

My name is Dr. Henri Lustiger Thaler. This is an interview with Mr. Arthur Schwartz from and sponsored by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Amud Aish Memorial Museum in Brooklyn. Mr. Schwartz was born March 3, 1926 in Tuszyn, Łódź, in Poland. Mr. Schwartz, can you give me your earliest memories about your life in Tuszyn leading up to 1939?

Used to be in Poland very top five [INAUDIBLE] city. Was big anti-Semite there. My father was a tailor. Later he was the-- how you say-- like a business he used to do. My city was-- people used to come to us in summertime for vacation, like Monticello, for vacation. That's how we used to make a living, from this.

So Tuszyn was just outside of Łódź?

About five miles. We used to have a street car. Used to go there with the street car to Łódź.

Nice.

Yeah. The children, we used to help, nine children. It was a little tough. We survived. It's not a religious city. We make the living from the vacation-- people used to come us like to Monticello. And my father used to go in a place, used to buy the fish from a big place, a Polish place, fish. And we used to sell it for the people who used to come to us for vacation.

I had nine children, four sisters. They were married. They had children. And all of a sudden the war break out.

Before we go to the war, do you recall all the names of your siblings, of your sisters and your brothers? Do you recall their names?

My father's?

No, the names of your siblings.

From my city?

The names of your brothers and your sisters.

Oh, my God.

Do you recall that?

[LAUGHS] Oh, I remember all my brothers was Bible names. Moishe, Haim, Kasve, Avram. My sisters was-- OK, my mother's name was Ruth. Ruth. Ruth. My father's name Shia David. Shia David.

Nice.

And most of them, the sisters I remember. Mulkalayah, Hensche, Rosa, the other one. Hensche. Something like this.

Beautiful names. Beautiful names.

Thank God my mind is still working.

Very good. Very good.

Yeah, I remember this, everything.

So you were from an-- it's an orthodox family. It's a frum family.

I'm talking about when the Nazis is everything. They come in there -- every -- They come in. The fence in

our city--

Just before we go to the invasion of Poland, I want to stay just a little bit more on what life was like in Tuszyn. And if you could describe a Shabbos evening.

My father was always very orthodox. He used to daven?

Mhm.

In synagogue, he used to daven. We never worked on Saturday or [INAUDIBLE], never, never. The whole city-- if somebody did something wrong on a Saturday, then a policeman took him to the rabbi.

[LAUGHS]

He took him to rabbi. Look what he did.

That I have never heard before.

If that is Saturday and he is going in places he shouldn't go. [LAUGHS] It was a very small city. Used to be about 400 or 500 families. That's all.

So in Tuszyn, just explain to me what were the high holidays like in Tuszyn? Like Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah?

Oh, very strictly. We used to have a [YIDDISH]. You heard of that? [YIDDISH]?

Of course.

Yeah, it's acting like a synagogue.

Yes, for learning.

A big one we had there. I remember I was a kid, used to play. And people used to protect Jewishness. In Poland was very anti-Semitic.

Were you in a Talmud Torah? You went to a cheder?

I used to go in cheder. I speak fluently still in Yiddish. I speak Yiddish. Maybe with my broken English-- [LAUGHS] But anyway, you understand me?

Yeah, I understand you perfectly. I understand you perfectly. Do you remember a day in the cheder? Take us back there. What was it like in Tuszyn for a young boy in a cheder? Do you remember your teacher? Do you remember any of that?

In cheder, some people-- they went to the cheder and they stopped going to the cheder. They stopped going to the cheder. And they move to Łódź, a lot of them, because the city was no rich city. We used to make a living, like I said, from the people vacationing in my city.

The tourist people.

Yeah. Used to call this Tuszyn And we used to make a living. And my sisters-- a few sisters were married. Two of them used to help the family to make a living.

To make a [INAUDIBLE]. Right.

Yeah.

So do you recall in Tuszyn, were there any Hasidic groups in Tuszyn?

Orthodox. It was orthodox.

But any Hasidim?

Was no conservative. I never saw nobody that -- 99% was in Poland orthodox. 99%. We never heard about the other conservative and the other one. I forgot the name from the other one.

Reform?

Reform, no.

That much came later.

No, no, never happened. God forbid if a Jewish woman married to a Gentile. Nobody wants to talk to you. Yeah, nobody wants to talk to her or something like that.

So a very close community. A very close community. Everyone knew every other family.

People used to know each other. We used to make sometimes shows.

Oh, nice! Tell me about that. I'm trying to understand the Yiddishkeit in Tuszyn. Tell me that.

A lot of things, the entertainment we used to make, I remember.

You mean plays? Plays?

In the city. In the city we used to make entertainment and everything, yeah.

Did you also go to a Polish public school?

I used to go to public--

Polish public school.

Well, public school, but I stopped it. The reason, my eyes was very nearsighted, so nearsighted I couldn't see what is on the board and everything there. I went about five years in the school, a public school.

How did you find that in the public school? Is that where you found anti-Semitism at that time?

Oh, yeah. Like I said, we had a place in Tuszyn. We had a house there, in Tuszyn. We rented it. From Łódź they used to come. Like you go to Monticello for vacation, they used go there. And we used to rent it to them. And when I used to go home, I used to walk home. They used to throw stones on you, the Polish. I remember they always used to run after me and throw stones at me when I was a boy.

Coming back from school?

Yeah, something. And sometime-- even in summertime. We had off. I used to go to watch the-- like Monticello, people used to come to us from Łódź. We used to be there and watch it. And we had a good time. I used to go up where we had to house the renting by myself. They find out-- I don't know-- I'm Jewish. They used to throw stones at me.

There wasn't so killing, murders. Something like this was never. They always had big signs. I remember in Polish, [SPEAKING POLISH]. Do you what that means? Don't buy in Jewish store. It was a big sign like this. Don't buy in Jewish store [INAUDIBLE].

And this was in Tuszyn?

Anti-Semitic.

In Tuszyn?

In Tuszyn, but all over. But they shooting. My brother was stabbed once, my older brother. He was stabbing.

And that was an anti-Semitic or a robbery?

Oh, Poland was-- they always claim that the high rising buildings belongs to the Jews, and the street belongs to the Gentiles. They always used to say that. They said, always they were very jealous of the Jews. That's my story.

Do you remember the first time you went to Łódź, to a big city from Tuszyn? Do you remember that time? You must have been very impressed.

I went to Łódź, I was maybe once or twice. Once when I was in school. You remember a prime minister in Poland was Pilsudski?

I've heard of him, yes.

You heard about him?

Yes.

He was very good to the Jews. He passed away, and the school took us to the funeral over at Łódź. I was about once or twice there. That's about it.

When they took me to a concentration camp, I was a couple weeks in Łódź, in a camp there. I was working in a factory, something like that.

When you were deported from Tuszyn--

From Tuszyn.

--you went into a factory?

I remember the war was-- I still remember-- 1939, September the 1st. I remember that. Two months later, the first thing what they did? you're going to be surprised. They came with the ammunition. They came with horses, the Nazis. They put all the horses in the synagogue. This I remember, what they did. In the synagogue. They put the horses in the synagogue.

And the headstones from the cemetery-- the headstones in the cemetery, they used to make sidewalks in the street. A friend of mine-- he passed away three years ago-- he went there for vacation. You wouldn't believe it. They're building houses there, in the cemetery, in Poland. I didn't believe it. But he told me. He was there for vacation.

Tell me your first indications of the war. The Jews of Tuszyn, were they feeling that a war was coming in September? Any feeling like that? Or reading the newspapers there?

I tell you, the Christians in Poland, they were waiting on a case like this. They suffered, too, a little bit. Different. But they didn't do too much damage to them. They did their damage to the Jews right away. My city used to be the first one to be liquidated. They give us four hours. Four hours to leave the city.

And everybody used to take-- my sisters, they went to another city. Piotrkow you call it. And one sister used to go with us. All my sisters were married. I was the youngest. I was the youngest. They told us, the four

hours you have to leave. I took a blanket. Somebody took something else. And my father used to say-- you understand a little bit Jewish?

[SPEAKING YIDDISH]

He said, [SPEAKING YIDDISH]. No place to go. OK, we'll find another place, another city. We'll find another city, Belchatow. You have in the list here, Belchatow. You see that? In Belchatow was a tough life. Said somebody, we still have a little bit money. And we rented a room there for us.

And, all of a sudden, they made a Jewish committee. The Jewish committee send us flyers to go to work. To cleaned the street, the snow, and everything, every day, the Jewish committee. And they used to wear on the arms Magen David. [INAUDIBLE] city not yet a ghetto. Used to wear like this.

After this, I took a walk with my father. Then they made us right away a ghetto in this Belchatow. You can't go out from the city. I took a bicycle to see my sister. Used to be a mile away, one sister. They stopped me. They took me to the police station. They beat me up. And people and the neighbors want to see what they did to my back, the Nazis. They hit me and everything.

And my sister had two boys. And she said the way it looks, she wouldn't survive. But I have two boys. I want them that they should survive, 10 years and 12 years. She gives away to a Polish couple the boys. They gave them the money. They gave them the gold, silver. Two days later a Nazi came in. They took them out by the ears. Yeah. Took them away, couldn't find them, nobody.

Then, later on, I took a walk with my father in the ghetto that they built it of. A Nazi to comes over to my father. He beats him up. He beats him up. And I ask him-- I used to speak a little German. [SPEAKING GERMAN]. You understand what Jude means? [SPEAKING GERMAN]. My father was screaming. I was crying. My father's whole arm was swollen.

And a couple weeks later, I walked by myself. A man comes in-- not civilian, Nazi. He grabs me by the hand and take me away in a factory. In the factory, I saw maybe 200 young people like me, 14, 20. They used to go for the young generation they used to take away. My parents they took away about a year later. that lived there. They're still there.

What's happened? Then we find out they're going to take us away. Where we going to took away? And my mother find out they're going to take us away with the buses, with trucks. They have to pass the trucks where I used to live. And my mother find out there. And they took me away. My mother used to run after the truck. She pulled her hair out. And she was screaming, my son! I wouldn't see you anymore! And she was right. She didn't see me anymore.

They took me this time to Łódź. In Łódź, I was working for about a couple of weeks, three weeks.

What kind of work?

With steel. The hammer used to hit, different things. For a short time. They took me again away. They took me away to Poznan. You heard about that maybe?

Yes.

Poznan. There was a railroad there. They made a highway from Poznan to Berlin, a highway to Berlin. And we used to work there, about seven months.

Another thing, they took us again away from there. They sent us upstate from Poznan, a small place. You couldn't see a dog in the street. You couldn't see a human being in the street. But there used to be the barracks for us, camps. We used to work the same thing, with train and everything.

What was the name of that place? Do you remember?

Gutenbrunn.

Gutenbrunn.

You see it. You see it here? Gutenbrunn. In Gutenbrunn, my best friends, what they did-- they did something. They ran away. They digged a hole, something like that, and they run away. They didn't go too far. They call them. They caught them, and they bring them back to the camp. And everybody had to look what they do. There used to be, built already, in my place where I used to live, they used to build a tie You know what a tie is?

Right.

Yeah?

Yeah.

Ready to hang you. And they took them back. And everybody saw how they hang them, all three of them. Yeah, they used to hang them. And we used to stay not too long either, maybe a half year. They tell us they're going to take us away. Where? We don't-- I took a chance. And a train was waiting for it.

A train was waiting for us ready. They were so organized, you wouldn't believe it. A train was waiting. I asked the bodyguard, where we going? He told us we're going to a farm. And I was happy. On a farm I'm going to have a lot to eat and everything, on a farm.

There was no farm. They took me-- Auschwitz makes you free. Arbeit makes you free. Took us to Auschwitz.

At this point, how old were you? You were about 15 years old, if my math--

I was at this age something like--

14, 15 years old at this time.

Something like this, yeah. And we used to stay about 300 men. They stay in the line, making the number.

You just want to show your number, Mr. Schwartz.

See it? If they send you in the right side, then you're lucky. That mean they send you to a labor camp. You're going to live. If they tell you go left-- people used to be skin and bones. They sent to the left. You know what's happened to them, when they send you to the left.

And they sent me again to another camp near Katowice. You heard about it?

Yes, but let's just stay in Auschwitz for a moment. How long were you in Auschwitz?

About three or four weeks. I saw stones picked up, every stone--

So you were in Birkenau? In Birkenau.

In Auschwitz. Then they sent me from--

What do you remember of Auschwitz? What do you remember?

Terrible things. I saw women and children coming day and night, their babies crying. The babies were crying. I was really surprised from the Allies. They bombed every day Germany. The trains, the highways. How come they didn't bomb Auschwitz? The train used to come with people to the last minute, with women and children and men till the end of 1944. I saw women and children back and forth. The train was so easy. I was really surprised.

Let me ask you, Mr. Schwartz. Coming into Auschwitz-- and understanding, as a religious Jew coming from a religious family, and seeing that Auschwitz-- you were walking into a death world. It was a death world, mechanized murder. How did you process this? How did you from your own faith that I mentioned?

Tell you how. People ask me, how did I survive? I still was strong, and they saw that I could work a lot of work. Let's say we were about 200. They picked up maybe about 40 men, 50 men. They give you the right side. And that's why they sent me camp to camp, sent me one camp to another camp.

And I saw trains. They coming back. Why the Allies didn't bomb the railroad there? They bombed other place the railroad, but Auschwitz the rail was very, very freely. They could go day and night up there.

A lot of questions historically about that, Mr. Schwartz. But I'm just wondering, when you're seeing all this with the women and children, and knowing that people were going to their death and that Auschwitz was an extermination camp, a death camp, how did you process this spiritually? Or how did you process this in your thinking? Did you pray? Did you have a feeling that somehow there would be a [YIDDISH] somewhere? How do you process this?

This is a miracle I stayed there. They sent me to do same thing, every day go to work, pick up stones, make holes. They took me away. I know they took people. They were working till they die over there, till they die. And I was lucky. They took us, maybe about 50, 60 men. They sent us, again, out from Auschwitz to Swietochlowice.

Yes, but before we leave Auschwitz, I just want to stay there just a little bit more in Auschwitz. And then we'll go to Swietochlowice. So for the three weeks that you were there, did you see Jews trying to create something normal in this crazy world there? Did you see men trying to put on tefillin? Did you see people praying? Did you see a Yiddishkeit that people were trying to hold onto in Auschwitz? Did you see that?

Oh, I'd see a lot of people. Some people would commit suicide with themselves. They have no more future. We see there's nobody helping us. The whole world don't say anything about what we suffer. And when they sent us to Swietochlowice-- you see it?

Right. Yes.

To a factory, ammunition. There used to work there about 200 men. And they picked up 10 men. 10 men unloaded. A train used to come in from Czechoslovakia with ammunition, to the factory with ammunition. And we unloaded the ammunition. In the train was civilian clothes.

All of a sudden, they took us-- the 10 men, we were a team, 10-- they take us back to the barrack. We don't know for why. What was the reason they take us away? They thought that we want to run away. Because we used to wear prison clothes. You saw the clothes we had to wear. And the tlie was ready in the barracks. They took us back to the barracks. The tlie was ready to hang us. To hang us!

Was this time I would say we had a miracle. A man came over to them. They called the key Gestapo to come to see us, the big shot, to watch how they're going to hang us. The cord was already my neck. And a man comes over at the last minute. It's not our fault.

I never think about it, to run away. Never think about it. And they let us free. Went back to the factory, working. Go to the factory, Go to the work-- it was miracle. Nobody believed that this could happen. We used to be 10 men stay in the tlie. Five feet away, one of them, ready to hang us. And all of a sudden we go back to work.

In Swietochlowice, a bodyguard comes in for fun. He takes out my brother. I used to be with three brothers together. Then they separate us. They took them out from the barracks. They should fight with German shepherd.

They should fight with German-- and I saw through window what the dogs do to my brother. They're beating

him up. He's bleeding in the arm. And they were dancing. The bodyguard was dancing what my brother goes through. He survived the camp, like I said, but he passed away very young. Very young, he passed away.

From there, we were close, near Katowice. You heard about this Katowice?

Yes. May I just ask you a question about this horrible torture that occurred to your brother? How did his wounds heal? How did his wounds heal? You helped him healing his wounds from the dog bites? How did the wounds heal? There was no medical attention. How did they heal?

I was so depressed. I said I will never believe I would survive. I used to weigh 80 pounds. You can imagine later on already. Even now, I get nightmares and I don't sleep so good. I don't sleep. Even when I take a sleeping pill, it doesn't help me. Yeah, I tell you the truth.

OK, I'm going to finish with Swietochlowice. We used to stay there, work with ammunition. They let us free, go home from hanging. The Russians were a half mile away from us. A half mile away from us! And they still had time to take us, about 200 men, away. You know where they took me? To Mauthausen. You heard about Mauthausen?

Yes.

You got it over here. In Mauthausen, the same thing what I saw. We took showers. I see the killing and hanging, killing. Some people used to work for the Nazis, too, some of them. They think they would survive. The city that I mentioned, Belchatow, the Jewish committee-- my father they sent two years later to Majdanek. You heard about it?

Yes.

They sent my parents away over there, to Majdanek. OK, I'm in Mauthausen. Mauthausen the same thing. I was working there.

And how long were you in Mauthausen?

About four weeks. Mauthausen full of-- I see killing. What I got through, I say that. And they sent me to the last one, Gusen II. You see that? Gusen II? Gusen II, for me, was like a little Auschwitz. Tell you why. Was a factory in Austria. Gusen was Austria. Was a tunnel, an airplane factory. On the top was a forest. At the bottom was a tunnel with airplanes.

I go there, to the airplane, working. They sent me up to the airplane, the bodyguard. I should clean and check. I didn't know nothing about airplanes. It was the night shift. I fell asleep. I fell asleep. He grabbed me. He threw me out of the airplane. He beat me up. I was two hours unconscious. And I didn't know who picked me up and took me back to the barracks.

But I saw what I saw in the barracks. What they did to people, you wouldn't believe it. They had a bottle of water. And there are some people already skin and bones.

I came over there. I make believe I'm healthy. I clean the window. I wash the floor. They didn't bother me there. They didn't bother me.

And the other people, what they did-- a new way to killing you. They come to you. They grab you. Somebody will-- you couldn't walk anymore. Hold your hand and your head. And here was a bottle of water. In two minutes, you were dead. You drown. They put you in a -- And they throw you out in the street. In the morning I go to work. I saw all bodies like a piece of ice. It was already about 20 below zero. It was so cold. This was in 1945 ready. I was liberated in May, '45. This was [INAUDIBLE].

And all of a sudden, what I saw, I said, what the hell is going on? American, they liberate me. First time I saw a schwartze. I never saw a schwartze. They came the first thing in the camp. Yeah, he comes again, then comes the army. And the Americans, they grab me, and they sent me in hospital. I can't walk, skin and



bones and everything.

I run away from the hospital. Why? People were dying there from diarrhea. They used to eat rich food. I couldn't take the rich food to eat. And I ran away to a private-- near Linz. You heard about Linz? Yeah? To a private Austrian. They didn't want to take me, but they took me for four or five weeks. They gave me to eat oatmeal and it regulates my stomach. I was about five weeks there. I gained about 20, 25 pounds.

Then later on, I said to myself, what I'm going to do here? I want to go back to Poland. And my heart tells me, don't go. Don't go. I didn't go. Three weeks later, was a pogrom. You heard about it maybe?

Sure.

Kielce. You heard about this city, Kielce?

Of course.

People came home from the Holocaust to their homes. They killed 45 men this time.

Then I used to stay in Austria, in Salzburg, in DP camp, for the displaced person, DP camp. And from there, they took us to Italy. In Italy, then I find out-- because my brothers I was together, then I was separate with them-- from the UJA, find out that two brothers survived. Yeah, they told me they survived.

Then we stay a couple years. Wait. It's not like here. You have to wait till they're going to let us into the United States. And they helped us. And I came to the United States.

So how long were you in the Salzburg DP camp? How long were you in the DP camp?

Beginning the war till the end of the war, I was all the time-- there were eight camps.

No, how long were you in the displaced persons camp?

Later in a displaced person--

From '45 to what?

Yeah, what they made special for the Holocaust survivors.

Right. But how long were you there? How long were you in the DP camp? A couple of years?

In Italy, we were about three years. Three years over there. Yeah. Then we came here. I had an uncle. When I came here, he passed away. My mother's brother, he passed away.

I came here to the United States. The HIAS, they come to me and they ask me, I have a place for you. I'll give you four weeks. They send you to a hotel. It was good. Then we're going to look for you for a job. This is great. Fine. Then I had a cousin. He spoiled it for me.

How?

He spoiled it. What this boy did, he had a house. He sold the house, and I have no place to go. In a little while I suffered here in the United States here. I went back to them. I had two brothers. And one brother used to live in Portland, Maine. The one brother used to live in Cincinnati. They couldn't help me. They came married with children already, you know? And the HIAS used to help them. They pay the rent for them. Then later, they were [INAUDIBLE].

Then, later on, I came back to New York. I was working at a delicatessen store in Cincinnati. And I got a membership card. And I saw I didn't like it. First to live there. I came back to New York. I went to the union. And maybe you would know it. I worked by a delicatessen. This store was very famous. You must know.

Isaac Gellis.

Oh, yes. Of course.

At Essex Street.

Yes. Very well-known deli. Very well-known deli.

This way, I survived. This is my life.

So what we're going to do, Mr. Schwartz, is we're going to take a short break now. And I want to come back and ask you just a couple of concluding questions and--

Speak a little louder please.

We'll be back in about five minutes. We're going to take a short break now. And then we're going to come back and speak a little bit more, just a few more questions. Thank you so much.

OK.

We're back with our second segment of the interview with Mr. Arthur Schwartz. Arthur, in the last segment you spoke about your brothers and how you were through various camps with them. And I just want to go and-- where were you separated from your brothers? I think that you mentioned in Gutenbrunn you were separated from your brother? Is that correct?

I was separated-- they took him away from a place, Gutenbrunn, because he couldn't survive. He lost weight. He was skin and bones. They took him away. I didn't know where they took him.

Then I went with my other brother to Mauthausen. They did the same thing, separate. He went in Austria in a place. And I went in another place. Yeah, we did go. This way we were separated. They didn't know if I was survived, and I didn't know if they did survive, till I find out from the UJA that I have two brothers still in Germany.

So there were nine children and your parents in the immediate family. Three survived the war? You and your two brothers were the only survivors?

That's all that survived. All the sisters passed away.

And your parents.

Yeah. The family passed away. All the sisters. All have children. All right. Could I say something now?

Of course. Of course.

Including the speech I make close to the end. And I said to the people, look. Six million Jews, two words going to be in Jews. [SPEAKING YIDDISH]. You understand what does that mean?

Yeah. But explain it. Two million Jews were killed. But myself, they--

They couldn't do nothing.

Couldn't do anything.

Yeah. And that was the [INAUDIBLE]. And I said, my speech, I said, I gave it, if you people have the second generation, they should know what's happened. It's a very sad story, but it's a true story. It's a true story.

And then I said to the end, if we would have three years before created Israel, this will never happen. I think

so. I think so. If Israel would be created three years before, this will never happen. And I said to the new generation, it's special for you. If you mothers have grandchildren, let them know. It's a very sad story, but it's true story. Very true.

Here in the United States I see a lot of anti-Semitism too. Right? Lots of anti-Semitism here. In this country we see that. And then I told them, to the children, if I go in a place, you wouldn't believe it. The parents send their children-- I should give them a brucha [LAUGHS] And one, almost a rabbi, he kissed my hand, the number. I said, what's this? I'm not a hero. He said, you survived, and German is dead. [LAUGHS] Something like this.

Well, sir, I think the rabbi was showing that, as a survivor, you're a special individual to have survived that horror. I just want to ask you--

Or maybe you see it in the street. Oh, I lost a string thing. Maybe it's laying there.

We'll find it. We'll find it.

You got it?

Yeah.

OK, thank you.

Sure. We'll put it on.

No, no, no.

We'll put it on later.

I mean this.

Right, your cufflink. We'll find it. It's here. Mr. Schwartz, I just wanted to ask you a question. And we spoke about it in between these segments. And it's a question that deals with your inner ability, your inner source of strength. Where did you get your strength to live through this? You went through eight camps. Eight camps-- Stutthof, Łódź, [INAUDIBLE], Gutenbrunn, Auschwitz--

You mean how did I survive?

Swietochlowice, Mauthausen. How did you survive? What was your inner strength that made you survive these camps-- eight?

In my mind was already I wouldn't survive. What I saw, what I go through, I couldn't sleep. Even now it bothers me. I get nightmares, a lot of nightmares with my parents. My parents are still on my mind. My mother used to run after me, and she pulled out her hair. And she was screaming, my son! I wouldn't see you anymore. And she was right. I didn't see her anymore. They took them away. What can you do? Life must go on. I'm here.

You went through a lot of stories. Were they all the Holocaust?

Yes.

Yeah? Was mine the biggest?

It's an important story. It's an important--

Mine?

Yes, what you're saying is a very important story. It's a very important story.

My place was the first one to liquidate. So the Germans came in. They gave us four hours. Leave. We didn't know what to do. The first thing, they closed up the Jewish stores. And my mother used to look for the children begging for a piece of bread for they gave us to eat.

They always have a song in Jewish. [SINGING IN YIDDISH] That's what Mother was doing. She used to run in the villages for a piece of bread to give us to eat, something like this. Because all Jewish stores were closed. They're closed up.

So we didn't know what to do. They didn't tell us. Gave us four hours to leave. I think we were first one, 1939. And September 1 was the war. Two months later they were liquidating the city. We have no place to go. Was a mess.

Do you have some closing thoughts that you would like to share with us? Some closing words? Do you have some closing words for the interview, some last words for the interview that you would like to share with us?

Well, I hope we should have peace. We could have a free lifetime. You could go the street free. What I see in the street now, killing, even in the United States. Look what's happened in the synagogue. They're killing people. I would never believe that, a rabbi killing each other. Oh, it's a mess. It's a bad feeling. I tell you the truth. Very bad feeling.

After all of what you've gone through, you still see the same anti-Semitism.

Yeah, what I went through, and I see that it's again like this. There's something unbelievable. I have to tell you true. I used to live in the Bronx, Mosholu Parkway. You know this?

To tell you the truth, I had a hold up. A man comes over to me with a knife like this. He pushed me in the elevator. I should have gave him the wallet. But I did. I gave him the wallet. Every time the elevator was crowded, and this time there was the elevator empty. And he followed me. I was shopping in a supermarket.

I was shopping in a supermarket, and I saw somebody's following me. And I was a little suspicious. Why are you following me, something? He comes to my house. I open the door from the elevator, and he pushed me in. And the knife already to my stomach. Give me your wallet. He must be as a Spanish guy, with sunglasses.

You wouldn't believe it. I recognized him, Forest Hills, here! I didn't know what to do. Go to the police and tell them he's suspicious? I think he is. He used to wear sunglasses so you shouldn't recognize him, something like this. He was 100% the same guy.

And somebody told me to stay away. What you do? Look for trouble? [INAUDIBLE]. And the only thing I'm glad is that still my mind is working. That's what it is.

And your memory is very good. Mr. Schwartz, I want to thank you very much for the opportunity--

Thanks for coming.

--to interview you.

What are you going to do with this?

Well, we're going to--