipherable]. It was a horrible place. It was wooden barracks. The food was also rationed, but it was good. We were DDT's, and so on. So again, I said, why should I take that. So I made friends with the American essing officer that distribute the food, and he had the -- the trucks and so on. I made friends with Dr. Dimetrirus, because I helped him in -- that he was a Greek -- not Jewish, Greek that

run the -- the -- the hospital in the displaced camp, and also the head of the displaced camp. So -- and I also worked for the -- for the Itterdude. That's organization from -- from the first president of -- of Palestine, and -- in the young brigade, goldonia. And I -- in the displaced camp, in Verkshide, I made friends with them, so oh -- and I was getting looking very good. I was a pretty good looking girl.

Q: Still are.

A: And I had very good friends, and I -- that essing officer, and everybody, they were just doing everything when I ask, and so on. And there were a lot of ma -- people sent to the displaced camp from Israel, they were called Sheliaks, to talk to the people how to get over to Palestine, and at that time. And I met with them, and I went out with them one night to a night club, that a friend of mine's mother owned it, Alonstra, it's in Linz, in Austria. And I get a call from the pharmacist, from the -- from the displaced camp. He says, "Marsha, we are going to DDT the camp." Verkshide. He said, "Would you like to have some fun?" This is how I met my husband, I want to tell you this sto -- that's why I'm telling you this story. I said, "I love to, as long as you don't touch my barrack, or my father's." Said fine. So I came, and they put me in in a white, big, long thing with a mask. And I am going around, and I am spraying the barracks, and being very gentle about it, because it's my people, and everything, and all of a sudden I open a room, and the people are sitting, they are all dressed beautiful, drinking wine, having beautiful food and everything. And I got so mad that I pulled my mask down, and I start spraying the DDT at them. And one of them was my husband, Cornelius. And at that time he saw my eyes,

he saw my face, and he said he fall in love with me. He was em -- then they liquidated Verkshide, and they send us to a much better displaced camp called Bindermichl. And that was -- Goering's built some apartment houses. So they put two, three families into rooms, a family into a room, and with my father -- I live with my father, I got mad at my father, I walked out on him. I went to live with a girlfriend, it so happened in the same place my husband had a room with another man, and my husband worked for the Joint at that time. Joint Distribution Committee. And I met him, and what happened is I worked for the bri -- for the Itterdude, and I start getting into the Bricha business.

Q: What did you do, when you say you worked for them, what did you do exactly?

A: I -- I wrote for them, I translated for them in Russian, in Yiddish, in whatever it is. I worked on the Jewish typewriter, and -- you know, in -- in the same time when we moved to Bindermichl, I said, "I'm going to go to school." To go to school -- I spoke a little bit of German, and to go to school you had to be a certain age, but I wanted to -- I want to go into art school. Just go all over, all those things we're speaking, German, nothing, for me that doesn't exist. I want to go to art school. To go to art school I had to take a course in German, and I went into art school, and also worked for the Itterdude at the same time. And one day they said to me, "Marsha, we are going to take some people over." And what happened is voke -- going to -- to school in Austria, I got this Austrian outfit, with my big, black braid, with the Austrian hair, you know, with the feather. And I spoke already the dialect in Austria pretty good. So they said, "We need you." I said, "Why do you need me?" They came to the office of the Itterdude. They said, "We need -- we

smuggle people, we're going to be straight with you. We smuggle people through the Innsbruck border," they say, "into the Italian, into the middle of the mountain, and there the Italian take over." I said, "I'm ready, I'm going." So I -- and it was vacation time, and I come in, and they tell me what to do, and I do it. And what happened also is that the first thing that I went into the Austrian school to learn art, I had a friend of mine do me a false passport. A Austrian false passport, what nobody had. So I can do things that nobody else can. The a -- the essing officer moved with us to Bindermichl. And you know to have, I mean, a friendship with that -- with the -- you must heard about it -- I know you're younger than I am, to have a friendship with a -- with an American soldier, you were like a whore, excuse my expression. But that man was so beautiful. And I said, "You know, I need a truck." He said, "Why do you need a truck?" I said, "Oh, we want to go to Ebensee skiing," we want to go there, we want to go there. He said, "Okay, what else do you need?" I said that I need some food provision a little bit and so on. Says, "Okay, we going out next week?" I said, "Fine, it's alright with me." So he gave me the truck, and we took the people to Zanenfeld. That's near Innsbruck, and there was nothing, there was just some hou -- fenced in, like I remember a fenced in place. I had the picture of it, a trumpet. I don't know where I put it, it disappeared. And we would call in, and we would -- we took a little package, each one took a little package with them. We went through that little -- what do you call it?

Q: Little pass?

A: Little pat into the mountain. We took them up the mountain, we went one by one. And then we would leave them there, the Italians would take over, and the two people that took them would come back to the camp, and come to Zanenfeld.

Q: How dangerous was that?

A: Very dangerous, because first place, I was on a false passport. Second place, I am caughting smuggling people over the border. Now that was over the Italian border, you understand what I mean? They didn't know what I was smuggling there. I could say I'm smuggling to it -- Italy, you know. And -- but it was dangerous, it was [indecipherable]. And then one time was shooting off [indecipherable] it was dangerous. My father didn't want me to do it, and I said, "You can't tell me what to do, I do what I want to do." And I already met my husband.

Q: How about Cornelius? Did he want to -- you to do it?

A: That -- I -- he wasn't that time with me that -- that close, we just knew each other. He invited me to go to a concert, and I wanted to go dancing, and I was invited from the American head of the camp to go dancing in the club, in the camp club. And I [indecipherable] said, "That man is crazy. I should go to a concert when I can't go dancing?" He said, "A little culture won't help you -- won't hurt you." But I didn't go with him, but every other day he was waiting near the office, the Itterdude for me. And I finally start going out with him. In the beginning I was mad, it's a long story, because I thought he went out with somebody else, and so on.

Q: What did you like about -- what did you like about him?

A: What I liked about him, you see, I never went out with anybody that didn't have a education. I never went out with anybody that had dirty nails, or dusty shoes. Never. That was my -- I don't know why, don't ask me. I don't know -- I don't understand it. And I liked him, I wasn't in love with him yet, but I liked him. And I -- and he brought me beautiful things he bought from the Joint, and there was a lot of beautiful clothes, you know. And I didn't really need it, because I went out with a guy -- now this is I wa -- I was already 16. I went out with a guy that was from the Prague University, and he was the head of the police in the camp, and lived out of the -- outside of the camp. And he thought I was going to marry him. And that -- one day he got very sick. I had a fi -- I fou -- another thing is, it's very interesting, this is old camp, and this is old displaced camp. I made friends with the CIC from England, a woman, and she was very in love with that guy Tommy, that man that I am telling you about. And she went home one day and she brought me a poodle, and for herself a big boxer. And the boxer in the compartment, in the plane, bit a piece of the poodle's foot. So Dr. Dimitri, the doctor, fixed the f -- the -- the -- the poodle's foot. And I left him with Tommy, of course in Tommy's house, and I called him Tommy, because Tommy had some stomach trouble. He was a Jew from the University of Prague, and I called him Tommy. So I left him, and one day, one evening I went home, and I came home the next morning, and I want to go into his apartment, and his valet doesn't let me in. And I said, "Why, what's going on? I have to go in, I forgot something." Anyway, I had a lit -- bitty little fight with him, I went into the room, and my girls from the redhaired was sti -- the two dogs were lying next to the bed, and my

girlfriend's from the CIC, re -- the redhead was sticking out of the bed. He starts running after me, and -- and begging me, and everything, and I said, "No, no, no, no, I don't want anything to do with you." Anyway, I come to my father. He said, "Do you sleep with him?" My father was very outspoken with me. I said, "No." He said, "You know, a man needs it, and they need to get it somewhere. So he has your girlfriend handy, so he did it. I don't like Tommy, I don't want him to go out with you." I said, "You have nothing to say, Papa." I said, "I do what I want, but I don't want to go back with him, I don't want anything to do with him." So one day I was out with the shleech dancing, and I get again a call. Tommy is very sick, he won't take any medicine, nothing. This was already BinderMichl. He won't take any medicine, nothing, till you come to see him. So I said to him, "Chaim, would you go with me?" He said, "Yes, to save a person's life." So I went with him, and he took the medicine, and he got better, and I had to promise him, I said, "Look, my father doesn't like me," right away I used my father. I don't even live with him, "doesn't want -- like you, doesn't want me to marry m -- y -- me. Why don't you go to Italy with the transport, and I'll meet you there afterwards?" In the meanwhile, it's a long story, I met Cornelius. I thought I fall in love with him, and I thought to myself -- and he asked me to marry him. And he said, "It would be a good time. My two friends, my best two friends are coming back from Italy," they left to go to buna -- San Paolo, or Buenos Aires, I don't know where it was. "They're coming back, could we get married?" And we got ma -- we were get -- we got married, and Barbie, she should [indecipherable] went back to Italy, and accidentally they met Tommy. And Tommy said, "Oh, you come

from Bindermichl, my fiancée is coming.” And he took out that picture, and this woman didn’t mean that it was that it was that serious. So she says -- Barbie, she says, “I’m sorry, your fiancée just married our best friend.” But before that I went with the opera singer from Romania. I went with the guy that went -- also from Romania, that went with the King sisters. And one woman was very jealous, and she said to my father, “How can you let her go out so much, with so many men?” He said, “It’s better too many men than just one. So I’m sure nothing will happen.” And my father didn’t have anything to say about who I’ll go out or what I do anyway. But he liked Cornelius, I don’t know why. And I said, “You know, Papa, he is half Jewish, he is not even Jewish.” He says, “You will make something, I know you, you’ll make him Jewish. Don’t -- I’m not worried about it.” And he gave him -- I’ll never forget -- my husband hates fish. And he gave him, he said, “Would you like a drink with a piece of herring?” Of course, Cornelius was a gentleman. You know, he was so debonair, I think that what impressed me, he wore that hat with the pipe, you know, he was very well dressed, I’ll show you pictures. And that what impressed me so much about him. And I brought him uppa -- and we were in the room eating, and the father gives him a piece of herring, was a gentleman, he start eating that herring, and he chewed and he chewed, and he chewed. And I said, “Papa, go out and help Rocholla in the kitchen.” And we were on the second floor, and I said, “Cornelius, spit it out right away,” you know. And then when I speak German, because the only language that we can communicate, and what Cornelius did a lot for me, is that he helped me go to school, and then in Windham, there were the big bed, and then I was e -- and we

were married already, and a friend of ours was lying on the other side, and we were -- I was doing my homework. I was also at the theater in Austria, and the -- in the kammershpeler. But Cornelius made my father, and he made me quit it, because they saw -- there was a play -- I -- I don't have very perfect legs, so I always had to wear long clothes. So I played the maid in the kammershpel -- you know how beautiful the kammershpeler varm, with the chandelier, and everything. I played a maid the harem house. How do you say it? It was a -- a film made, and also a movie, segments of it in English. The harem house, you know, with the maid, where the father says tyrin down, do everything, this and this and that, and he was there.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: The head of the house, I forgot what the thing was. And I played that in the kammershpeler. Then Cornelius saw the leading lady walking around in a bra, from one room to the other. And he said to my father, he said, "Berrik, do you like that?" My father said, "No, but I have no control over her, maybe you can do something." So they did something, and that was the end of my theater career -- career. Anyway, what I want to tell you, I went to art school, and I learned how to -- to design clothes. What can you do in that little time? But I had it in me from my father, that's one thing you -- he was one of the best tailors. And my dress won first prize, and I'll never forget it. It was a royal blue dress that I designed. Was with the high neck, royal blue like a crepe suz -- a crepe material that's silk. And it had a big Japanese pocket I put on it. I must have seen it somewhere or something. And then the belt went in, right into the pocket, and it tied. And

then I put on the model big, red jewelry on the royal blue, with big, red earring, and beautiful black marble. It won first prize. So that was it.

Q: Wha --

A: And when I got married -- yeah, go ahead.

Q: Wh-what yar -- what year are we roughly now? Is that 1946?

A: We're roughly on the end of 1946, as I was going already, with Cornelius.

Q: Actually, I -- I have a few follow up questions now, but I --

A: Okay, let's --

Q: -- we should -- I should [indecipherable]

A: -- can we -- can I go to the bathroom?

Q: Yes, I just want to say my little thing. This is the end of tape one, side B, interview with Marsha Loen.

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: -- interview with Marsha Loen. This is tape number two, side A. Marsha, I have about three questions now that I just kind of toss out before you [indecipherable]

A: Okay. Just go ahead, Regina.

Q: Question number one, it was not difficult for you to live in Austria, and speak the German language, when you had been actually in the German concentration camp?

A: Absolutely not, and I'll tell you why. Can I tell you why?

Q: Please, yes.

A: I'm even driving a German car, because you cannot go on hating all your life, you only hurt yourself. And that is what I learned here in school, when I took a couple of semesters from psychology, after I finished high school, and junior -- college. Because --

Q: But when you're --

A: -- I me -- I don't say I'm in love with the people that -- that -- the offspring that the people that did it to me, but I cannot also hate, because I'm only going to hurt myself.

And language is a culture, and the German is a very good car, because I get a very good trade-in on it. So that's the answer for you, Regina.

Q: But even at that time, when everything was still so close.

A: It bothered me to a certain extent that I don't feel nothing. It did bother me, but I didn't feel anything about it. I'm sorry to say that, maybe it's wrong. But, you know, to hate is to hurt yourself, and that I've learned from the beginning as I was liberated, with

the Russians, with everything else. If you hate, you only hurt yourself. Without even going to school, I knew about it. I felt about it, let's say, this way.

Q: The other question I had was, did you ever meet a vakovna actually at that time?

A: No. Not till after eight years, or seven years I was in this country. I didn't even know survivor exist for about seven years in this country. That is another story.

Q: Well that we shall definitely talk about that a little later.

A: Oh yeah, they we'll finish this soon.

Q: Oh yeah, yeah. And -- and the last question is though, was it important for you to some degree that Cornelius was also a survivor? Did you talk about where you came from, or was that not that --

A: Shall I tell you something? First place, Cornelius was a different survivor that I was. He had a Christian mother that was a Righteous Christian that impressed me tremendously. She saved 32 Jews. In fact, she has right now a tree in Jerusalem. And she's in one of our guides in the museum as a Righteous Christian, in the same guide that Schindler is, and Wallenberg. Second place, he was a gentleman. Third place, he came from Yugoslavia, where the lot of his family was killed, too, in Novosad. And third place, he was a good looking man, he was well dressed, and he was clean. And that was the most important thing to me. I don't care if he would have been -- I don't know what. And the language that we spoke and could understand each other was only German, because he doesn't speak Yiddish -- Jewish. I didn't speak Hungarian, or Yugoslavian, or any

other language, or English. He spoke 12 languages, I didn't. I wasn't that bright. I was bright, but not that bright. So, it didn't bother me at all.

Q: So what were -- what were your plans eventually, then? You did not intend to stay in Austria?

A: Definitely not. Before I met Cornelius, I was the biggest Zionist that ever existed. Smuggling the people over the border to Palestine. In fact, Ben-Gurion's what was his name, Shorette was at my wedding, and I was crying, because I had to go to America, because Cornelius' family was here. And he said, "Marsha, we need people like you in America, too. Don't cry." So it was a sadness to a certain extent, a sadness in me that I couldn't go to Palestine. But another thing I went to a country that I thought I would never get -- get to. You understand what I -- in a way it was selfish, but I was happy.

Q: We'll talk a little bit more about that when we -- when we get there. So how did you get there, actually? What -- what happened?

A: What happened? How did I get to America?

Q: To America, yeah.

A: Yeah. I married Cornelius, Cornelius had a brother here that came in 1939 for the World Fair, on his honeymoon. Lost all our money. In fact, when I married Cornelius he was very rich, because I also went for rich people, because I didn't want to have no food again. And then we got a letter that in 1947, when we got married, his mother and father were supposed to go through Vienna. And I had a false passport, and he had a passport, and we were supposed to meet them in Vienna, and then the thing was changed, and they

went through Prague, they went by plane. They shipped a lot of antiques, that my father-in-law was going to open an antique shop. I don't want to go into a big story about it, everything was stolen, and we couldn't rip -- we were making 30 dollars a week, and paid a private detective all over. Nothing was found except a couple of paintings that were between the bedding that came in those empty cases. So this is the first time I lost money, and I didn't feel sorry for me. I felt sorry for my mother-in-law, and father-in-law that had an estate with maids and chauffer, and two cars in Europe, you know what it means. A Fiat, and a Chevrolet for the boys. And ift -- went to San Marco when David -- when Connor was three years old, and all over Switzerland, and Cornelius went to -- to college in Budapest, and to Switzerland, and -- very, very rich people. And she had to come and start crocheting, and start work. I felt rather sorry for them than for myself.

Q: So how did you -- how did you get over then, by boat?

A: So we came, and we went from Bindermichl, we went to Bremerhaven, and there's decided there is a boat going through New Orleans, if you -- and it would take 14 days rather than more. And we went on that boat. Then that was after -- we were married in '47, that was in August 1949. And we went on the boat, and being that Cornelius spoke so many languages, he was invited as a interpreter to speak over the tape recorder, and we came on the boat early. Came in on the boat early, I was made shtudmarder -- the head of that old woman, barra -- because the women and the men slept separate. And I met the two Ire officers. And like I said, I was pretty good looking, had a good sense of humor, knew how to dance, I won a couple of contested. And that rock and roll in Austria. Not

with Cornelius, he's a lousy dancer, with his friend. And being in the theater, you know, and everything. And I made very good friends with the Ire officer. And I got very sick going through the channel, very sick. And, you know, being that Cornelius was with the Joint, and part director of the Joint Distribution Committee, I got an apartment in the displaced camp that they had a telephone. And through that I met a lot of black marketeers. Ve -- he never did it, because he was afraid, God forbid, he couldn't go to America. So even when he lost all his money, he wrote a letter to his sister-in-law, did my tuxedo arrive? She s -- she wrote him back, "Cornelius, with all the money that you have now, you don't need a tuxedo." The first thing didn't bother him, the money, or the diamonds, or everything else, it bothered him is the tuxedo. So what happened is is that when we lived there, and we had that telephone, a lot of black marketeers would come over and make telephone calls, and everything else. And they went to England, and they brought me beautiful clothes, you know, as [indecipherable]. But I had a maid from Dabotchka, Maria, I'll never forget. And they would come in, and if I wasn't at home, and they would go into the kitchen in the displaced camp, I had a beautiful apartment -- Wiesenthal, from the -- from the Museum of Tolerance, lived above me. I gave him a party line, and I gave him a maid. And I wouldn't have anything to do with that man if he said boo.

Q: How come?

A: Because he's the biggest phony in the world. I'm sorry to say that on tape. Anyway -- and if you want to cut it out, you're welcome to it.

Q: No, actually, I would like to ask you more about that.

A: Anyway, and the thing is is that that will come later, with the museum. And the thing is is that I had a telephone, I had all those clothes, we were on the boat, and I didn't know where Connor is, Cornelius didn't know where I -- all of a sudden I didn't know if I was in love with him, if I was not in love with him. And I start throwing up. And that Ire officer was already a little bit in love with me, I had a feeling. So he came down to the thing, and he picked me up -- at that time I was only a size seven. I wasn't what I was right n -- he picked me up, in that pink robe [indecipherable] and he gave me his cabin, and he went to live with the other Ire officer. And my husband, when I saw him on the deck, I got -- I got well after I saw him. And my husband stayed with me in that -- in that cabin, and everybody, all of those survivors that were on that boat, thought that I had an affair with the tyrit officer. At my age, just married, you know, and everything else. But I let them talk. And my husband was with me, and we had that cabin over, and we were 14 days on the sea. And I got better, and I went out to mingle with the people, and I arranged a dance on the boat. And, you know, 14 days over the Mississippi, in order to go to New Orleans, was a long time. And varabul Connor start feeling better, I start feeling better. I had nice clothes, and I had that friend, that Ire officer. In fact, he came to Los Angeles one time, when I was very unhappy, because he left me a PO box, in case I'm not happy, to send him a letter. And I was unhappy because in the beginning we lived with our in-laws, and so on. So I was a little unhappy, till I got that letter, and he came over, and he said, "All you do, move out or I take Marsha with me."

Q: So you had a protector there. A friend, friend.

A: Yeah, t -- I had a protector, and a friend. And he -- he di -- he was in love with me, maybe, I don't know. But I did not have an affair with him. I'm telling you, on tape, or on the tape, or off a tape. But everybody thought I did. And we went 14 days [indecipherable]. And we arrived to New Orleans, and of course, if we arrived in New Orleans -- Cornelius was still the gentleman, and he still knew a little more like all displaced people, because he was -- and he beat the champion in Ping Pong.

Q: On the boat, or in the --

A: No, in New Orleans.

Q: In New Orleans.

A: In New Orleans. We were in the Jewish -- the Jewish geminda vizakmindas in -- in -- in -- in --

Q: Nay -- neighborhood [indecipherable]

A: No, the gemine, the Jewish farbaltung. The -- the Jews that took care of the people. We were the first boat to arrive in New Orleans. I was so stupid, I took my pearls, and rings, and things, and I was afraid to take it with me at the displaced camp, send it with -- somebody smuggled -- brought it to my -- to my mother-in-law before 1947, before they left, and -- and theirs were -- everything was stolen, including my things. When I came into New Orleans, they didn't even look at it, they were so happy to see us, the first boat, you know. And we were staying with all the Jews, it was like a temple, you know, like the Jewish Federation here. You know, there was arranged a -- a big room with food, and

the bananas and everything. Because on the boat all I got -- I was invited once to the captain's table, and they ask me what would I like. I said, "I would like a piece of black bread. I can't stand that cotton any more." And then they gave me a bowl of cottage cheese and fruit, and I said, "Would you do me a favor, would you separate the fruit and the cottage cheese?" You know, with me there was no nothing, captain or no captain, if I had to say something, I said it. And I start helping the people on the boat. You know, there was a little boy -- she died, and he's sick, and now he's a very famous pharmacist, and he's very well to -- I haven't seen him for maybe 20 years. His name was Leon Lolinka was his name, and he -- his father was from my town, and I knew his mother. And I brought food for him, I had food brought for him, and juices that was brought to my cabin and everything. And we arrived in New Orleans like I said, and we were in that geminda. My husband right away played Ping Pong, you know, his life, cause that what they did also in the displaced camp with his cousin, played chess, played Ping Pong. He beat the champion, and a Jewish woman that was -- owned a couple of apartment houses, was very impressed with us, the way we were dressed, than the other people, and my husband beating the champion and every -- she invited us for dinner, and as we were walking, I had my camera, and I stopped, and I wanted to take a picture of a little black girl in a yellow dress. She was the most gorgeous, beautiful African-American I've ever - - African-American -- at that time we called them black -- African-American girl I've ever seen, and she came to me, and she said, "We don't do those things here." I said, "I just finished being in a concentration camp, in a displaced camp, in a Russian camp, and

you're coming to tell me that I cannot take a picture of that woman because she has a different color skin? Forget your dinner, I'm not coming, invite somebody else." And I walked away from her. And that rich woman, that I could have had a lot out of her, believe me, but I didn't want anything to do with her. Absolutely nothing. She apologized, and she said, "This is the rules," you know, "and I'm Jewish too." You know, and I said, "No, to me you are not Jewish, because if you would have been Jewish you would have done something about me, and about my two little sisters, and you wouldn't let me -- tell me that I can't take a picture of that woman. It was the end of it.

Q: Was anybody interested where you were coming from, so to speak, in --

A: Oh, in New Orleans they were -- not that interested, they were just trying to be nice to us. Interested nobody was. Nobody wanted to hear the sad stories, and at that time I really wasn't read to tell them yet, to tell you the honest truth, as I arrived. And the -- like I said, we arrived, and I to -- my mother lived in a -- mother-in-law lived in a big house, she was living in a shack. It was a better neighborhood than Bull Heights, and she was working already. And, you know, there was no money. My brother-in-law was broke. My father-in-law send him money for the boys, and when everybody went into airplanes, he we -- he went into lawnmowers. They didn't take him in the army because he had something with his eyes, and he lost that money, and his money, and his wife's money, and everybody else, and we were completely broke.

Q: And that was already in Los Angeles, or that was [indecipherable]

A: In Los Angel -- everything that -- no, in New Orleans we were there a couple of days, and then we took a train direct to Los Angeles. And the 70 dollars that he laid out for us, I paid him back, because I didn't want nothing from nobody. And we live with my mother-in-law and father-in-law like I said, and they -- Connor was the youngest one, and I start working in a factory. We had to live, we had to eat. I start work in a factory, and what happened is is the foreman wan -- was on vacation -- like I say, I was very handy going -- working already on clothes, and everything. And the man that owned the place, his name was Rubin, I will also never forget, he came and he said to me, "Why don't you give out the work? Why don't you act as the foreman?" Worked there couple of days, and every night I came home I was throwing up, and Connor couldn't get a job. So we went to the Jewish Federation, that I work now for, at that time, because we came with the affidavit, so we got nothing from HIAS, nothing from nobody. So we had to do it -- everything ourself. So we went there, and they gave him a job as a -- a watchman in a motel -- the [indecipherable] the motel is still standing. That man didn't ever know what a gun means, or anything at all the gun. And then my father-in-law would bring the papers and read it for me, because I wasn't that good in English that time, how many people were killed in motels, with guns, with that. And then I didn't want to tell him that I'm sick, so I would throw up at night, because I couldn't take the sweat, the smell of the factory. Not that I was a snob, I just couldn't take it. And then Cornelius got another job with a friend, in -- with German lenses, through his brother. Not very much paid, and I -- my mother-in-law got me a job with a designer, Suzy. Suzy with a designer, designed sweaters, and skirts

with felt appliqués, it was very much in fashion. Sold it to Saks, and everything -- and we had a store on the strip. And where we lived is, we lived near the strip. It was between the strip and Santa Monica, and at that time the strip was the place. There was the -- the mola -- th-the LaRue, there was the Mocambo, Ciro, everything was there. And that was the place there, a main shop, and the factory downstairs, and I worked there. She was very good to me, very good to me, because I caught on just like that, one, two, three. And she would come down, and she would say, "What do you think, what should we design?" And she lived above, in the better area, over Sunset, at that time, on Clark Street. It -- it's sounded center now, where the Billage Hotel is, but it was at Clark Street at that time. And we moved out from my mother-in-law's, and everything they spend on us, we wrote it down, and the minute we made 200 dollars, we paid them all back. But what we did is - - my teeth were all broken from the calcium I didn't have, and they worked on it in Austria, and they ruined it even more. So I went into a dentist that was down the street, on Santa Monica and Clark Street, someone sent me. There was a Thrifty drugstore, and his office was upstairs. And I made very good fr -- I made very easy friend, I made very good friends with him. He start working on me, gave me a good price. I didn't want it for nothing, and I paid him off slowly. And we got to be the best of friend. This were our first friend in America, the Vestliss. And what happened is is my father-in-law went in the basement in the May Company right there, and bought me a black dress, we were going out, so what I did is, I had a colorful scarf -- because the clothes that I brought from Europe, I couldn't wear, with those big pads. Connor's shoes were squeak --

squeaking, you know. It was complete different life, a complete different scene. And these were people that already had catalogs, and -- and -- and live -- lived in Beverly Wood, in Beverly Hills, in the valley, and so on. And eve -- they got to be very good friends of mine. And I was working at Suzy's, and Suzy went to Paris. And her husband, that was a very good looking man went after me, and I had to quit. And I didn't worry, because I had a job waiting for me at Sidney's. And Sidney on LaSeneca was also one of the most exclusive -- and all I needed, clothes. Now, when I was at Suzy's, I went -- I met Marlena Dietrich, I met all the movie stars. Marlena Dietrich, I called her a whore, because she -- I didn't -- wasn't afraid of her, because she didn't pay her bills anyways [indecipherable] I -- I -- I said -- I didn't know what's the different is in English between Madame and Madame at that time. So Suzy was downstairs, and she said, "I would like Suzy to fit me." I was upstairs. I said, "Suzy, the Madame is here." She said, "In America we say Madame." Say -- and I knew that she understood German, and Suzy was from Austria, her father was a Austrian actor, so I, "Suzy, the hura is here." The whore is here, in German.

Q: My God.

A: And, you know, I wasn't afraid of the devil, you know. But Suzy, they -- in fact, I had a [indecipherable] too, because the -- she had a publicity lady there at that time, she paid 200 dollars a month, was a lot of money in the 1950 -- 19 fift -- 1949 - 1950. And she said, you know -- the publicity lady came in, she took some picture and everything else, and she put in a magazine me and Suzy, and cutting out a poodle. And Suzy had a poodle

named Lulu. It said, "Suzy and partner working on a Lulu creation." Do you know that woman didn't come in for two weeks i -- to the st -- to the -- to the factory? I had to run the factory, because she did not like it that I was with her in the magazine, the public -- but it wasn't my fault, in fact, that actress, Barbara Britten was modeling for us at that magazine at that time. It wasn't my fault, I didn't even want to sit there. Who cared if I'm in a magazine or not? All I was worrying, where is the next bread coming from? Where am I going to pay the detective to look for our stuff, and so on, you know. But at night -- she didn't live very far, and she would have an idea, she was very creative. She would have an idea -- in fact, she was engaged to Groucho Marx at one time. And she would have an idea, and she would say -- she married that guy, Larry. Why don't you come over, Pasternak is here with his wife around the pool and everything, and we can work on the -- on the creation, I have something in my -- so we would work for hours. She never paid me overtime, but she always was very good to me, and she bought me certain things that I didn't have, and so on.

Q: So you --

A: But I forgot to tell you, when we moved into that little apartment, over the garage, a rent control apartment, Al and Juliet West, who went and signed for me at Sears and Roebuck, so we get it on payments, and we bought our bedroom -- we Lysoled it, and we painted it. And at that time, it was not modern, wooden floors, but it was wooden floors, we shined it. And we had red couches with pink troracks. And we didn't have a dining, we just had a dining area. And all my friends that lived in Beverly Hills, and everywhere

else, they liked to come to -- to my house to eat, because I learned how to cook from my mother-in-law. She wa -- she went to Budapest to study cooking business, to teach the cooks how to cook. So I got to be a very good cook, so everybody liked to come to my house. I met a lot of interesting people, very interesting people, because I met the Essex, they should rest in peace, they were all older than I was. He was writing the Mickey Spillane movies. I met other people, doctors -- in fact, he had a -- this was the funniest thing because I wasn't used to it. At one time we lived in Beverly Wood at that time, on Sawyer Street, was a very -- it's still a very expensive street. And he gave a Halloween party, and I went as Auntie Mame, and he went as my follower. And I -- I took a bracelet, and I had jewelry, and I made myself a very fancy thing, with my hair up, you know. And I come into his house, and on the drapes were hanging a big -- I hate to say it on the cam -- on tape -- a big skeleton with a wiener hanging out. But they all came in diapers. The doctors, the lawyers, those intelligent peop -- they came in diapers. One came as Adam and Eve, with fig leafs. And here I was worried, you know, this going on. And then I had another problem with them, because a lot of those intellectuals were on the pink side. Not red, but on the pink side, because their background was their parents run away from the Bolsheviks. You know, from the czar, Bolshevik, whatever it is. So one time they took me to a theater, and we saw a show, and it was a union tee -- I don't know what it was. And somebody was talking against America. And I s -- got up and said, "What?" And I start walking out the theater. And four of them went after me, my friends, that is -- nothing should happen to me, that the people shouldn't kill me. They didn't tell me where

they were taking me. But I had a wonderful time, they are still wonderful people, they're very old, very old, but wonderful people. And Juliet and Al, Elizabeth and Rolfe are my very closest friend. Elizabeth and Rolfe, they had a big drugstore on the corner of Fairfax, a old drugstore. And Juliet and Al, Juliet -- when I had my baby, David, I wasn't allowed to have children, because in the concentration camp, you must have heard on the tape, they did something to me by looking for gold. And I tricked my husband into having David. When I had David, and I couldn't afford, and I couldn't get a nurse, it was my first house, I had a little small house in the valley, where I opened already my own business, that Al -- with the help from Al, that wrote me a blank check, if I need money, that he got back every penny, plus. And eliz -- help with Elizabeth and Rolfe. All American friends, I didn't know that -- that -- that survivors exist, only that person that I came on the boat, I told you, with the little boy. I came to visit him in Bull Heights. Cornelius bought a -- a old car, and we drove there every two weeks to visit him, he never told me survivor existed, because he thought they weren't good enough for Cornelius. That was so stupid. Anyway, so what happened is is I did this -- where was I? In the middle of telling you the story.

Q: You talked about David [indecipherable]

A: About David. When David was born, she gave me a maid, Myrtle, that brought up her children, for months. For months, because I had the studio already, that I didn't tell you, in Sherman Oaks, to work for me. This is what kind of a friends she was.

Q: Maybe this is a good time to --

A: Rest?

Q: -- to stop this one.

A: Okay.

Q: This is the end of tape two, side A, interview with Marsha Loen.

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Marsha Loen. This is type -- this is tape number two, side B. I would like to ask you a question about your son, David. First of all, when was he born, and --

A: Regina, can I interrupt you? Why don't you let me tell you before David, when I went to school, and I started working on the museum?

Q: Okay, go right ahead.

A: And then I'll tell you how we bought the -- okay.

Q: Okay, fine.

A: I went to -- I decided -- my husband's family was very educated, and I decided that I'm not going to let them see that -- like I was born under a stone, somewhere on the beach, especially my brother-in-law that was a philosopher, and very intelligent man, he just died about si -- three months ago, at 85. And what I did is, Cornelius went with me with the streetcar from Santa Monica to Hollywood, and every night after work, I went to Hollywood High. And then, without knowing any survivors or anything, somebody told me they are going to build a monument, and they are having a meeting on Vermont.

Holocaust monument. So I went there, and I s -- the meeting, and all of a sudden, my part of the committee. So I prayed -- played through them from school that night when they had a meeting, and I helped build that monument -- I mean the -- the museum. And in 1978, when we opened the museum, I was chairing it, and that why I wanted to interrupt you to tell you, you are -- you also ask me why am I mad at Wiesenthal, and I want to tell you why. Because before we opened the museum, Mr. Wiesenthal was supposed to speak for us. I shouldn't say that on tape, but I have to get it off my chest. And maybe I'll get fired for it, but I don't care. Before we opened the museum, Mr. Wiesenthal was supposed to speak for us. Our chair was Mr. Silverman, American Jew, and we had a meeting in his house. And I don't -- I forget the name from the old man that came, and said that he got a letter from Wiesenthal that he wants five dollars per head more, like cattle. And we couldn't even afford it to open the museum, how can we afford to give him five dollar more to be our -- our speaker at the mu -- at the big dinner, at the opening. And then the Wiesenthal Center came to us -- that is now the Wiesenthal Center, with the proposition they'll give us 25,000 dollars for him. And being that we couldn't get it more from the federation, because they gave us a lot, we sold Wiesenthal for 25,000 dollars to the Wiesenthal Center. The Los Angel -- at that time we were the Martyr's Memorial, and the Holocaust Museum, we just changed our name to the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust because it's much easier to -- to get to understand it. And that's why Wiesenthal for me is absolutely poo, and the reas -- I have been once at the Wiesenthal Center, and that was with a delegation -- this comes later -- with a delegation from --

from Russia, that came to see what we did, and they saw our museum, they saw the Wiesenthal museum. And let me tell you something, a very famous man from there, that helped build the museum, behind the synagogue in Moscow said that our museum is a Holocaust Museum, theirs is a Disneyland Holocaust. I'm sorry to say it on tape, but this what it is, and if ever anybody hears it, please forgive me, if you're interested in the Wiesenthal Center, because it's strictly too much to do -- I'm so -- come --

Q: Cornelius? We're hearing a little noise here, okay?

A: And Wiesenthal is -- he should live to 120, I have nothing against him, but he made himself a name. I know him because he lived upstairs, across from us -- leef -- because this was the elite of the DP camp. And across from us lived a name -- a man by the name of Ignatz. We called him -- what -- called him, Ignatz? And he was prosecuting the Hungarian Nazis. And then Wiesenthal took it all over.

Q: That was in Linz, in Austria.

A: That was in Linz, in Austria, in Bindermichl. And if he denies it, he's a liar. Anyway, let's go back to -- now, we can go back to David.

Q: Well -- well, let's talk about David a little later then, because --

A: Okay.

Q: -- you just began to talk about you work with the museum.

A: David was born then, already, so David was born in 1958. The doctor said I couldn't have children, because first place our bloods are different, mine and Cornelius, and I was afraid. They say the first child it's nothing, but I was afraid. Also, when -- if you hear my

tape in -- in the museum, they took me into a room, and they looked for gold. And I was very young, and they did something there, so it was very -- the doctor didn't want -- they didn't want me -- but I wanted a child, because when my father -- in '57 they brought my father, that survived Dachau. I worked so hard for the Gateway of Mental Health hospital in Los Angeles. I and Cornelius were fundraising in the valley. So they surprised me on a television show. It was called at that time, "It Could Be You." And they told me I was going to have -- announce my fashion show, cause I'm giving for Gateway for mental health. And they came to pick me up, and then they surprised me with my father. And what happened is my father came, and he came into the -- to my house, and he says, "Oh, a Jewish girl, a bizdatnitsi, no children." And it practically killed me. So -- and then my mother-in-law and father-in-law was in a very, very bad accident, and the two sons were so good, and they were so terrific, and that day I decided -- and I knew my mother was -- just has to snap a finger, she had a baby. I remember this as a child, and in ghetto, she wa -- a ba -- baby was born. She was made before the ghetto, was born in ghetto. And I said to myself, "I'm going to get pregnant, I'm gong to trick him into it." And I got pregnant. And being that I am a designer, I wore a certain kind of clothes, that he never noticed it till about the third or fourth month, and then I told him. And I wouldn't go to a gynecologist, but again, one of my model's husband's was a very famous gynecologist. He also charged me a big amount, because he thought I was so filthy rich, because of my studio, and his wife models for me. And I went to him, and I was pregnant, and all through the pregnancy we -- we did out garden in our home -- in our new home, and we

did -- the front we added landscape, I -- landscaper. I was bleeding, and I never told the doctor, and I never told -- and David was born prematured. And I had the dachshund at that time that was sick. And -- and I had my little house on Bervis in Van Nuys. And I opened in '53 ti -- my studio, ameeet studio in Sherman Oaks. And when I opened the studio is my friend the Vestliss', they helped me, and who went looking with me, Elizabeth, because they had a big drugstore in the valley, and we found that place, and it was -- and I remodeled it in a early American, because I loved the early American, because that for me presented the country that I came, and that gave me a home. And even in my house, in my first house, I had the early American. In my little apartment behind the studio, I had the early American with the hooked rug. And now I go a little more modern. I got used to America. Anyway, and what happened is is that I -- I -- I got pregnant, and I worked, and like I said, I brought my father out, and it upset me, and then when my mother-in-law was in the accident, I said when I'm gone there wa -- nobody going to be left, I have to have something. And I stuck it out, and David was born in the eighth month. And he was -- I took him out -- he was about five pounds, because at that time they just build the Encino hospital, and it wasn't far from my -- from my studio. So what happened is is I got -- and it was Monday morning, I got terrible cramps, and I called a friend if she could take me. And she took me in, and the doctor said take her in right away, because I had -- delivering another baby. And she was sitting in the front room, and doing a -- she told -- I found out later doing a check, balancing your checkbook. That was all still Americans, not -- no survivors. I didn't know any survivors.

And the -- they came out and they said, "Where can we get hold of Mr. Loen?" And Cornelius' office always on the ru -- on the road. And th -- she said -- th -- she says, "Why?" Said, "Mrs. Loen is being admitted." So I said, "I'm going to have a baby," and all the checks were flying all over the waiting room. My friend, the schultz. Anyway, so what happened is David was born, and he was in a incubator. And I had one stitch. One stitch, because I was pretty flexible. And then Fritz was sick, and he was in a -- in Tarzana in a hospital. So, I had the people working for me in the studio.

Q: Who was Fritz?

A: Fritz was my little dachshund. And -- I took him out from a pound, believe it or not. I gave him a home. And he was a pedigree. And he had -- his b-behind legs was hurt -- was very bad, so I took him to the finest hospitals in Tarzana, very far away. So I would go and visit my baby in the incubator, then visit Fritz, and then come back to work in the studio.

Q: I'd like to ask you just two quick questions for clarification.

A: Yeah.

Q: It would have been dangerous for you to get a child? That was [indecipherable]

A: Yes. I -- it told me -- when the doctor was putting me in the hospital -- what was his name, Cornell? I forgot, oh.

Q: That's alright.

A: Oh, it's -- we were -- we were so close. He was putting me in the hospital, he says, "First I'm going to save your life, and then I'm going to save the baby's." I said,

“Robert,” Robert -- I said, “Robert, if my baby dies, I kill you. I went through eight months, and I’m going to kill you.” So you see, because I’ve done so much in the concentration camps, and afterwards, with charity, with raising money, and everything else, said, “God couldn’t do this to me again.” And then, the hospital was so small, and I got terrible cramps. It was just built, and they brought in -- in the next room a woman from -- from surgery, she said, “Keep quiet.” That lady just came out, she said -- I said, “But I’m wet.” I didn’t even know that you break water. I never read up on it. So they found Robert right away, and he brought with him two doctors, two pediatricians, and he was putting in that stitch, and I said, “Robert, are you knitting or purling?” Because I design knitted clothes. This is already under anesthetic. I had a -- he had to give me a spinal because my water broke. And then all of a sudden I hear the other doctor, “Is that you, Marsha?” It was Dr. Danielson, his wife was one of my clientele. So you see, I was surrounded by friends when David was born. And I took him out of the incubator, and after six months I had to put him on a skim milk diet, thanks God. And he was reading and writing at two and a half years old. At three years old, he was -- he knew every president, he knew every composer. Now, he was not genius. I took him to UCLA. My father-in-law was a very, very intelligent man, and David was his life, so he spent a lot of time with David. David has -- has a photographic memory, like I do. I remember a lot of things as a child, don’t forget, that I went through. A lot I forget because I blocked it out, but a lot I remember. And David has a photographic memory. So one day, he was running up the steps in my father-in-law’s apartment, and he says -- and he’s reading the paper, he’s running up, he’s

not -- he's three years old, and he says, "Appa, Castro is in Moscow." Yeah, my father-in-law should rest in peace, it was his life. One time he took a wooden spoon, and he hit him on the behind. I'll never forget, he called me up, and he said, "Appa," that's an Hungarian father, he said, "if you do it, it doesn't hurt." He loved him so much. In fact, I had to take him to the doctor that treated my father, because the day before he jumped on his bed and everything, and I heard him in his room praying, and he said, "Please God, if I did something wrong, bring my -- my grandfather back as -- as a baby again." So I took him to his doctor, to my father-in-law's doctor, and he told him, Dr. Cohen, that his grandfather was very sick, he could not survive, that, in fact, the last day he brought him a lot of joy by being there.

Q: Did -- did you have any particular hopes or plans for David that, as a -- as a survivor that made a connection to that?

A: I'll tell you something. I've seen a lot of things happen between my American friends that were always Jewish. If the son doesn't get to be a doctor, or a pharmacist, or anything else, and those kids were very unhappy. I never told David anything about the Holocaust till he went to go Bar Mitzvah. When -- when he wouldn't eat, I wouldn't say I was hungry, why don't you eat? When he didn't eat I would say, "David, you have to eat, there are so many children hungry in China." He said, "Why don't you adopt a couple?" That little fat monster told me that. But I never told David anything, anything. I never exposed him to it. David played Little League. I burned my hands on the making hamburger there [indecipherable] did in my life, run from the studio, run to the -- to the

field, made the hamburgers when it was my day. He played Little League, he loved sports, he did judo, anything. In fact, he was -- when he was very little, he was very smart, but not coordinated. To -- my doctor, Dr. Jessup, told me, "Why don't you take him boxing or judo?" So I took him for judo. So in the beginning he didn't want to go in because he didn't know how to tie his shoes. So I told him, "Then leave it open." But later on, this was the best thing that I ever did. But I never, never exposed him to the Holocaust before he was able to understand. And I won't tell any, any child about the Holocaust that is under 11 or 12 years old, because this is a very horrible story that happened, and it can affect their life. And especially my son, it was important to me that he doesn't feel guilty because of me. That he doesn't eat, or he doesn't eat. He didn't want to be a doctor, he wanted to be a sports re -- the reporter, fine. This is your life, you live it. At 21 he moved out of the house, we moved to the town house. Fine, you live your life. I'm not going to make scene. He is 40 years old, he is not married yet. I would love to have a grandchild, but if he doesn't want to get married yet, if he want to play the field, fine, what do I care?

Q: So when did you tell him a little bit about your experience, and what happened?

A: I told him before he went to -- he started studying for the Bar Mitzvah. I told him what happened, very slowly, and very quietly, because he didn't want to study for his Bar Mitzvah. I had to get a private rabbi. I did not belong to a temple, because -- this is another story by itself, I'm not going to go into it. And I -- I ra -- I had the rabbi, I ha -- I hired the shul -- a temple, and he had the most magnificent Bar Mitzvah that ever -- he

had everything -- at that time, everything was Calypso. And a friend of mine was in the linen supply business. Everything was served flambé, and it was kosher, glot kosher, because at that time I knew a lot of survivors already, and some of them were very religious, and I wasn't going to commit a sin. So I found a place that was glot kosher, and it just opened, the Ventura Club. And -- but everything they gave you, they did your flowers, I didn't like. They gave me hundred dollar deposit, I paid 500 dollars for flowers. Imported hats from Mexico, with everything Calypso, every color. I didn't like his orchestra, so I had another one for the grownups. I changed everything around. They were supposed to do everything, I did everything. But I liked. But it was a beautiful Bar Mitzvah. And, in fact, David was mostly an atheist. But now, as he is getting older, is very, very Jewish inclined. And I never pushed him, and I never told him you have to be, because when came Christmas, we were at my mother-in-laws. Came Rosh Hashanah, we were at my house. My mother-in-law made the be -- on -- on Passover, the best matzo balls there is. And I never -- in fact, when my father-in-law had his first heart attack, he -- my mother-in-law was running up the street to call us, and she was crossing herself, and David was only going one way. She star -- she called me up, she said -- as sad as it was that -- where father is and everything, but said, "I have to tell you something. David was going one way, and I said, David, why are you doing it?" He said, "Anyah, I'm half and half." You know, so that's -- that's the -- the funny part that comes into a sad life.

Q: Let me ask you about your --

A: I was very close to them, to my mother-in-law, and father-in-law, very close. In fact, I had a ex-sister-in-law -- I have a sister-in-law that I'm very close to. She's Catholic, because for me it doesn't matter what religion, what faith, what race, as long -- and especially my mother-in-law and father-in-law, David was their life. That was the only grandson, and that was their life. And my father-in-law, he didn't live to see it, only wanted to live to see David's Bar Mitzvah. My mother-in-law lived to see it, but my father-in-law didn't.

Q: Just a quick follow up on your own faith. You don't have to go into the temple story --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- just a question. Did your faith change because of your war experience --

A: Yes. And I'm not going to lie to you like other people. It didn't change for the better. I was -- come from a very religious family. And it's a town where it was the most famous yeshiva, Slabotka Yeshiva. Most of the finest rabbis came out, and my grandfather gave a lot of money for it. And he was very religious, and he was -- like I told you, I was his pet. And he was the first one to be taken away. With a hundred -- with 138, I don't know how much it here, but 103 degrees temperature. The first aktja that they had in the Kovno ghetto, they took away my grandfather, my grandmother, both of them, but the closest one I was to Shia and Bessa Schneider. And let me tell you -- my mother's family. And one time -- my girlfriend died of kidney when she was 38 years old, for a transplant, many, many years ago. And a very famous rabbi, Rabbi Newsbaum was at her home, but va -- he didn't go to ma -- many homes, but he came to Ethela's home. And I said, "Why,

why the nice people die first?" And he said to me, "Because God doesn't want them to suffer." I said, "That is no excuse." I said, "I have never done anything, my two little sisters have never done anything in their life." I said, "Why did -- one was three years old, she didn't even have a chance to -- to suffer, or not to suffer. This is no answer, Rabbi." Then, when I came to the valley, and I was going to have David, I said, "Now it's time to join a temple." I spent every penny to opening the studio. And Al and Juliet West, they helped me out, I told you. And I went to a very famous temple, I don't [indecipherable] to tell you, Rabbi Weiss. Later on I was with him on the same ticket speaking, with the federation, and then at -- at the big B'nai Brith conference. He didn't recognize me when I came to the microphone. And I came to him, and I said, "I would like to join your temple." And he said, "It cost 750 dollars to join the temple." And I said, "I can't afford it," [indecipherable] He said, "Then why don't you look for another temple?" And since then, I would never join a temple, and I was with him on one ticket that -- that -- at the federation I didn't say a word. But, when the aliyah start coming in from Russia, we had a big convention, B'nai Brith convention, and I was there, and it was in the aisles microphones, and I came up, and I said, "Rabbi, you want us to make Jews out of the Russian people. They are coming so poor, and we have to make Jews out of them." I said, "Wasn't -- do you know me?" He said, "Oh yes, Marsha, we were on the same ticket at the federation, at the ballroom." I said, "Now, don't you remember in 1957 I came to you before my son was born, and I wanted to join your temple, and you said to me it cost too much money, I should look for another temple?" I got such an applaud, 120

women were there. Here he's giving -- this is such hypocritical -- he's giving us a lecture that we should help the Russian Jews -- being je -- make them Jews, and -- and -- and -- and 20 or 30 years ago he refused me to join his temple. He's not the rabbi there any more. It's a very good temple, Temple Ariel.

Q: Ask you another question. You said earlier that you didn't know there were other Holocaust survivors in -- in --

A: No.

Q: [indecipherable] for awhile. When -- when did that change, and when did you --

A: I'll tell you. You'll die laughing. I was sitting in my studio -- sitting in my studio, Robert Young was sitting there, he knitted on the set. I used mostly designed for the Gracie Allen Show. Mostly, it was expensive and -- to have a dress designed by me, or they knit it themselves or we made it for [indecipherable] Ice Follies, Mrs. Sheepstead, Loretta Young, you know, I had most of the studio people. And we're sitting -- the owners of the Sportsman's Lounge at that time was Zuzu Fine, and Robert Young was sitting, and a very old actress by the name of Ann Harding, I don't know if people will remember, because at that time she was old already. She was on studio one or something, I saw the night before. And I get a phone call. I said, "Can I talk to Mariashki Supporzhnikov?" And I said, "Ish bin mya," this woman is speaking Yiddish, I am speaking German because I forgot how to speak Yiddish. I said, "Ish bin Myashka sup," - I am Myashka Suppozhn. But in German she said, "I'm sorry," she said, "Myashka Supporzhnikov didn't speak such a good German." I said, "But I am." She said no, and

she start talking in Jewish, and we talk and we talk and the people are there [indecipherable]. They are sitting there laughing like crazy for the conversation that's going on, and here I'm sitting there, and -- and talking to her, and she said, "Now wait a moment. What kind of a coat did you wear in ghetto?" I said, "I wore a gray poodle coat, I'll never forget, with a big, big cub -- ." What do you call it, that you put over your head?

Q: A hood?

A: A hood.

Q: A hood, yeah.

A: Yeah, and it was made out of poodle cloth, because when I came into the ghetto, I was so young, that my clothes grew out of me. So my father found a piece of poodle cloth, and he made me a warm coat. And everybody envied me, of course. She said, "Oh, you are really Myashka Supporzhnikov." That night I was invited to a very big affair, and I stopped off in a home before we -- we went to the party, and from then on I start meeting more and more survivors. I knew survivors, but I didn't really associate with them, because they were from Poland. I had nothing did -- I had -- we had nothing in common. So I met a lot of Lithuanian survivors. And this is -- I mean, my life was always the museum, and always the Holocaust. The first time I start talking was here in the valley. It was one time a very big tycoon, the Glickmans. He was in the eel -- real estate business, he was a multi-millionaire, lost a lot of money. He was 13 years old, and he had the havara group. Was many, many years ago, about 20 years, 30 years ago. And I went to

their home, and a pr -- a -- a teacher from Grant High School at that time, they called it the bagel factory, it was a Jewish high school, and they were the first builders of the Stefan Weiss Temple, the Glickmans. And they called me over, they said, "Would you talk to havara group, tell them your story?" That was the first time I start talking about the Holocaust, it was about 32 years ago. When he brought me home, that professor, from -- from Grant High School, he said to Cornelius, "I created another billi -- Billy Graham." From that day on, I start talking about the Holocaust to everyone that will listen, and never stopped. And what happened is is -- but never, never did I tell anybody anything that they didn't want to hear. The only thing that is before I went to go to be citizen in -- and one of my clientele was a daughter-in-law of Professor J.C. Owens, he was the right hand of Hoover. And she said to me, "If you are going to be, be a Republican, not a Democrat." And Cornelius, and his mother, and everybody, big Democrats. I says -- I said, "Why?" She said, "I'll bring you some documents, and I want Cornelius and you to read it together, because his English is a little bit better than yours." I said, "Thanks a lot Mrs. Owens, you just did me a big favor. In front of all my clientele, you are telling me that." She took it out of the safe, and she brought it to me, and I read the story, when Hoover was in 1938 in Europe, and he came back, and he asked Roosevelt to do something about the Jews that are being killed in Europe. He didn't come himself to Palo Alto, he sent somebody, and told them to inform Mr. Hoover that he cannot be bothered with a handle -- handful of Jews. And since then, I came into a friends of mine house, a survivor also from Lithuania, that had a big picture of hers -- over her fireplace of

Roosevelt, and that was in the 19 -- late 1950's, and I spit on his face, and she threw me out of her house. And now everything comes out in the open. What I knew in '53, is coming out now, with the boat, and with everything else.

Q: I have to s -- change. This is the end of tape two, side B, interview with Marsha Loen.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Marsha Loen. This is tape number three, side A. I would like to talk a little bit more about your work -- your Holocaust work [indecipherable]

A: My Holocaust work is --

Q: When does it --

A: -- the most important thing in my life after my son and my husband.

Q: When -- when did that start, and had it something to do also with a change in -- in -- in society, more of an interest in [indecipherable]

A: No, no, absolutely not. When I first started there was people didn't even know there was a Holocaust. Some Jewish people didn't know, like I told you, I talked to the havara group, and it was like I was, you know, something out of the blue. They were shocked that there was a Holocaust. And these were very close friends of mine.

Q: And that was in the late 50's, wasn't it?

A: And that was in the -- in the li -- yeah, the late 50's, yes, definitely. And -- no, the beginning of the 60's already. And the people were -- were shocked what was going on in the Holocaust. Jewish people, friends of mine, Christian people. It doesn't matter to me if they were Christian, or Jewish, or half and half, or whatever it is. So I made up my mind then and then, that I'm going -- not -- I was left for revenge, and mine only revenge will be not to hurt people, but to teach them that this should never happen again. And that is my revenge, and that why I'm still speaking. And that -- we were very rich, we lost a lot

of money. The same museum that I helped build, and paid out thousand, and thousand, and thousands of dollars, I'm working that museum on a salary right now, through the federation, at my age. But I have to, and as long as I can drive, and as long as I can work, I will do it. Cornelius is still working again, too. But I'll tell you something, maybe it makes us happier this way. Sometimes I'm very tired, I could hardly get done. Because a lot of people that work with me in the museum, that are in higher positions that I am, are very misunderstanding, and don't understand the feeling. And I've talked to somebody at the federation the other week, and he says to me, "We have a big problem here, Marsha." And he's right, psychologically, he said, "You are one of the high lite -- lay person, and now you're staff, and that is a big problem." And he says, "You can't stand anything that is wrong." And I said, "I can't, because you know, when I go out, and I raise in two days, four and a half thousand dollars to put up banners, I want to be consulted if the banners are alright or not, because three of them were made, and it was selected the worst of them." I said -- and that is what hurts me. That person that runs that museum, I cannot mention name, is very jealous of me, because when it comes -- anything that has to do with museum, everybody knows me, the whole community. Starting from the federation, to the - to-- to black young adults, African American, to teachers, to everything else. Everybody knows me, and I hope they respect me, and that is the biggest problem. But I have to work, and I -- this is the only job I know. And I've learned, believe it or not, at my age, the last three years I been working on the computer, and I'm pretty good at it.

Q: Good -- good for you. Good for --

A: And I go out, and you know what? I was supposed to start as -- as a coordinator, and I was on the level of higher pos -- not with money, but on a higher level, and she couldn't take it. So she put me down as eight -- grade eight. I got the same salary, and I'm union anyway, but she didn't want to have the same paper filled out every two weeks as I did. So I was put as, instead of 10 plus to eight plus, and it didn't bother me, because I don't go out for big honor and so on. I also very mu -- many times met, before I started working, I went with Benjamin Meet, and many other people, to Washington for teacher training, to send out teachers to Yad Vashem, because I am part of the council of post-war Jews organization. I am the treasurer for many years. In '91, we honored Benjamin Meet, and Vlodka from the American gathering. Benjamin Meet is one of the greatest men that I've ever met, because he brought the survivors together. The first gathering that we went to was in Israel, the second one was in Washington. In fact, in the Washington museum, I just got a book from the Washington museum, I left it in our museum, is you open the middle, and there is my best friend from ghetto. When I was a little girl he was my boyfriend, Abe Malnik. And it's a big pictures of him, on a -- on a TV screen. I don't know if you've seen it, the last jo -- the last book that came out. I also am in touch constantly with Malsy at the book store, because we sell a lot of guides to you, called, "Those Who Dared," and "Rescue." That was done by the Martyr's Memorial at that time, under the leadership of Alex Grubman.

Q: I imagine you also did a lot of interviews with Holocaust survivors later on. What did you -- tell us more about that, what you learned from that experience.

A: I'll tell you, I interviewed for the Shoah Foundation 110 survivors, because I needed it -- they paid me, and also I wanted to know a lot -- you see, I didn't want to talk about things I didn't know, that you read out of a book. And when I arranged for the Holocaust museum, for the Martyr's Memorial, to go out for people to speak, and to give tours in the museum, I've always told them, "Don't say anything that you didn't go through. You talk only about your own experiences," because there was, at that time I coached Abe Spiegel, and I coached Ed Lasabnik, and I coached the first three chairs, the lay chairs. And I was the lay person that coached the -- those people. I also was fundraising for B'nai Brith in the meantime, fundraising for ORT, but I could never take the presidency, because always came the museum ahead of it. I was -- I was one of the first people, with my husband, with the Carters, and many people in the valley, with the Katz's, they were older than we are. We raised money to establish the --

Q: It's an airplane coming over here, so --

A: Yeah. I -- to establish the Gateway of Mental Health, most of the famous hospitals in Los Angeles for -- for the Gateway of Health people. We bought the Hoover lot, and I and Cornelius were fundraising. I'm very good at fundraising, and especially when I had the money, and I gave, I got back a lot. Even now, when we needed banners, I raised the money for it. I work for the museum, but I really work with my heart. If you don't get a speaker, I speak. If you don't -- we need to work the computer, I work the computer. If you need this, I do this. But, the only thing that hurts me very badly is that the person that

runs the museum does not like me. Absolutely doesn't understand survivors, and absolutely doesn't like me. But that will change, I hope, in the near future.

Q: You just said, doesn't understand survivors. Let me ask you -- there were so many different --

A: It was my own fault, Regina, because when the f -- the director left, and he was writing a book that is just coming out, called, "The Deniers." It will come out in 2000, I hope I live to see it. And he didn't have much time. I was working just as coordinator, and then when he left, he wrote a letter to the head of the federation, that till they find a -- a -- a director, I can run the museum, and this person can help me. And I did that, and in the long run, she got to be the director of the museum. She doesn't have a PhD., she has a Master degree, but that's not important. Sh-She's very good as a part time curator, but not as good as a director, and I know I may get fired when she hears the tape.

Q: Well, let's get away from that subject [indecipherable]

A: Okay.

Q: -- what I really want

A: It hurts me very much, this subject. Because the museum has to stay, because I put -- this was the first museum built in the United States of America. We had breakfast with Elie Wiesel. I still have the picture of me and Elie Wiesel, and Freddie Diamond. And Elie Wiesel at that breakfast, was a very small breakfast from the federation, said that this was a jewel. We were on the 12th floor of the Jewish Federation building. And then we start -- they start building the Washington museum, and Lydia Bodka is the president of

the Council of Post-War Jews organization. And every year in February -- now I can't, because I work, we went, and when I had the money, and we helped Latka and Benjamin Meet send people all through the concentration camps, and Yad Vashem -- teachers, to be able to teach the Holocaust. When I started to -- not lecture, I don't call it a lecture -- talk about my experiences in the Holocaust -- I'm not a lecturer, I'm not a teacher. I -- it was done here a little bit, and there a little bit, and there a little bit, and people came by the hundreds to the museum when it first opened, because for them it was new. I was 10 days, I'll show you, from the president of the University of Utah, southern Utah. I was supposed to be 48 hours, I stayed for 10 days. I set up a Holocaust museum in the library, and the kids were coming down from the mountains, the Indian kids, and all kind of kids. And it was called Jewish week. And there was all different kind of illel, did a lot of cooking, and dancing, and so on. There was one Jewish students in the whole -- at that time it was a college, now it's a university. So -- and I paid for everything, and then there was a director from Yad Vashem working, Shome Balmar, at that time, at our museum, and I called, and I saw all those big people from Israel, from the American Jewish committee, and so on. So I -- right away I send him a ticket he should come right away to Utah. And then he lectured at the washing -- at the Einstein hall. So you see, whenever I talk, and whatever I do, I always end up Holocaust -- talking about the Holocaust, and what it should be done about the Holocaust. You know, about a couple of weeks ago, I couldn't get speakers. And the museum is small now, very small, because we are sharing till the other building is finished, we are sharing the whole first floor of a building with

two other agencies of the federation, with the library, and the Jewish Historical Society.

So, when they have a big group, we divide it in three parts. We send them to the monument, we have a big monument at Palm Pacific Park, that was built by survivors, and I was on the committee too. In fact, I'm engraved in the committee. And we have the museum, so what we do is we divide it in three groups. And I couldn't get any speakers that day, so I spoke to three different groups at the same time, the same day. And worked.

Q: I asked --

A: So, you can see that Holocaust is my life.

Q: Yeah, so it's --

A: Not the Holocaust. I'm sorry for that expression, the hol -- to remember the Holocaust, that this should never happen again. It -- not only Jews died in the Holocaust. I was in a death camp, Stutthof, where on the other side there were Catholic priests, there were Gypsies, there were homosexuals, people -- prisoner of wars, people that didn't agree with Hitler, that were killed in that place. Stutthof is the only camp that the original gas chamber -- the original crematorium is still standing. But this is the forgotten death camp. I wrote a couple of articles in papers about the forgotten death camp, and if you notice, when you were here originally, I made that phone call the minute there is to give out money for survivors or anything, I call all my people that I know, and if they can't make the phone calls, I do it. We have a guide in the museum that we composed for where and when the people should call. For insurance claims, for -- for Swiss money, for everything.

If anybody calls -- we send out about at least -- at least 800 -- 800 to a thousand of those guides for survivors to do it.

Q: Marsha, h-how do you feel about -- no, let me -- let me say this differently. S-

Survivors have so many different life stories, and so many different --

A: Oh, yes.

Q: -- experiences. However, is there something from your experience, who has interviewed -- interviewed a lot of them, too, something that is united --

A: The something that bothers me is that a lot of them are adding certain things that other people went through, that they discussed with. And that what bothers me when I was interviewing, because I read a lot about the Holocaust, even for the Polish people, and Auschwitz, and -- and Majdanek, and everything else. I worked with, "The Triumphant Spirit," with Nick Decalsio on the book. And it bothers me when people -- like take the Hungarians, from Budapest I'm talking about. They didn't -- they -- they only start suffering in 1944, and they were put in the ghetto in 1944. But they also suffered, and a lot of them were killed in Auschwitz, and everything. But I don't think they went through the things that the people that went through -- that went through from 1939. Like, I couldn't say I went through like the Polish people that started 19 -- 9 -- '39, or the German Jews. But the German Jews, in the beginning, before the Kristallnacht still lived pretty good. You understand what I mean? And like again with the Anne Frank's diary. You take the Anne Frank's diary, there's hundreds of people that wrote diaries, but Anne Frank's diary was found first. And I want to tell you a story about Anne Frank's diary.

My cousin, Leah Salisbury that converted to baptism -- I don't know what she converted, she married a guy -- she's my mother's cousin, she wasn't my cousin, she was the literary agent to Anne Frank's diary in -- in America. I never had a lot to do with her, because her mother was Jewish, and she didn't do it very much, she only had to do -- she only had to do with show people And she wanted me to come to her estate in -- in Sanvits shwanza, somewhere in New York, Connecticut, whatever it is -- I don't know what it -- what it is. I never went, because I didn't like it the way she treat her mother. It was her mother 80th birthday, I was a youngster at that time, it was my mother's aunt. And I went there -- Aunt Molly, and her biggest pleasure was modeling, at 80 years old for the temple, and things like that. And no, Leah went, was stayed up 10 - 15 minutes, and she left. So when she send me tickets when Anne Frank's diary was here, as a theater in Los Angeles, I didn't go. And I don't really believe in Anne Frank's diary. I believe that it happened, of course, it did happen. But there is so many diaries been written, there's so many children been hidden, there's so many children been killed, like my two little sisters, one three years old, that was born in ghetto, that doesn't even know what it means that little piece of bread, one piece of fi -- a whole piece of bread, or a whole piece of -- of milk, or anything. But she knew every German. They were so smart, like God has give them more head, or something. Every German that walked by, she knew by name, when she was hidden. You know, because when they took away all the children, my biggest crime my mother committed is by hiding of my two little sisters. And that why she was killed at 34 years old, in Stutthof. I don't know, like I told you, where she was killed. Now that I read

a lot more about -- when I start reading more about Theresienstadt, and Auschwitz, and everything that was going on, I don't know where she was killed.

Q: So you think though that a lot -- many survivors, or at least some who speak about their experience, bring in something that they have read in the meantime --

A: That's right.

Q: -- or -- or seen on the -- in [indecipherable]

A: Definitely, and that why most of our speakers of the museum can only speak about their experiences. If they do not speak about their experiences, they are not called again. Because, you know, like I told you, some very intelligent men ask me about the Warsaw ghetto, and I told him, "I would insult your intelligence if I tell you, because I read the same book that you can pick up off the shelf, and read it in there in the library."

Q: Do you think that the public's perception of survivors has changed over the years, that the American public looks at survivors in a different way than they have?

A: They look in a much nicer way than they did, because the survivors made something of themselves. That's why I like the survivors to buy, "The Triumphant Spirit," and see what people made of themselves. Like, the biggest toy factory is owned by Mr. Cort. The -- that gave a lot of money to the Washington museum, he gave a lot of money to the monument. He gives, and gives, and gives, for the Holocaust. Mr. Webb. Most of the survivors. Mr. Chappel, here in Los -- I can only talk about the people in Los Angeles that I know. One of my very, very good friend, was much older than I was, he just not long ago died, helped build the monument in Florida, Abe Resnick. You must have heard of

him. He comes from Kovno. He was in Kovno ghetto part time. I knew people that -- that made so much of themselves, the survivors, that you have to have respect for them. You just have to. Even if you don't like what they tell you. Even if you feel guilty that you couldn't help them, that you didn't help them. You still have to have respect for what they made of themselves. You take me, a little girl comes into -- married a guy that most of the family is Christian, I'm Jewish, very, very brought up Jewish, come from the concentration camps, my husband was in a labor camp. Thanks God my mother-in-law was very understanding and helped a lot of Jews, I told you she's a Righteous Christian and everything. But still, my brother-in-law was in America, having -- living a playboy life, you understand what I mean? And so on. And here comes that little -- poor little girl, you know. And thanks I God -- but I didn't let it happen to me. This is the survivor's spirit. I didn't let them think of me that he is better than I am. No. I am the one that is feared. I didn't fear him, he feared me. You know why? Because I didn't let him get away with it. Because I was better than he was. He didn't go through what I went through, and had to go to school and everything. His father paid for everything. I did it myself. Do you understand what I am talking about? Maybe people won't understand what I am talking about, but I feel very, very good about it.

Q: I think it's very clear. But my question is still, so you have really managed to, with great determination, and work, and spirit, to build a new life.

A: Definitely.

Q: Still --

A: My life was very rich, thanks God.

Q: Did the --

A: I went to Europe for a -- for months, and month. I was very wealthy at one time, and I went to Europe, and I went to the first one -- when Hawaii wasn't a state yet, I went to Hawaii. I went -- my friends were very well-to-do friends, and some of them took us to La Jolla, and you know, I went to places where people -- I don't say -- you know, my son was born a little later, like I told you, I couldn't have children, so I had a little more time than the other people had. They had to bring up their family. A lot of the survivors were lonesome, so they got married just with anybody, you understand what I mean? Maybe they -- they didn't fit, but they made a life together, they brought up their children beautiful. The only thing that I don't agree, that most of the survivor pushed their children. And I was -- stood by it, and watched it, and it hurts. And a lot of them are sick. A lot of them are very sick, and a lot of them need psychiatrists.

Q: Did you ever need help?

A: I'll tell you. Many times I've need help, but you know what? My husband was my best psychiatrist. I talked a lot of things over with him. And like I said, I told you I've learned to do self hypnosis, because nobody -- I was too strong for anybody to hypnotize me. And I made a lot of friends. I didn't have time -- I didn't have -- I lectured on the Holocaust, I worked. My studio was -- you know, I had contact with very unusual people. You know, show people are very unusual people. You know, like Cary Grant ordered from me a -- a golf sweater, and he send in his manager to bargain with me. And I told

him, "Please don't do this to me. He doesn't want it, let him go somewhere else." A hand knitted golf sweater in cashmere. Zsa Zsa Gabor once says to me, "Oh, I don't have to pay you the bill, my name is good enough, that I come to you." I said, "Much bigger people than you are coming to me, and I don't mean show people. I mean scientists. I mean other people, just -- just any people. They don't have to be in show peop -- show business to have a brain." I didn't want to tell her that there is no brain, I'm sorry. But that's it. You know, she had looks, and that was important.

Q: I just -- I just read a quote recently, and I just want to give you that quote and see what your response is. A scholar recently wrote that still in this country survivors are very often seen either way, either as anxious ghosts, or as secular saints.

A: This is full of baloney. I think a survivor is a normal person, absolutely normal, much more normal as some of the Americans I've met. And believe me, most of my friends are Americans. And like I told you, it went by eight years before I met with the survivors.

And I tell you something, I had one girlfriend, h-her son -- I didn't have children yet, and her son only ate lamb chops with ketchup. I mean, this is abnormal. If my son would do it, I would say he's crazy. I wouldn't make it lamb chops a -- and if a daughter, God forbid, took a piece of her lamb chops, Ann Marie had two problems. I mean, this is abnormal. But for s -- for saying the survivor are abnormal, no. I feel -- I feel much more -- much more up to date, and up to life, and if I die tomorrow, I have lived a very rich, beautiful life. Poor or rich, even if I lost my money -- at one time I was very depressed because I di -- we [indecipherable] twice -- three times, but then I talk to myself. I said,

“Marsha, you lost so much in your life, does those things mean anything to you?” After the earthquake, when I lost everything. And then in the middle of the shakes I went to help a friend that lived up in the hills, in the dark, with my husband, because she was there alone. That was more important to me than my Rosenthal, and my Lalique, and everything else. To get into the car in the dark, and the shakes were still going, you know, aftershake, to go and help my friend. And would any average American do that? And I feel myself they would. And that why I call myself an American. I worked for the man that I like. I do everything that the country needs, because that country gave me life, gave me freedom, gave me everything.

Q: Are there things that you are critical of in -- in American culture and society?

A: Yes, to a certain extent about the schools, very much so. That why I send my ha -- my son in the beginning to a private school. When I went in the public school, it was horrible. And there's a lot of things that -- that could be -- when I first came to this country it was so peaceful, it was so beautiful in 1949. You could walk on the streets, you could have a ball. And now all this murdering, and everything that's going on, it's -- doesn't come out of the people, it's the way the people are treated. And if you say, oh a black American did it -- I -- I mean A-African American did it, or a -- a -- a -- a -- O-Oriental did it, or this one did it. What about the skinheads, what they did to the synagogues in Sacramento? What about Jewish people that do certain things? And what about Christian white people that do certain things? There's no such a thing, I -- unity is the most important thing, and that country does not have unity right now. That's the

problem. And that why it's very important that the kids in school, or in college, or in the university, are learning about unity. That the person is flesh and blood. They are not -- even an animal is protected by the animal society, but the -- the African American that doesn't have food is not protected. I know what it means to be without food. I know what it means to be cold. I know those things, so I feel with those people. In a country that is that rich, and helps everybody else. Kosovo, Shmosovo, everything. Help your country, too. I don't say they shouldn't help the people. They definitely should. But help your country, too.

Q: This is the end of tape three, side A, interview with Marsha Loen.

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Marsha Loen. This is tape number three, side B, and Marsha would like to -- to read a poem now, but you should probably introduce it, and say something first. Okay.

A: Yeah. I was hurt by a friend, so I didn't know how to deal with it, so I went home -- you know, I'm -- I'm -- I'm a amateur poet. I don't write all odays, I just write rhymes. So I would like to read you the poem. The poem is called, "Friendship." Friendship is a gift from God. The love from a second person that draws you like a lightning rod. It takes patience, it takes understanding, because if you break those rules, it cannot easily be mended. That is why we go through life to find a way to understand that person who is a friend, and try to keep that friendship, and lend a hand. But if that person get jealous and

bitter, it is hard to keep your cool and bitter. To forgive it's easy, sometimes hard. Who knows the right thing, and who is smart? Is that person who calls himself my friend, or is that person I do not understand. The only one who knows is me, I feel the love, I feel the glee. To be bitter, and to hate is very easy, but there is better things in life to keep my busy. Hatred hurts only that person who projects it. That is why I say, forget hate, keep your friendship and don't neglect it.

Q: So friendship is very important to you?

A: Yes, very. And if somebody hurts me, I just -- I can't take it sometimes. So, instead of arguing, or doing something, I just write a poem, or just an article, or anything. What I wanted to tell you is, Regina, that I'm a very lucky person that I'm connected with the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. They gave me a job at a certain age, when nobody would have given me a job, when I need it. And that's why I'm very grateful to them, and I will be grateful to them the rest of my life. And that again is the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles.

Q: Did you ever go to -- to es -- to Israel, or to pal -- not to Palestine, to Israel?

A: I went to Israel. I practically ended up in Palestine, but -- when I was smuggling than the people, but I went to Israel. The first time I was supposed to go to Israel was in '67, and the war broke out. I was in Russia. I did not go to any of the concentration camp, I never will go. In fact, when I was in Lithuania -- that's why I went -- I did not go to Kovno, I stayed in Wilno. Because I won't give him the satisfaction, to go to Poland and spend money, to the murderer. It went to Kovno -- I went to Lithuania, to Russia because

I had to. There was a reason, there was a mission. My sis -- older sister was there. And at that time I went as a friend, because it was still Communistic, and I had to wait two and a half years for a visa. And then I had to stay in a certain hotel, and everything else. But never, never, would I go to Poland, or to anywhere where there are concentration camps, and have give them the satisfaction to spend money there. I'm sorry, I won't do it. I went all over Europe. I went to the Mamblon, I went to Italy. I know there were concentration camps everywhere. There was one in Ebensee that I didn't even know. I was skiing in Ebensee with my husband. We went there because how far was it from Tronkishin where we had the hotel, and we went from -- from -- from Linz, to -- to -- to ve -- I went to -- we went on our honeymoon, we stayed at the Vicearussel near the Glosegrog, you know, the -- what do you call, the oldest lakes. It was in alt -- no, it was in Wolfgangsay.

Q: Wolfgangsay.

A: Wolfgangsay. And I went always on trips all through Europe and everything, but still, I went to Italy, I went to -- like I told, went -- we went to the Mamblon. In '67, I was supposed to -- I went to Russia, and then my husband meet me, we were supposed to go to Israel, but the war broke out, it was the Six Day War, so I couldn't go there. So I went there the year after, and then I went for the gathering, and then I went for the -- went in 1979. Then I went in 1985, and they had the -- for the partisans. Then I went again in 1989. And then when my ankle broke, it's very hard for me to travel by plane, so I haven't been there since. But I have papers, I'll show it to you. I have a beautiful citation from the Mengele twins, because I always visit people that were connected with the --

with the Holocaust, and they were hurt by the Holocaust, and made friends with them, and did something for them that I could. I went -- they were here, I had a symposium for them in Los Angeles. I can tell you, I went in Israel, I have -- I found family in Israel, and I was very happy. Whenever I went there, I was very, very happy.

Q: Did you feel differently Jewish, in a certain way?

A: No. Absolutely no. My cousins, and my aunt, they're not Orthodox. They are Jewish, they -- they -- they -- they have their religion, they go to temple, and everything else, they have the Passover. In fact, one day I was there on Passover one time, and mostly I stayed in a hotel, I stayed with my cousin Leah. And my -- my uncle died first, then I -- they were well-to-do people, they have a -- they had a electric factory, and so on. My cousin Leah's husband had a garage. So there was no problems of any kind, and they were very happy to come here, and I was very happy to go to Israel. And most of it was the gathering of the survivors in Israel that Benjamin Meet arranged. I went to Yad Vashem, and one year -- see, my mother-in-law died. She was brought out of the Hungarian club into Israel, and they gave a big, big deal for her, but she didn't have time. She was honored here in '68 with some trees in Israel. W-We put in Putnam. I have a big citation for her. Like I said, I don't take citation all over the place. And then I went -- then I went in '85, and I insisted -- because they knew me in Yad Vashem arad, and ev -- a-and sh-show me -- everybody knows me -- knew me, and so I say -- I insisted that I want the tree already planted. So they went through the books, and they found it, and the tree was planted with two other people from Holland, at the same time. And it looks down on the

fallen soldiers, from the mountain. I haven't seen it since, I'm sorry to tell you that. But one of these days, maybe if we're still alright, and Cornelius is alright, we'll take a trip and go over and see the tree.

Q: [indecipherable] Yad Vashem in Jerusalem have a different -- it -- is it -- is it different for you than the othen -- other museums that you know in this country?

A: Yad Vashem is the most important museum, because it was first built in jer -- in jer -- it's built in Jerusalem, in our -- you see, everybody has a background, except us Jews. One comes from Poland, one comes from Lithuania, one comes -- but now they have a country, okay? We always had a country, it was always the Jewish country, Israel, the country of the Jews, but we have a country, and in that country was the first Holocaust museum built. And then there is another one, the -- I forgot the name of it, it's in a kibbutz. Loch -- Loch hamma cut tahowt. It's a more partisan, and so on. I helped with that one, too. And Dr. Kulka -- I told you, Dr. Harry Kulka took me through the museum, then he took me to the University of Jerusalem. And I was from ORT, I -- from the first gold pins, I had, and from the first people on the -- in Tel Aviv, I -- University of Engineering is our name on it, mine and Cornelius'. I -- I don't go there very often now, and many places. I don't even fly to Las Vegas to my son, he comes here, cause it's very hard on my ankle, it formed arthritis. So when I went to Washington, I went on crutches, the first time to be taped, not the first time to Washington, because I was there. I have pictures on Washington when it still say be careful, and they just had the bottom built,

you know. And then we ha -- I have the hard hat. Here is a little thing there -- right there, pick it up, next to the lake is the Washington museum, right there.

Q: It's on this one?

A: That was given to me, yes. You can read it.

Q: Well that's -- that's a little model with a plaque that says, US Holocaust Memorial Museum, a campaign to remember Marsha Loen, and it shows the museum.

A: Yes, and it's -- I put on -- on -- what is that called, that hard stuff?

Q: Oh, I'm not very good at that.

A: Granite, granite.

Q: Granite.

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh, it's real granite?

A: It's real granite, yes.

Q: Very nice.

A: That was given by -- by af -- to me.

Q: I'll put it back a little later.

A: That's alright.

Q: I have, of course, always one more question.

A: Yeah?

Q: Which events in this country, in -- in the -- in -- in the USA, in America over the years have been really important to you? And they don't have to be necessarily related to the Holocaust. Any movement, any event -- political event?

A: First place, the Fourth of July, the independence of America, because the independence of Israel is very important to me. So there is a connection, why I love that holiday so much. The second one, I can tell you that's not connected with the -- is the Bill of Rights, because everybody is created equal. Cause if I don't think like that, who should?

Q: I don't think --

A: Oh, of course, I like all the holiday. I like the turkey on Thanksgiving, like I like my matzo balls on Passover, my turkey has to be done on Thanksgiving. You understand what I mean?

Q: Yeah, I guess I was --

A: I'm very traditional.

Q: I don't have to ask you whether the women's movement was very meaningful to you, because you li --

A: No, absolutely not, absolutely not, because I'll tell you something. It's important for people that the woman should have a voice. It's important, any person. I don't care if it's woman, half man, half woman, whatever it is, should have a voice in the country, because it's a democratic country. It's a country built by -- it's -- it's a melting pot. You understand what I mean? So it's important that the mo -- women movement, but an effect

on me, not. What has a tremendous effect on me is that the second generation is interested in the Holocaust, and especially Dr. Gary Shiller, that is the president of the second generation. I admire him tremendously, and I hope he's our next chair of the museum.

Q: Why do you --

A: Because the second generation should take over.

Q: You know, that was another question that I had. How do you see the impact of the Holocaust survivor testimonies, on the overall Holocaust consciousness memory in this country?

A: I think it's a good idea. I don't think it should be pushed down anybody's throat, I'm sorry. If somebody wants to know about the Holocaust, they should be able to -- going in -- like in the Washington, the learning center, and push a button, and know what went on. If somebody wants to bring their school out to the museums, wond -- that is the most wonderful thing in the world. If somebody -- if you have teacher training like we have in the museum every year, a teacher training, and we do it with different agencies, like the ADL, the labor committee, the American Bureau of Jewish Education, we do it together, and that is very important. Teacher training, so the teacher knew, when it comes to history, that, like the Spanish Inquisition, and the Crusaders, this also has to be told in history, because it happened, and it happened to a people, and for no reason at all. And it's good for the people in America to know it, because like I said, it's such a melting pot, that the people should get along together properly.

Q: What would you say to some of those people who think that there is now a little too much emphasis maybe, on Holocaust education, to the detriment of other elements of Jewish culture.

A: I would tell them, like you g -- like the Jews go on Yom Kippur to temple, and pray. That happened 2,000 years ago. This only happened 50 some odd years ago, and believe me, much, much more that happened on Yom Kippur. And I think the Yom HaShoah is the most important thing, for any religion, or any people. It's important for us Jews, but a lot of people should come and see it, and hear it. Because this is like going to temple on - on Yom Kippur. This happened 2,000 years ago, but it's still the tradition, and we still do it. And people stand in line to get tickets to go to it. But the Yom HaShoah only happened 56 years ago, and six million of our people were killed. And that is -- that is our yom -- that is my Yom Kippur. Do you know in the beginning, before the survivors start dying off, I was jealous of a funeral, I told you on the tape. You know. And now, I'm afraid to go to funerals. I'm afraid to pick up the telephone, because the survivors are going so fast. And that why the testimony is so important, it's very important, that it shouldn't be forgotten. Look at what happened to the Spanish Inquisition. What do you read in the dictionary? A date, a time, what happened, and finished with. Are there books on it? Not many. And look at what happened, and it's practically forgotten. This will never be forgotten, as long as I can help it.

Q: How do you feel about the movies that have come out, let's say since the late 70's, where th-the pop -- the popular culture representation of the Holocaust is -- how do you put it --

A: Sometimes it's overdone, and sometime it's not true. The "Schindler List," is the one that is the closest, and still it's still a movie. Let's not kid ourselves. The best one that I ever saw was last month, "The Shoah," because it was interviews. And you see what interviews can do.

Q: In the hands of a master.

A: Of a master is right. And there's the -- you still see those little pieces of anti-Semitism was flying in the background, but people don't notice it, and -- certain people notice. And I think he did the best that ever was, I'm sorry. Spielberg was alright, I fainted, I went to the bathroom. I -- I never fainted in my life, but I -- all of a sudden I had to run to the bathroom and throw up. But I came back -- because I was the volu -- Los Angel -- Valley Times ask me I should get about three or four survivors at the opening of "Schindler's List," and then the lady interviewed us, the reporter, and I did, and I watched it, and I never watched it again. But I did interview survivors, and I've learned a lot from survivors by interviewing them, the 110 survivors.

Q: I want to follow up on that, but let me ask you, what was the most difficult thing for you to watch in the "Schindler's List" movie?

A: When they carried those children on the carts. This is when I row -- run out and throw up, because I'm sure my little sisters was carried somewhere on a cart, or disappeared somewhere, somehow.

Q: And -- and what are --

A: The shooting, and everything else, I've seen it. I've -- I -- I -- I went through it. You understand what I mean? You have to ask that from an American. You understand, Regina? But I personally, when the children on the cart, when they were carrying in that camp, this is what I couldn't take it.

Q: Are there still some images and sounds, or so -- or memories that -- that -- that follow you to -- to this day?

A: Yes. My mother yelling to me, if you survive, Myashinka, go to Palestine, and find Soatsky. And that was my aunt in Israel, Sarah. And also another thing is when they separate me, the man and the woman, when they brought us to Stutthof in cattle cars, and they separated the man and the women, send my father to Dachau, and my mother and me and the kids to Stutthof, and my father was yelling, "Give us the poison tablets, give us the poison tablets. You don't want that." And my mothers said, "No. Even if a finger is left alive, I am going where the Jewish people are going." But let that end on a real happy thought. I'm an old lady now, I work. You see we live a pretty normal life, pretty American. My accent I couldn't get rid of, I went for speech therapy, I couldn't get rid of it, I'm sorry. And --

Q: I like it.

A: Thank you. I don't, but I can't help it. And you see, I have a s-son, that goes -- you heard him go already twice since you are here. He lives in Las Vegas, he has his own life to live. And he comes -- is coming out now on my birthday, on the 28th, cause I can not drive and fly by plane. And then, I don't like Las Vegas, it's too l -- noisy, and too much things. Last time I went to Las Vegas two years ago on Thanksgiving, and he had a stomachache. We were supposed to go out for Thanksgiving. So now I said forget it. If I want to play cards, I go to one of the casinos, and that's all -- they're here in Los Angeles. I don't have to go and see those -- that they spend thousand -- there's so many thousands of homeless people lying around the streets all over America, and they're building millions and millions of dollars hotels in Las Vegas. Not that we don't need it, we need that too, but there is a limit to everything. Yesterday I went shopping. There were standing people, and collecting for AIDS, near Juan's. So I sent Cornelius in to get canned food for them. And I tried to give as much as I can. When I had the money, everybody got. But now I try to give as much as I can. In fact, somebody told me I'm too generous. Because when I drive by in the morning, I drive by a bakery that has bagels, and I had on a -- a -- a department in the federation, they used that I bring them bagels and cream cheese in the morning, for the department. So if -- if I can -- now we are separated, the federation and the museum, and in different places till the building is redone. So now I have to wait till somebody comes to pick it up, or I run over and take it over. And this is my biggest pleasure, even if it costs me money, that I work, and it comes to me very hard. But this is my pleasure.

Q: I have one more question, but let's stick with pleasures then.

A: Yeah.

Q: [indecipherable] what -- what else gives you pleasure? What --

A: What gives me pleasure? Like I told you, I had my studio, and I did a lot of knitting, so I do that a little bit, and it gives me pleasure to go to art show, museums. And it give me pleasure to -- do you know what I like to watch? This is the craziest thing, the classic movies, the old movies. Isn't that ec -- that relaxes me. And after reading a Holocaust book, or something else, I buy myself a little romance book, to relax me. So I lay down in bed, and Cornelius watches television downstairs, and I read that -- and I go from the first page, to the middle, to the last page, to know what the ending is. And that relaxes me, and I fall asleep with it.

Q: That's -- that's fast reading. My last question actually is you mentioned before that you learned from the Holocaust survivors a lot. Think -- think about a few examples.

A: An example is that I learned that they are -- some are very, very -- how do you say it -- how do -- I -- say -- some are very depressed, and very down, and you have to be around them, but it happens very seldom to pick them up. I also learned that when I go to a party, they dress like young girls, 70 and 75 year old women. They want to stay forever young, because they never had a childhood. And they never had, really, a young life, because they had to work, and bring up a family, and everything else. To me, being a designer, it hurts my eyes. But I know what they feel, psychologically. The third thing is what bothers me tremendously is that the survivor money is handled by Americans. And that

hurts very badly, because there is a lot of survivors, and needy survivors still alive. I get -

- I got a call from a 91 year old woman that has nothing to eat. A survivor.

Q: Because of the so -- it takes -- it takes them too long to process it, or that it's not enough --

A: No, it's not enough. What -- what can she do, a woman, she's 91 years old, she needs some help. She needs somebody to help her, or be put in a home. Or when a survivor goes into a state home, and there is millions of dollars in -- in New York. A survivor should never, after what they went through, stay in a state home, should be treated completely different. Not because he's a survivor, and he's something special. He should have -- his end should be easy on that person, if it's a man or woman. Maybe I'm wrong, maybe I am expecting too much.

Q: But how -- how --

A: Like we're getting the money from Switzerland, and it's going on education, it's going on everything else. But they don't remember when they tore my earrings off my ear. And my little ring that my grandfather gave me to get away. And I didn't want to give it, and my mother said, "Give it to them, give it to them." They don't remember when they told us if you don't bring in your goods, plus your ironing, plus our electrical appliances. Not only the gold, and the silver, and the platinum, the electric appliance and everything, you'll be shot. Everybody's forgotten that. And they say that the Jews are greedy, because we -- we -- we -- we ask what is belonging to us, that's coming to us. They haven't seen nothing from it yet. Not for me. I need it, too, believe me I do. Driving

every day over the canyon to go to work, and then have to listen to a lot of things that I -- I am very ve -- get very upset, and I come home, and I get sick. Not from the Holocaust, that I am told, from my superiors. You understand? It's not easy on me, but I needed work, and I have to stay. Don't you think it would help me if I had some money, what was taken away from me? And -- and I help. I am on -- I am on the council, I am the treasurer of the council. Today was supposed to be a meeting in my house, we're honoring a survivor that's going to be 90 years old. We honored Latka and Benjamin Meet in -- in 1991. We -- we do a lot of vienna poldi, fill a page for doing "Schindler's List." The council is very important, we are involved with the money to distribute for the needy survivors.

Q: Well, on that note, I think unless you have something -- I would like to complete the interview, unless you have something, a last word that you would like to say, otherwise I just would like to thank you.

A: I want to thank the people -- can I know their name?

Q: Please? Oh, you mean the -- Jeff and Toby Herr.

A: Yeah. Where is it -- sit -- yeah. I would like to thank very much Mr. Jeff and Toby Herr for doing the grant for the interview, or whatever they did to get that interview going, because that will be a step stone in the museum, and for children to learn about the Holocaust. So -- and thank you, Regina, very much for coming and interviewing me.

Q: It was a privilege. Thank you very much, Marsha. And now I have to do just -- and this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Marsh Loen, and this is the end of tape three, side B.

A: Good.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Conclusion of Interview