

INTERVIEW WITH KIM FENDRICK

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**Transcending Trauma Project
Council for Relationships
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INT: On April 19, 1994. Kim is a child survivor. Kim, I just want to start with finding out about your life in the present. How old are you? What are your current living circumstances? What kind of work do you do?

KIM: Okay. I'm fifty-eight, soon to be fifty-nine if G-d wills it, in June. I am divorced. I live in an apartment. I have two children, two grandchildren, and my work is as a family therapist, as a clinical social worker.

INT: Could you tell me more about your work and your training?

KIM: I have-I wear two work hats. One of my long-term involvements is with a family service agency in Burlington County, where I've been for almost twenty-six years, and that's an agency that I helped found long ago and far away and since 1985 I've been in my own office as well. I'm half-time there and half-time here, and I primarily work with adults, occasionally with children but mainly with adults, parents of children -- my preference rather than working with children. Individuals, marital situations, and my-the distinct preference is not to work with active drug and alcohol abusers. That's a population I don't care to work with, but other than that-

INT: Why is that?

KIM: (pause) From a very young age, alcohol was frowned upon. Being drunk was frowned upon, and I-I think there's a personal and professional reason. Personal one is probably the one that is most important. I always felt uncomfortable in the presence of someone who was drunk because there was a lack of control over that situation for me, and professionally, I believe-that my sense is that people are not accessible to the work if they are under the influence. So as I work with clients who are not principally addicted but occasionally have come in under the influence of alcohol, I have sent them home, because I don't believe that they could hear what's going on. It wasn't a useful session. But I think the first part is very important in my sense of not being safe in that environment.

INT: What framework would you say you work from and what would you say is your greatest strength as a therapist and supervisor.

KIM: Well-

INT: This is what happens when you have a therapist talking to-

KIM: My framework is psychodynamic, more and more that is kind of being forced into being cognitive as well, and to quote one of my students this year, she says in her evaluation of me something to the effect that: "Kim sees the good in things and builds on it." Something like that. I can quote it to you. I have it with me, but it's something to that effect.

INT: Is that also a life philosophy? Somehow, would you say?

KIM: I think it has become one. It wasn't always, I don't think, although my children often call me an optimist, but I think I'm a realist and in theory, at least, that's true for me, that I take the good and build on it. Personally there were some bad that I couldn't build on and had to shed, my divorce for example. I could not find the good in that ultimately and needed to divest myself of that in order to survive, but in general, yeah, I see the good in it and try to make the most of it.

INT: How long have you been divorced?

KIM: I've been divorced since January 22, 1988.

INT: And you've been living on your own in your apartment?

KIM: Mm-hm. And even -- well, the apartment was something my husband and I shared prior to our divorce and he left.

INT: Okay. Again, staying in the present for a while, tell me about your children, their ages and their life circumstance and what they're doing now.

KIM: My daughter is thirty-two. She is one year away from being a Conservative rabbi. She's at the Jewish Theological Seminary in Manhattan. She's single, not by design and hoping not to be, and I'm hoping that she won't remain so. My son, who's thirty, is married and he is a--he's a salesman essentially. He sells computer services to Fortune 500 companies, changing from selling computers because the business has changed. He has two little boys who are precious and wonderful, Joshua and Zachary.

INT: How old are they?

KIM: Joshua is two and a half and Zachary is three and a half months, and his wife is a lovely young woman named Esther who's an attorney, who is presently full-time mothering. And then I have another very special child in my life who happens to be the grandson of a family that saved my life. I made his acquaintance in July of 1990 when he came to this country and he's sort of become a part of my family -- he and his wife -- and he's forty. He's a painting contractor, lives in Vineland, and it's been a wonderful full circle for me.

INT: So you talk about him as a child.

KIM: He's forty.

INT: Of yours? (Laughter) Is he a part of your family? Do your children relate to him in a close way as well?

KIM: They do. When I had his fortieth birthday party in my apartment in November, both of my children and my son and his whole family came and yes, in a symbolic way, he is very much a member of my family, and in a real way as well. We don't-my

daughter being in New York and my son and daughter-in-law living in the northern shore of New Jersey, we don't get together physically as often as we might but when there are big things, yes, we get together. My Polish child came to my daughter's thirtieth birthday party whereas my biological son did not. He couldn't. And when I had a wedding reception for my Polish child, my daughter was there. My son was away at some event, so yes, we share some important events together and I've certainly helped him financially in ways that a mother would and it's been a real joy.

INT: How was that connection established between you and him?

KIM: We need to go back a little bit.

INT: Okay.

KIM: The farmer and his-the Catholic farmer and his wife who saved my family's life had five children. My aunt has been in touch-had been in touch with all five of the children. I had only been in touch with two, when one of the children with whom she was in touch but I was not, died. That child happened to be his son. That son's son wrote to my aunt and said, "You can stop writing now because my father died," and my aunt wrote back to Poland, "You keep writing," and eventually that son of the son made his way to America, wound up on the East Coast in Vineland. My aunt called me from California in June of 1990 to ask if my father, alav hashalom (may he rest in peace), who was alive at that time and was in this eighties, she asked if my father could find a job for this young man, and I laughed her off the phone. I said, my father? How about me? Well, I was still the little girl that she knew during the war and couldn't quite imagine that I could do something for him and I asked for his phone number, he lived forty-five minutes away from me, and that's how we met.

INT: So it was your aunt who stayed in touch with the family?

KIM: With all five.

INT: Not your parents.

KIM: My parents stayed in touch with two of the children.

INT: Two.

KIM: Right. She stayed in touch-she was the original contact with that family and remained in touch with all, my aunt.

INT: When you met him, what was that like for you and what did that seem like for him, that first meeting?

KIM: I can speak more easily of what it was like for me.

INT: Sure.

KIM: When I called he was very eager to meet me and we agreed to meet at a Dunkin' Donuts because I really didn't know who he was, what he stood for or what he might be like. I had never met his grandparents, even though they saved my life, because when I came into the cave where we were in hiding, my uncle who brought me into the cave from the forest brought me in surreptitiously, without telling his grandparents, because he didn't want to hear the possibility of their saying, "No, you can't do this." Eventually they gave permission for my parents to be brought in also, as well as several other people, and in leaving the cave when the Russians liberated us, the Jaremkows, the grandparents, the farmer and his wife, asked us to leave at 3 a.m. because they didn't want their neighbors to persecute them for hiding Jews. I didn't realize that I had never met his grandparents. In my mind's eye, I could imagine them. I had heard so much about them. But I never met them. Fortunately, my father was alive at the time and my uncle and aunt are alive now. I could have asked my uncle and aunt but I asked my father, why didn't I meet his grandparents? In meeting the grandson I realized that I had never met the grandparents. That sort of came face to face for me, and in meeting him, symbolically I met his grandparents, because I had never met them and he stood for them.

INT: When was this again? What year?

KIM: It was in July 1990. It was eight months prior to-ten months prior to my father's death. My father and he also met. My father gave him this incredible three-hour lecture on Polish history at my father's kitchen table. It was wonderful and this is wonderful and Vajo, or Walter as he is known here, was so respectful and listening to him. He is a very educated...he's an engineer by training. Very educated young man who knows more about Polish history, I would guess, than my father did. Maybe not, but he listened so attentively and my father had the joy-

INT: What was the common language?

KIM: Polish.

INT: Polish.

KIM: Oh, without a doubt.

INT: And for you?

KIM: Polish. I've refreshed some of my Polish with great difficulty. (Laughter)

INT: So are you saying in effect that something happened that was automatic for you?

KIM: Yes.

INT: An automatic connection, feeling?

KIM: Yes. It was a wonderful feeling of being able to say thank you to somebody tangible, because as a child, and I was eight and nine in that cave, I didn't feel

responsible for anything that happened, nor did I know anybody personally nor did I ever say thank you to anybody.

INT: Your aunt, in keeping touch with the five children, and your parents with two of the children, did they actually know them? Did they have some relationship?

KIM: My aunt had a pretty close relationship with the one daughter. They were friends.

INT: Before?

KIM: Before, yes. Before and probably during, but prior to our going into the cave. I don't-she was the connection to my aunt. My uncle was close to the grandfather, the farmer himself. My uncle and the farmer worked together in a work camp, where the grandfather -- the farmer -- was the foreman and my uncle was a laborer. The farmer, being not Jewish, was the paid employee under the Nazis and my uncle, because he was Jewish, was an unpaid laborer, and that's how the connection was a double prong connection between the farmer and the farmer's daughter. The farmer's daughter and my aunt were friends, and the farmer and my uncle were connected at work.

INT: Did your family, in connecting with the Polish family, ever establish them as Righteous Gentiles at any Holocaust memorial?

KIM: During my parents' lives, they were hesitant to do that because of some legalities that were part of their lives. In coming here, things happened. But now that my father has been dead for three years, I am in the process of doing that. My uncle has given me that mandate and I have all of the information and I am in the process of doing...it needs to be notarized, it needs to be with an Israeli consul and all and it's-

INT: Is that through Yad Vashem?

KIM: Yes. Yes.

INT: And who is it? All the members of the family or is it the grandparents? How then is the tribute made to the Righteous Gentiles?

KIM: I'm not sure but I have a listing of all of their names. They were certainly all involved, except for the youngest child who didn't know, who wasn't told, that we were there. But four of the five children -- the oldest four -- left the farm when we were there in fear for their own lives; in fear of our being found and therefore their being shot. But they all participated in the knowledge that we were there and certainly the parents are the ones who undertook this and continued to feed us and shelter us.

INT: What town in Poland did this take place?

KIM: It took place on the outskirts of a little town called Zloczow, Z-L-O-C-Z-O-W, about sixty kilometers from Lvov, or Lemberg as it's known in German, in the eastern, southeastern, part of Poland, which is now Russia. At that time was a little bit of Austria,

a little bit of the Ukraine, a little bit of Poland, sometimes one thing, sometimes another. I considered it Poland when I was born there.

INT: Okay. Let me-I want to go back to the details of the experience, when we begin to talk about your parents and Europe. Let me now ask you, are you involved in any kind of Holocaust related activity, group, organization?

KIM: Yes I am. I am involved in a not too intensive way with the Jewish Community Relations Council, except that I serve as a speaker for the JCRC. I've spoken at many, many schools, have never turned down a request unless-I've turned down one, but I've spoken at many schools and I speak to probably eight to ten to a dozen a year, more so this year than ever.

INT: Is that Jersey and Philadelphia?

KIM: No. Jersey, limited to Jersey. And I focus it on my experience and survival and prejudice in general, but it's a very personal involvement with my audience and I try to pitch it to the age of the children. Generally it's been with eighth graders who have just completed The Diary of Anne Frank, and then they can relate to my experience, being somewhat similar except that she didn't survive. I appeared on a-I'm a chapter in a book. Did I mention that to you?

INT: The name of the book is?

KIM: Is The Hidden Children by Jane Marks and in May of '91 my daughter and I went to a conference of Hidden Children in New York at the Marriott, and she was moved by something, by two things I said there and included me in this book. As a result of that involvement and the book, she gave my name to a talk show in Chicago, the Jerry Springer show, and I was a part of that broadcast in October of '93 with my Polish child. He was there with me. It was very sweet on the airplane going there. I had just received a copy of the book from the publisher and he's looking at it and while he's not named by name in the book, he is named by relationship. He says, "In America I am famous. I'm in a book. I'm going to be on television." (Imitates his accent)

INT: Would you say his name?

KIM: His name is Walter Jaremkow, J-A-R-E-M-K-O-W. He lives with his wife Agnes in Vineland and they have the sweetest little house and I'm happy to have been a part of that possibility of buying it. He's a painting contractor, doing nicely. He does beautiful work and teases me. When I looked into long-term care. I remember his being in my office and I had to make a phone call because somebody was trying to sell me long-term care and I told him what I was doing. He was sitting here waiting for something. He says, "You don't have to do that. You're going to be with us if you need care." (Laughter)

INT: Old world tradition.

KIM: Right.

INT: Have you always done this? Have you always been a speaker in your adult life or is this new? Newer for you?

KIM: Wonderful question. No, it's very new. The first time I spoke was in November of '88 and there's a definite line of demarcation when I became a speaker, at least when I frequently went out to speak. I spoke at my children's school occasionally, when my son brought me in as a show and tell, you know, thing, or my daughter [did]. But when I was married, my husband - who is American born - was not happy with my identity as a Holocaust survivor. He was very, very grateful that I survived and very appreciative of that fact that my family survived, but he really didn't want me to focus on that, perhaps as a means of protecting me, but I would guess more as a means of protecting himself.

INT: From?

KIM: From the attention he wasn't getting (laughter) and that might have been. It was hard for him to see me as a person with those memories and those- and knowing different languages. He wanted it to be more of an integrated experience. He couldn't see me in that light, and resented my speaking out. He was not comfortable with it. So to keep reasonable peace, I didn't do it. There was no point in doing it. But once our separation was clear and we remained together physically in the apartment for several months before he moved out -- we separated but we were there in the same place -- I gave myself permission to do it. And it was Kristallnacht, the anniversary of Kristallnacht in '88 that I first spoke at Bishop Eagan High School, a Catholic school in Cherry Hill.

INT: Were your parents alive at that time?

KIM: My mother was not. My father was. My mother had died in December of '87.

INT: How did he feel? How did your father feel about you beginning to speak publicly?

KIM: It's not even a relevant question for me. I mean there was no hesitation on his part. My parents - both spoke very freely privately. They never spoke publicly, only because they felt they probably couldn't express themselves adequately or maybe were not called upon, but to my children and to me and to their friends they spoke about their experiences very, very openly. So it's not even a question that I gave any thought to. He had no hesitation, I don't think, about my speaking.

INT: Are you involved in any organizations? I know, for example, organizations have developed specifically for child survivors. Have you been a part of that?

KIM: No, I have not. Not in any formal way. No. If there were a local organization of child survivors I would give it serious thought, but they are often at a distance and I have not.

INT: Anything else about that? Holocaust related activities that you would want to share?

KIM: What comes to mind is that I am both a survivor and a child of survivors, so it's kind of a hybrid existence. I believe that as a survivor, every survivor has a different experience. I think we shared the event, those of us who survived, but we certainly didn't share the experience. I believe that just as each of our lives, survivor or not, is different from every other person, our survival was different from every other person. I also believe that there's a sense of competition amongst survivors, a kind of pecking order. I've heard it said that camp survivors...no, my survival was in a cave and I was sheltered by my parents and my uncle and aunt so it was the best kind I can imagine -- but I've heard it said that people who survived the camps almost don't consider others who survived as survivors. Personally, I've met some people who really needed to talk about their experience far more. The urgency inside and the intensity with which they talk about it is so great that it almost doesn't leave room for other people to talk about theirs. And I expect that the more enormous the loss, the more-the greater the loss, people who've lost either both parents or one parent or a sibling or...they really need to say much more. They haven't had the protection that those of us who were very lucky had. Just passing thoughts.

INT: When you say that you are both a survivor and a child of survivors, does one identity supersede the other? I don't know if that's a good way to ask the question but- I'm sure the issues merge, but are there times when you feel that the issues of one identity is stronger or dominant or prevail over the other?

KIM: Yes. I think that my sense of being a child of survivors and having been a child during that time supersedes my being a survivor, because it was never up to me to make it happen, so I wasn't responsible for that process. In a way it's disempowering and in a very important way it felt so good to be taken care of, and I think that identity -- probably the child in me is the person who speaks. I speak as I was then and felt as a child.

INT: Checking in on your current life, how would you describe your involvement Jewishly?

KIM: I am a cultural Jew rather than an observant Jew. I am very much Jewish, but not observant.

INT: Are you affiliated?

KIM: Yes I am.

INT: With what institution?

KIM: I belong to a Reform synagogue and I feel very close to my rabbi as a person, even more so than as a religious leader, but yeah, I am connected that way. I'm also doing something which is very special for me, that probably has little to do with the Holocaust but it has to do with my being from Europe. I volunteer some time with a Russian couple a little older than myself who speak Yiddish, and they're a joy. They're a lovely family. They have their two adult children and their children here, but I made their acquaintance through my synagogue requesting Yiddish speaking congregants who might have time to give and I figured if not me who?

INT: What do you do for them? What role do you play?

KIM: It's interesting "what do I do for them?" It's what I do with them. It's what they do for me and it's what they think I do for them. I visit. I eat their wonderful food. I run errands occasionally for them. I certainly make phone calls for them. Interceded on their behalf to get the subsidized housing. They were in so-called regular housing and now they're in the supported housing in the Jewish community and just two weeks ago, the man, Channan, of the family was teasing about wishing that his wife would cut his hair rather than he has to spend five dollars at a Russian man's house to get his hair cut and she was saying, no, she doesn't want that because he'll always find fault with it and I said, hey, I used to cut my father's hair and in fact I may still have the little apparatus that shaves the hair, because he has the same male pattern baldness that my father had, hair on the sides and no hair on top, and I found the little machine and I'm bringing it to them and it's that kind of-again, almost family feeling.

INT: You said maybe that's because you're European? Do you think that's part of being an immigrant?

KIM: I think so. I think the connection, certainly the Yiddish connection, speaking Yiddish, but their reminding me of my parents. (Voice shows emotion) He reminds me very much of my father. He has two hands that can do almost anything, and he's got this tremendous zest for life and can-do attitude and imagine what it took for people in their seventies to emigrate from Russia to here! Imagine. Courage. Spirit.

INT: Yeah.

KIM: They're very dear and if they think that they get a lot from me, (voice is choked up) I get so much more from them. (End of tape 1, side 1) And as I say, I can't speak for them except in their actions, in their words to me. The gentleman of the couple will be celebrating his birthday shortly and they invited me to the home for a celebration and they said, "Now we're not going to have everybody. We're not going to have our nephew. We're just going to have our children and you," so that says something about...and their children are appreciative of my doing some things with their parents and for their parents because it takes a little pressure off them. They're doing very, very well but have families of their own and are very, very busy, though they do a great deal for their parents. They're very close. Some things are left undone and when they ask or when I see the need I'm there.

INT: And this connection was through your synagogue?

KIM: Mm-hm. It was a little blurb in the house organ saying, "Anybody who speaks Yiddish..." and many people think they speak Yiddish but because I'm from Europe I really speak Yiddish. It's that kind of Yiddish that they know.

INT: It's not an Anglicized Yiddish.

KIM: Right. And we fill in with Russian. You know, many is the time they just flowed into Russian and I'll say, "I don't think I understand what you said," but we piece it together.

INT: As a cultural Jew, why are you involved with the synagogue, with the rabbi?

KIM: I wish I had a great answer for you. I don't think I have one. I think because I believe in G-d and it's something that I think I need. Can't tell you why.

INT: A synagogue as opposed to an organization like [American Jewish] Congress or [American Jewish] Committee or Hadassah? It's the synagogue.

KIM: Mm-hm. Let me pull at straws and try to figure myself out. The synagogue came to mean a great deal to my father in his later years. He was the gabbai in his synagogue. When I was first married, my husband and I toyed with affiliating with Ethical Culture. As our children were born, we affiliated with a synagogue because we wanted our children to know what being Jewish is about, but we had some questions about remaining in the synagogue when we were first married and I think that had to do with the way that dues-it had to do with money, not so much what was required of us but how it was handled, and I'll never forget.

This really was-this speaks to why not to be affiliated but we were at a High Holiday service prior to our children's birth and the contribution that people made on the High Holidays were called out in the congregation. It was humiliating for the members. We were not members. We couldn't care less. Nobody knew us. But it was so humiliating. That's what upset us very, very much, but then we traded off the fact that we really wanted our children to have a Jewish identity, and my parents were very supportive of that and I think they would have bought the synagogue if not paid our membership to make that happen.

In time, I-my husband's roots were very traditional Jewish. He had considered being a rabbi up until his bar mitzvah, and while I had very, very few roots-in fact, when I came to this country, I was twelve. My parents wanted me to go to Hebrew school as well as to regular school and I gave them a choice. I was going to learn English or Hebrew and I couldn't do both at the same time so they chose English, and I never went to Hebrew school, never had a bat mitzvah, never-I read Hebrew haltingly but I don't-I don't have an answer why but the synagogue is important to me. It's important to me to be there on special occasions. For me. It has little to do with what the synagogue is but it's my connection with my G-d. (Voice shows emotion)

INT: Can you put more words into that? What is touching you in this way?

KIM: My grandfather, maybe, (Kim starts crying) who was not a very observant Jew. Very modern Jew, but he was very important to me and it's a line that I need to continue. I'm not sure why. I don't know why. And in fact my daughter who will be a rabbi and far more observant than I, I believe that came from my father's learning and devotion in his later years. While he knew a great deal, he never was terribly observant until he retired and became very close to his synagogue, so I don't have a good answer for you.

INT: I think that's a fine answer. And you connect your daughter's choice to become a rabbi with your father's influence?

KIM: Mm-hm. And I think for the Holocaust influence, you know.

INT: So it became important to her to maintain continuity.

KIM: I think so. Again, it's unfair and probably inaccurate to speak for her, but as someone else asked me, how did she get the interest in being a rabbi? I think that's where it came from. She's very-she's the historian in the family. She's very rooted in roots and traditions. That became important for her.

INT: How do you feel about her choice?

KIM: I think it's wonderful. I think it's wonderful, not because she will be a rabbi but because she will be what she is wonderful at. To be a rabbi is fine, but more particularly because this is what she is wonderful at. This is where she thrives. She could have been many things, really many things, a very able person, but I see her as being so fine at this.

INT: Okay, what specifically?

KIM: Teaching, conveying concepts from many different viewpoints, depth in learning, conveying hope, allowing for difference. She's a wonderful thinker and a wonderful communicator. Incredible communicator. There's many a time, more so in the past than recently, when she would say something to me and I would say, "Susan, I don't understand what you said," so she would repeat it. I'd say, "No, no, no. You don't understand. I don't understand what you've said." So she would say it in a different way and I would understand what she said. She says things. She just has this gift to convey profound, profound concepts and important concepts.

INT: Does it mean something different to you that her choice of how to use these gifts is as a religious leader, teacher, counselor, as opposed to a mental health person or a professor of English or any other choice where she would be a teacher and a communicator. I understand that you'll be proud of her whatever her choice, but-

KIM: Is this more important?

INT: Or different. Is there something about it that's a little different, that the choice is the rabbinate and not English literature or whatever?

KIM: I think no matter how honest I make this answer, and my most honest answer would be no, it isn't. I don't know that it isn't because I don't know what I don't know, but it feels as if I would be just so happy. I am so happy for her that she-that it seems like the niche for her. This is the kind of application in which she could use herself the best. I don't think it has to do with her being a rabbi but I don't know. I don't know.

INT: And you mentioned your grandfather before. Did you know him and did you know him well?

KIM: I knew him very well, and if tears ever come to me it's when I speak of him.
(Voice gets emotional)

INT: Is he...whose father is he?

KIM: My father's father.

INT: And you knew him before you went into hiding?

KIM: I knew him from whenever I first remember knowing him until I was seven, when he was rounded up in the first Nazi roundup and disappeared from my life.

INT: Did you see that or just know of it?

KIM: No. Just-now there's an interesting question. I just knew of it and we heard that he had been rounded up and taken up to the Schloss, which is a prison in town and whoever it was who reported it-I don't know who it was-says that he died with the Shema on his lips.

INT: How did he die?

KIM: He was shot to death. Executed.

INT: With a group?

KIM: Mm-hm; with the first roundup of Jews in town. (Kim is very emotional when she talks about her grandfather) Yes. Male Jews were rounded up and herded off and shot, and he was caught in that first action. I don't know what...I remember that and I have carried that always, so when I get up to say the Shema, that's who I think of. (Kim is crying)

INT: Even today?

KIM: Even today, yes.

INT: Did you react at the time? You were eight.

KIM: Seven.

INT: Seven.

KIM: No. No. I never went through that process then. Never. I have never-I keep going through it every time I think of him and (pause) remember what was told to me about him, how he died. He was very special to me, very special. I was his only grandchild and he was my friend. He took me for walks and taught me how to write the alphabet with his cane in the ground, in the sand, in the earth and bought me books. I remember sitting on his lap at a Passover Seder and his telling me the story of the exodus from Mitzrayim [Egypt]. I remember where it was.

INT: Where?

KIM: It was in his apartment in [name of place], down the balcony from our apartment. We were sitting by the window. I sat on his lap. I remember my mother forced me to eat the white meat of chicken. He would bring me strawberries and cream.

INT: What do you mean?

KIM: I didn't like white meat of chicken and she would force me to eat it in order to nourish me. This was prior to the Nazi occupation, and he would smuggle in strawberries and cream and that was a whole lot better than the white meat of chicken. He was my friend and he disappeared from my life.

INT: Was he your only grandparent, living grandparent before the war?

KIM: No. I had all four living grandparents. My mother's parents were not nearly as close to me, in part because they were geographically distant. They were in another town. I did know them and I do remember them, but there wasn't that emotional connection to them. I was also their only grandchild, as a matter of fact, but they were not as close at all. My grandfather and I lived in the same house, in two different apartments. My grandmother, his wife, who happened to be my father's aunt, my father's biological mother died two years before I was born, in fact before my parents met. So in the tradition of Orthodox Judaism, he married the next unmarried sister, and she was my grandmother, and she survived with us and she even held my daughter in her arms when my daughter was three months old. That was my "Babcha."

INT: But your relationship with her was different.

KIM: It was very good. It was very close, but she didn't-she didn't lend herself to that kind of emotional warmth as my grandfather did. And I had her all my life essentially, until I was twenty-six years old, and it was-

INT: Do I know her? Did I know her?

KIM: I don't think so. My Babcha? No, you weren't born then. Well, yes you were. Yes you were. You must have been, because you're older than Susan. I don't know. I have a picture of her. She looked like a little gnome. You probably didn't know her. She was my dear, dear grandmother but I did my grieving with her. I went through the process. She was in a home. I went to visit her every week or it feels like every week. It probably was less frequent than that, but we went through a process of separating. With my grandfather it never happened.

INT: When did you feel the feelings?

KIM: I don't know. I don't even know. I don't-

INT: You don't remember when they first-

KIM: No.

INT: When you first got in touch with them.

KIM: No, I don't. I really don't. I think at first it was like, "No, he just went someplace. He's going to be back." I mean we heard that he...but he was always back. He was there for so many early years of my life and part of my life, so no, I don't know when those feelings surfaced.

INT: Did the family talk of him?

KIM: Oh, sure. Oh, sure. Oh, sure. In fact, my daughter's middle name is after him. Oh, sure. To the extent that I'm sane and I'm not sure that I'm all sane, but to the extent that I am, I think it's because there were no secrets in my family.

INT: So they didn't not speak of him in order to protect themselves from the pain?

KIM: No. No, absolutely not. There was nothing that was not-

INT: But as a child you didn't always cry when the family spoke of him. It's just later in your life.

KIM: Mm-hm.

INT: Is there a picture of him?

KIM: Yes. Oh yes.

INT: Do you have one?

KIM: Oh yes, I have a big picture of him in my apartment. And it's not that I dissolve, but tears come to my eyes when I conjure up the image and what he meant to me and what I meant to him. Unconditional, absolutely unconditional.

INT: Very special.

KIM: Very special. Very special. Almost my guiding star.

INT: I hear that. Are you okay?

KIM: I'm fine.

INT: Okay. Again, in the present, you talked about your Jewish involvement, your Holocaust involvement. Do you have any other kinds of organizations or activities or hobbies or interests that you're involved in?

KIM: I enjoy my friends a lot. I play bridge. I enjoy my grandsons. Organizations? Who do I belong to? I belong to a discussion group. I belong to a professional group. I think that's the peak of it. Nothing else comes to mind. My friends are very important to me.

My two dearest friends who have been-the people are very important to me and I think that having worked with people, I wouldn't enjoy what I do, regardless of what kind of financial rewards it would have to offer, it just wouldn't mean much to me.

INT: And it's always been true?

KIM: Always been true.

INT: In your professional choice and the way you live life.

KIM: Not only by professional choice, but as a child, having grown up with adults, I found that adults trusted me with their secrets and sometimes sought out my advice. Wow. Hey, this is a good thing. Yeah, so yeah. And I think that had to do probably with my grandmother who was a very wise lady and spoke very openly about how one lives life and the right things to do, but never had great expectations. Never laid a trip on me to do things in a certain way, but always told me what the right thing was to do. She was a very big part of my life because she and I were basically at home when my parents worked. So other organizations? I'm not an organization person as such.

INT: Your friendships. Would you say that your friendships are close and you use each other as confidants and invite each other in?

KIM: Absolutely; in particular, two women who have been a part of my life and absolutely an incredible support system for me for twenty-five years. Yes. And I for them; one needier than the other. And at times each of us have needed something but we find that the sands shift, and yeah, the three of us are friends, but in different ways.

INT: And they have been with you through thick and thin with the events?

KIM: Mm-hm. And I with them, and there's been a lot of thick and a lot of thin.

INT: On a social level, since you're divorced, has it been an interest of yours to date, to be involved in relationships or have you thought about that differently?

KIM: When I first was divorced it was like, "Hey, I'm going to jump into this," knowing very well that the choices were limited. In time, I became even more selective and I really have-I'd love to meet somebody wonderful but not likely. Not likely. And I'm quite content in my life. It was difficult after the divorce, not so much that I was lonely - because I wasn't. I was alone. It was hard to be alone. It was hard not to have someone share that other side of the bed. That's what was hard, but loneliness was not a part of it. It was hard not to have someone to go to dinner with or to the movies with when I wanted to, but not because I was lonely. Simply because, you know, another woman would have done as well.

INT: Did it ever stop being hard?

KIM: Yes. Yes, it has stopped being hard. It's become much easier. In fact at this point, that may be a rationalization, maybe not, but I appreciate my space. In fact, the thought of

somebody sharing it is (laughter) more than I can deal with. I've had the opportunity to share that space at least theoretically. I've said to this one particular person that I'd love to have a man sleep with me and go home to another apartment, and that would be nice. (Laughter) Most men want the physical involvement of a home together. I think the best part about being divorced is that I don't have to cook, and I never enjoyed that. I always did it because it was-

INT: As part of the job.

KIM: Yeah. But I really like that a lot.

INT: Do you cook for the grandchildren when they visit?

KIM: No. I buy for the grandchildren when they visit. Well, the little one doesn't take much, but no. No. When my son went to Rutgers and they were bemoaning college food, he said, "It beats my mother's." (Laughter) He was right. Not one of my strengths. I hate it. I hate it. And it may have to do with-whatever it has to do with, but cooking is not something that I enjoy doing. Eating is fine. That's fine. Anything somebody cooks for me, almost anything, because I have arthritis and I control that with a food elimination diet, so there are certain things that I can't eat but anybody who cooks for me is my best friend. (Laughter)

INT: How would you describe your economic status?

KIM: Middle-class. Stable, thank G-d.

INT: And you support yourself, right?

KIM: I support myself. Absolutely I support myself. Yeah.

INT: Okay. Anything else about your current life and circumstances that you'd like to add at this point?

KIM: I wish managed care weren't a pain in the butt that it is. (Laughter) No, thank G-d. I'm looking forward to my daughter's ordination.

INT: Is that this spring? Is that this year?

KIM: No, a year from now.

INT: A year from now.

KIM: Giving some tangential thought to visiting my hometown. She would like that. The more I think about it, the less I want to do it, but I'm giving it some thought.

INT: Where is it now? In Poland proper or in Russia?

KIM: In Russia. (Pause) I can't think of anything without a question that would spark something in addition to what I said. If I had to choose the work I was to do all over again, if I had my dream job, this would be it.

INT: Do you connect that in some way to your experiences in the Holocaust or do you think it's separate?

KIM: That's a wonderful question. It really is a wonderful question because invariably, people assume that the Holocaust-in fact, a group of students said to me, "Tell us how the Holocaust has made you into the wonderful therapist and this wonderful person." And I said, "Wait a minute. Maybe it wasn't the Holocaust." I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. The part about people finding it easy to talk with me and the respect that I got as a child from my grandfather, I think had a lot to do with how-with the respect I hope I can give to people. I was rarely treated as a child. I really wasn't. And I was always a person and there were no secrets so-and when I say this I mean not only during the Holocaust but even before. I was trusted, and that really was important and is important, so I don't know to what extent the Holocaust had an impact on what I chose to do.

However, as you probably know as well as I or better, so many of us who are Holocaust survivors became therapists or in the helping profession, and I don't know whether that has to do with-I don't know what it has to do with but I suspect it has a lot to do with working on our own stuff, working on our own issues, and possibly gaining control when we didn't have it when we were younger. I'm not sure. I don't know if the Holocaust is the key to why and what I do. It could be.

INT: You said you were never really a child, you were a person, and that can have many meanings, and certainly I hear that you're saying it meant respect and there wasn't secrets and you weren't shooed from the room when there was adult conversation, but I would assume there was another side to that and that meant that you didn't have the-I don't want to say freedom because I don't think that's the right word, but sort of a lack of responsibility that children might have, or the carefreeness that a child might have. Are you saying that as well?

KIM: No. I don't think so, because I never felt the responsibility for taking care of things when I was little. More in my teen years in the United States, when my father had a hard time with earning a living and having a store and the pressure of all that, and my parents quarreled. I would be the intermediary. But that was in my later teen years, but as a child, no. I was never held-I was never turned to and asked to give a solution or felt responsible for resolving how we would survive.

One incident that I think-I know is very meaningful for me was when I was seven years old and we were in a cellar and the ghetto had been liquidated and my parents knew that we were all going to die, because ultimately, out of fifteen thousand Jews in my town only about eighty or a hundred of us survived, so the chances of survival-I mean, we knew, they knew everybody was being killed right and left. I was seven. They said to me-we were in the cellar, in our cellar, trying to outlast the Nazis upstairs and our food had run out. My parents said to me that they were going to pin a note on my coat and they

were going to send me out in the street, and the note would say, "Whoever finds this child, please raise her and take care of her because we," meaning my parents, "are going to lay down on the train tracks and die by our own hand." They didn't want to be killed by the Nazis. And they certainly didn't want me to die. (End of tape 1, side 2)

I mean send me out in the street and told me what they were going to do. I mean this was like everyday talk. You know, this is what they were going to do, and I looked at them and I said to them, "If you were going to give me away, why did you ever give birth to me," because at age seven I really couldn't imagine being dead. That wasn't real at all, but I could imagine being without my parents, and that I didn't want, so whatever was going to happen, as long as I was with them, it felt okay. Whatever was going to happen it was going to be all right, and they threw in their lot with fate and we survived, but it was a pretty risky decision. Anything, you know, everything was risky but I would guess that was a pretty empowering experience for me, to know that I could change their mind from that kind of direction.

INT: Did they put any words to that change of mind that you remember?

KIM: Not that I remember, and not that we ever discussed it afterwards, but that's what they told me they were going to do and I couldn't-I said no. I mean, I didn't say no. I said, this is not what I want, in my own way. I was furious with them.

INT: You certainly had to be outspoken in your own way to have uttered the words.

KIM: Yes. That's what I mean by respect, by being able to express myself. By feeling entitled.

INT: Cause you could have just been silent or weak.

KIM: Right. But I said that to them and even more important, they responded to what I said, which was really wow. Now even more so than then. (Pause) So in a way I-

INT: So would you then say that you grew up being or feeling more responsible than the average child would be? You keep saying respect, and I hear that, but you could speak and they would hear what you had to say, that they would consider it.

KIM: I was very important. I was very important; very important and very special, and I mattered. I certainly mattered to my grandfather and in doing that, it feels like I mattered to them. Here are two adults that decided what they were going to do and-it wasn't certainly a-I'm sure they didn't want to die but they didn't want to be killed by the Nazis either. And they decided to respond, to respect what I said, to listen to what I said, so no, I don't think that I grew up with the idea of owing them a lot and of being responsible. I don't think so. I don't think so.

INT: How about the issues that children of survivors talk about as being emotional caretakers of their parents. Did you feel that?

KIM: To a limited degree. No. No. I was--each of our experience is different. I was very fortunate to the extent that my parents were self-sufficient. They surely had their differences and they made each other nuts and they made me nuts at times. There came a point at which I realized, and they allowed me to realize by not putting it on me, that this is their “meshugas.” This is their craziness. And many is the time my mother or my father would call and say, “I can’t take it anymore. Can’t take it anymore.” And I would say, “Okay, what do you want to do,” rather than jump into the fray and try to fix it. I didn’t do that and nor was I expected to do that. They were probably intact enough to have taken care of it themselves. Two weeks before my mother died I was at the house. Two weeks before she went to the hospital. And my parents by then had not shared--did not share a bedroom. They slept in separate rooms.

My father was on his bed and he called me in. He said, “Milushu,” -- that’s my Polish diminutive -- he said, “You better find a home for your mother because I can’t take it anymore. I can’t take care of her anymore. She makes me crazy. I can’t do it.” And he wasn’t feeling very strong himself in addition to the emotional part. I said, “Well, let’s think about it. Okay.” And I knew by then that he wasn’t serious. I knew that. But I had to pay attention to that anyway and not say forget it, but to see how it went tomorrow because tomorrow was another day. My mother died three weeks later. As we were sitting shiva and my father outlived my mother by three and a quarter years, and later on we spoke of that night. He didn’t remember it. He said, “No, I would have taken care of her forever.” So another aspect of this study that I had been thinking about is that our memories change. Our reality changes with time. How we feel also changes from day to day so what I say to you today is probably different than what I would have said to you five years ago or might say to you five years from now.

INT: There certainly are differences.

KIM: My daughter had asked me whether I’d ever written anything about the Holocaust. I said I hadn’t, but ten years ago I found something that I had written when I was eighteen. I read it. This was for school. And I said, “Really? That’s how it was?” The details were already different for me. Probably not the major parts, but the details were different so...

INT: My sense is that while those differences are there, will be there, that some core issues stay there.

KIM: I agree.

INT: And it’s the awareness; the lens of the time. Maybe if we had talked ten years ago, you would not have cried so quickly about your grandfather, because it was in a different place, but I’m sure you would have told me how important he was...

KIM: Oh, absolutely.

INT: ...he was in your life.

KIM: Absolutely.

INT: Certain-certain themes are just there, I think, for people for a lifetime, assuming it's not repressed and you're unaware; but if it's there, you know it's there.

KIM: The particular stuff could change.

INT: Right, at the time. One more question and that is your grandmother, Babcha, and your parents and you in a household: What was it like between the three adults?

KIM: What was it like between the three adults? My mother was very respectful of my grandmother and even more so, my grandmother was very respectful of my mother. They got on together despite real differences as people. My grandmother was a very calm, quiet, reserved, intelligent, reserved person, and my mother was much more voluble, outspoken and you knew my mother.

INT: They lived together?

KIM: We all lived together. Yes.

INT: I know whom I was thinking of before. It's your uncle's mother, Mrs. Silber.

KIM: That was a whole different relationship. Very painful. No, my mother was a marvelous daughter-in-law to my grandmother, and my grandmother was a marvelous—they called her "chochu" because she was an aunt, a wonderful member of the house and very helpful without being a martyr. She was—she was a very appropriate person, very appropriate. She was wonderful to me. She worried about me in silence rather than in volume. It was good. Since it had to be, it was good. Ideally a household needs to be separate.

INT: Did the family go on vacations together, the four of you?

KIM: (laughter) What vacation?

INT: Any time away?

KIM: No. My father worked straight through and in all the years that I was a part of the household, he never took a vacation. No. Never go on vacation.

INT: Any Sunday walks? Any trips to the movies?

KIM: (pause) Nope. The first Mother's Day in this country—I turned thirteen in June and just before that is Mother's Day in May. The first Mother's Day in this country my parents bought me a used typewriter. It was a very unsentimental but warm relationship. The important things were the important things, but there was there was no time for the icing.

INT: Okay. We'll talk some more about that. Next time we get together I'll go back to the beginning of the story.

KIM: You're a great interviewer.

INT: Today is July 30, 1996. This is the second interview after more than a two-year hiatus with a child survivor whose name is Kim Fendrick. Last time we met we had talked about your current life circumstances and in so doing we had gone through the various influences in your life that were part of some of what you're living today. What I'd like to do now is go back in essence to the beginning of the story and track the history of your family chronologically and talk about the people; what kind of people they were and what kind of lives they led; and then built up to the war days. So I begin with your family of origin, hopefully going back to grandparents. If you remember earlier than that, that would be great. What kind of people were they, what kind of family did they have, what kind of towns, life experience, work, economics, basic experience?

KIM: Okay. My mother came from a very small town in Poland named Sokal, S-O-K-A-L, and I remember my father teasing her about the Danube being the river that flowed across the town and called Dunha in Polish, D-U-N-H-A. She was born into a fairly well-to-do family. Her father owned- I'm not sure whether it was a lumberyard or a brick yard, but it had something to do with building. Her mother, my grandma Yetta, was a homemaker. They had four children, my mother being the oldest. My aunt, her sister, was next in line. Then there was Toiva, who was the third child and the fourth one was Dolo.

INT: How would you spell that?

KIM: Well, his nickname was D-O-L-O, but his legal name was Adolph, unfortunately.

INT: Your mother's name?

KIM: My mother's name was Krancja and in English she was known as Clara, but in Polish it was K-R-A-N-C-J-A, Krancja.

INT: And the next sister's name?

KIM: It was Adela. She, Adele, did survive and there's much more about her later in the story. But my two uncles whom I knew well -- especially the youngest one who was almost my playmate because he was probably sixteen, seventeen years older than I and he would come around and play with me when he was a teenager. They both perished in the Holocaust. I remember my grandma Yetta and my grandpa Gonim fairly well because they were from a small town from which my mother went to Vlocdow, V-L-O-C-D-O-W, where my father lived and had a business. I didn't see as much of them as I saw of my paternal grandparents, especially my paternal grandfather, who was such an important person in my life and who, I believe, shaped me indelibly.

When my mother married into Vlocdow and my father; it was not an arranged marriage. It was a marriage-my mother was introduced to my father by my mother's aunt, who lived in Vlocdow. She told my grandfather, my paternal grandfather, that her niece by marriage would be a suitable wife for my father, who was a very quiet, handsome, well-to-do young man, but who was so busy in my grandfather's business, which was a general store-probably the largest business in town, that he didn't have much time to date,

although he had many willing women who wanted to go out with him. My grandfather held out for a very classy person and someone from a good family, so he traveled to Sokal to look over my mother, came back and told my father that he thought that was an appropriate young woman for my father to meet. Then she came to-now I'm not sure whether my father traveled to Sokal or my mother came to visit her aunt in-I think she came to visit her aunt in Vlodow, and my father and my mother met that way, and my father fell head over heels in love with my mother.

She had more reservations. She was the more educated one. She had gone to gymnasium, which was like a junior college here. My father had a barely a grade school formal education but was very bright and had gone to cheder. My mother had not, as girls in those days probably didn't, I would strongly suspect, but she had a lot of education from the Polish school system. My father had very little, but my father had tremendous native intelligence. He spoke many languages and was a very clever man. My mother was less resourceful but far more worldly than my father. They married in 1933. My father's mother-my father's biological mother had died in-probably before my mother-yes, many years before my mother met my father.

My paternal grandfather married the older sister of his wife who had died, because as you probably know, the custom was in Jewish families, when there was an unmarried sister who survived her sister's death, the brother-in-law- it was incumbent upon him to marry that unmarried sister. My biological grandmother whom I obviously never knew was a beautiful, stately, regal woman. Tall and beautiful, and I have a photograph of her hanging in my house. Her sister, the grandmother that I knew, was almost like a little gnome. She was tiny and not at all pretty, but interestingly enough, my grandparents -- the grandparents that I knew; the grandmother that I called grandma, who was really my father's aunt -- and my grandfather had a wonderfully happy marriage while the original marriage was not as happy. My grandmother let me know why the marriage was happy, because she respected my grandfather and love was not a necessity. You grew to love someone as long as you respected one another, and they had a very, very nice life together. My paternal grandfather, who to me was the world and to whom-

INT: Let's go back to the other side, because I think you...when the war started, it caught all of you in the town with your paternal grandfather's family.

KIM: I do remember my maternal grandparents in Vlodow. I'm not sure where they lived or how that happened. I don't know why they wound up in Vlodow when their home really was in Sokal, but you're right. My aunt had by then married a man from Vlodow also, named Isa Silber, and my two uncles were somewhere close by. Now the distance wasn't all that great between the towns, but I really don't know where my maternal grandparents lived while-or did they live in Vlodow. They may not have. My connection with them was not very frequent.

INT: What do you know of them as people, their personalities?

KIM: My grandfather was-my maternal grandfather was well loved in town, so much so that when my mother's wedding -- my mother's and father's wedding was held at my

maternal grandparents home in Sokal -- there was a joke. Somebody from the town apparently said to him, "Mr. Brüh, you have no enemies in town. They're all here." (Laughter) Because it was such a large wedding and he was so well regarded. Very generous man.

INT: How do you spell Brüh?

KIM: B-R-Ü-H, with two dots over the U. In fact, both my maternal and paternal grandparents had names with a U with two dots over it. My father's last name was M-Ü-M-Z, with two dots over the U. I realized that, that Brüh also had that same kind of spelling.

INT: So he was well liked?

KIM: He was very well liked; a very generous, dear man. I don't believe he was very highly educated, but he was a merchant and just well thought of. My grandmother was the wiser of the two, the more intense of the two. She suffered from gallstones. That's what I remember. She had many backaches from that. And then I remember not so much from experience as from being told that [she was] a very quick energetic lady. And my aunt Adele takes after her, being a very, very alert and active person. My grandfather-I guess my mother was more like my grandfather, more laid back and more at peace with herself. That's about what I recall about them.

INT: Do you recall anything about the nature of your mother's relationship with them?

KIM: Not really. If pushed, I have this vague recollection that she was very fond of her father. He was very, very supportive and very loving to her. Her mother was more demanding and more business. She was more involved in raising the children and my grandfather was more of an observer, but a loving observer. You mentioned also the religious affiliation. I have no recollection of any kind of religious connection with my maternal grandparents, nor do I remember any with my paternal grandparents, other than other than sitting at the Seder in my paternal grandparents' apartment, sitting on my grandfather's lap and his telling me about the exodus from Egypt. Now I-since he was taken from me when I was seven -- he was killed in a roundup by the Nazis -- this must have been when I was much younger than that, when I was four or five or six.

INT: So how would then-what words would you use to describe their involvement Jewishly?

KIM: Very secular. Very secular. However, my father had gone to cheder. He was --and I didn't know this until his later years -- he was totally schooled in prayers, nigunim, services. He knew it all. I never knew that until much later, because we really didn't practice our religion. We practiced our culture, but not our religion.

INT: So how do you understand that from his perspective within his family? Why would his secular family educate him in such a way?

KIM: Again, as you spoke with me on that, I will tell you what comes to mind, and that is that Jewish children did not have access to Polish schools, so he was forced into cheder and that's where he went. And he got a wonderful Jewish education, which I was not aware of or not a part of-

INT: How did you find out when you did find out?

KIM: The only observance that I was aware of-my father was a businessman. My grandfather was a businessman. My father worked in my grandfather's store ever since he was thirteen years old, and immediately went into management. I mean he really ran the store, whereas my grandfather was relieved of that responsibility, I don't know whether by design or how, and he was free to be sort of in loco parentis to me. My grandfather was my friend and my father really, my psychological father. He took me for walks, taught me to read, and I don't recall whether I said that to you two years ago but I probably did. He was really the man to whom I related as a paternal figure. My father worked from six a.m. until ten p.m. and I only knew him as the man behind the counter, and the time I do remember my mother calling upon my father to help her was when I had stuck cherry pits up my nose and our apartment was above the store as was my grandparents' apartment. There were two apartments in the building. And my father came upstairs and eased the cherry pits out of the bridge of my nose and that was about it of my memories of my father prior to the Russian occupation of our town, which happened in 1939. I was four at the time and then, and from that point on my father and I were very close and we knew each other, but prior to that I remember my grandfather.

INT: The secular nature of their Jewish life, which as you say most likely had a lot of cultural components, do you know whether or not that was unusual for the towns in which they lived or common?

KIM: It was usual for the so-called upper classes, economic upper classes. I had no awareness of my being Jewish other than that I knew that I was different from other people in town and I had a nanny, but we were more wealthy than Jewish as I knew it.

INT: Was there a Jewish community in the town?

KIM: Yes there was a Jewish community and all of my friends were Jewish, interestingly enough. All of my little friends were Jewish.

INT: With a similar lifestyle?

KIM: Not necessarily. I remember my little friend across the street. She had moved into the town and they were very poor and I shared some of my toys with her and she was invited to my home, so no, she was not well-to-do. The two families that lived in the house next door -- and they were all attached houses not single dwellings -- those children, those adults now, are in the United States. One of them-they were okay. One family was very well educated. Both parents were attorneys, and the other family, the father was an engineer, the mother was-her parents had a store and she worked in the store. They were not nearly as well-to-do as we, but they were well-to-do.

INT: Also secular?

KIM: Also secular.

INT: Was there a more observant community there?

KIM: Probably, but I didn't know of it. Now my uncle, who also came from that town, was extremely secular.

INT: Your mother's brother?

KIM: Nope, my mother's sister's husband. My mother's sister married another man from Vlodow, Isa Silber, and he was-not only was he secular, but he was a communist in the true sense of the word. A pure communist and believed in equality for all. I believe at that time he probably was an atheist and continues to this day to be an atheist, so yeah, I was in a milieu of a very secular-

INT: Cause this is not a common story.

KIM: No it isn't.

INT: For Poland.

KIM: That's right.

INT: Except in Warsaw.

KIM: Right.

INT: Or other larger cities. I wonder-there must have been some sociological explanation for this, some group who initially went there or people knew of the town in that way. It's very interesting.

KIM: Could be. Could be. But we were not at all religious as I recall. I don't even remember-well, it's true that the Russians occupied us when I was four and the Nazis occupied us when I was six, so I suppose there wasn't much opportunity to observe it, but I don't remember my parents going to synagogue. Now they must have, or my father must have, but I don't recall it at all. I don't recall-

INT: Was the business closed on Shabbat?

KIM: I don't think so but I don't remember. I don't think so and I don't know. I don't remember kashrut. I remember that my parents made a covenant, their own private covenant with G-d, that should they survive the Holocaust they would never eat unkosher food, so it must have been a change for them, because why would they make that covenant if that was part of their lifestyle to begin with?

INT: So you knew that later in your life.

KIM: I knew that later, yes. I didn't know that then.

INT: So when the persecution begin with the war, was that surprising to you, all of a sudden being labeled a Jew?

KIM: You remember that I was four when the Russians occupied us. I was, at that point, more aware of being persecuted for being rich than for being Jewish, because the Russians wanted to socialize everyone, equalize everyone, so that was my main connection. But I recall talk of the Russians wanting to exile us to Siberia. I'm not sure whether that was because we were Jewish or it was because we were rich. When the Nazis came in, there was no question that we were being singled out because we were Jewish. No question. I remember learning to speak Yiddish in order to understand what my parents were trying to keep secret, because we had help. I had a nanny. There was a maid. And my parents, in order to avoid giving information to these women who were Christians, they spoke Yiddish. I quickly started to pick that up, not only to speak Yiddish but they threw in Hebrew words like "beitzim" and "kesef" and things like that; so I quickly picked up because I wanted to understand what they were saying.

INT: So the language at home was Polish predominantly?

KIM: The language at home was Polish. Absolutely. My grandfather and I spoke Polish, and my nanny and I certainly-the language was Polish. My friends and I spoke Polish, yes. (End of tape 2, side 1)

INT: More about the influences on your parents' lives in terms of what...your mother as relatively speaking a more educated person. That was the ethic of her family or most of the family, would you say?

KIM: I can't generalize, but I can tell you obviously only what I recall, and that is that my mother's friends were well educated, well traveled people, some of whom studied in Paris, some in Spain, some in Vienna, and some who went to Israel, went to Palestine obviously-there was no Israel at the time. Went to Palestine to change the world and to establish a Jewish identity. They were well aware of their difference being Jewish because-my mother told me stories of her Polish teachers discriminating against her.

INT: In what way? What are the stories?

KIM: About not giving the Jewish children as good a grade as the Polish children got because they were Jewish. The standard for passing were higher for Jewish children, as a way of keeping them out of Polish schools. I believe that Jewish children were not permitted to go beyond a certain grade level. I forget how that went, but that sort of-I recall that.

INT: Although some did go to law school.

KIM: Yes, but maybe out of the country. Maybe that's why they left the country to go to Paris and to Spain. A cousin of my mother's...the aunt who introduced the notion of my mother meeting my father, Chochu Tzimmer, had four children; two sons and two

daughters. The two sons left for Palestine in the thirties. One of the daughters went to Paris and then Spain and is now a physician in Spain. The fourth child, the cousin whom I knew, whom I knew as a child, I ultimately met one of the sons, the son's son actually, but the cousin whom I knew, my mother's cousin whom I knew when I was a child was Stella. She also traveled somewhere to become-I forget what profession she had but she was the cousin that I knew and...I'm not sure what my purpose was in raising her although...I now realize what my purpose was.

Her granddaughter, Tali, now lives in Boston and I was able-Tali is from Israel because Stella was born in Israel when-I'm sorry. Tali was born in Israel. Stella died in the Holocaust, but her daughter, whose name I don't know, and Stella's husband, survived the Holocaust and they went to Israel. The husband went to Israel. His name was Chatzkel, and he and his daughter, Stella's daughter, also survived and that daughter has a daughter named Tali who now lives in Boston and with whom I've connected. She's a young woman my children's age and I'm happy to meet with her every time I visit Boston. She's married and has a little boy. But many of the upper class young people traveled out of the country to receive an education. The people who could afford it did it.

INT: And then they would come home to practice whatever profession they had learned?

KIM: I believe so. Some would; some most probably would. This is not my strength to remember. I really don't. My aunt Adele, my mother's sister's husband, was a tradesman. He really was-he was a glazier and he worked in a lumberyard. Very intelligent man, but he did not have a high education. My father-we did not talk about my father's one sibling who was Uncle-my Uncle Henyo. His name was Henry. He died in the Holocaust also, but I believe that he died of an illness during that time. I don't believe he was killed by the Nazis. He and my father worked in the business, so neither one of them went for higher education, and Henyo lived with his parents. He was the younger of the two brothers, and I believe he died of typhus. I'm not sure, but I knew him well and we were buddies also.

I came down with typhus when I was four years old, under the Russian occupation, and because-either because we were Jewish or because we were rich, but for one reason or the other or maybe both, we were restricted from traveling. We had a-I think it was called a passport although I think it was called something else, some other document that my parents had to carry if they wanted to leave the town, and it was illegal for them to transport me to a better medical facility than the little hospital in our town or the hospital that was not so little but not very well advanced medically. So my parents smuggled me between them on a train into Lvov, or Lemberg, in order to get me into a better medical facility and I survived.

There was a typhus epidemic and I believe my Uncle Henyo died of it. Many people died. It was contaminated water. And my parents put me into a hospital in Lvov where I was unconscious, in a coma for a long time. As I recall it was three months. It may not have been but I was in isolation for a very long time, never seeing my parents all that time, even though they could see me, because when the nurses carried me around in their arms they could see me through a one-way mirror. I didn't realize it was a one way mirror

through which my parents could see me but I couldn't see them. It was very difficult times in retrospect for me where I felt totally abandoned. I never saw them. I had nothing familiar around me, although eventually-somehow I had asked for, I was told, my little rubber doll whom I called Sinik, which means little son, S-O-N, and that was given to me. I guess it couldn't be infected because it was rubber and it could be washed. I had no cloth dolls.

I was never a doll person to begin with. I had many, many, many toys because it was my parents' business and my father's business and what was in there. I mean I was a very indulged child from the wealth perspective. My mother was always very conscious of my being an only child and tried to be as practical with me and was as practical with me as she could be, almost to the point of harshness, but she was always conscious of the fact that she didn't want me growing up as a spoiled brat, so I never valued many things, and to this day I don't value many things but I always value people. I had so much that it was ridiculous. I didn't need all that I had, and I didn't take very good care of it because it came too easily, but this little Sinik, this little rubber doll, was my special little friend, and I had that in the hospital with me. I eventually got it.

I recovered obviously and when I recovered I couldn't walk because I had been so debilitated. I had to learn to walk all over again. I broke my parents' hearts, to see this four year-old who couldn't walk again, as I couldn't when I was under a year. I lost all my hair. I was losing my hair as my mother was combing it, and the doctor advised her to cut it off so that it would grow back with more vigor. She did that, but in the meantime I wore a little scarf on my head because I was bald. All this under the Russian occupation.

INT: Any more of the-of your reactions to that experience that you recall?

KIM: To my hospitalization?

INT: Hospitalization, illness, not seeing them?

KIM: Oh yes. I remember being immobilized because I had had so many transfusions in my right arm. To this day I have an enormous scar in the crook of my arm and that vein is not accessible to tapping into. I received blood from my father and I scratched so hard that they put cardboard-almost like the insides of paper towels, those round things, on both arms, and I remember not being able to bend my arm because I would pick at the scabs, so that was a rather helpless kind of feeling, and I remember being in the hospital, feeling as if I was in a room about a hundred thousand feet long and fifty thousand feet wide and I remember thinking-feeling that I was in this corner with these enormous windows all shuttered with shades. It was dark. I was in this room and it felt to me as if I was all alone in that room, enormous room, because I was in quarantine. I didn't know that. I just knew that I was all alone and every once in a while somebody would appear with something and they would leave. I never saw my parents for however long it was, but they would see me. I didn't know why I was picked up by nurses or by the attendants and taken into the special little room which was about, oh, eight by six or eight by eight and I remember being held and kind of switched from side to-the person who was

holding me kind of turning around and I later realized that it was because they wanted my face to show at the-

INT: You certainly would have understood someone explaining to you that your parents are behind the mirror.

KIM: I don't know. I don't know. I might very well have wanted to see them, but I suspect it was better that I didn't know that they were there but I didn't know why I couldn't see them. I didn't know what-nobody explained to me, as I recall, what quarantine means and why I was not seeing them. I don't remember being told that. I may have been.

INT: So did you have a sense that you would never see them again?

KIM: I don't remember that. No. No. I just knew that I wasn't seeing them then and I felt abandonment. I don't know that I went beyond that, thinking that I would never see them again. I don't think so, but I wasn't seeing them then and I was devastated, but I didn't-I couldn't make any sense of it.

INT: Any sense of being very sick and possibly dying?

KIM: No sense of possibly dying but losing time and knowing that I didn't know where I was. When I woke up I did not know where I was, 'cause I had been unconscious. I had such a high fever that they brought me. I have no memory of being brought to the hospital. None. I have a vague memory of sitting between them on the train, but I think that memory is more hearsay than memory. They told me that they covered me up and they sat me between them, although I have this vague vision of my mother being at the window and I being in the middle and my father being on the aisle. I don't know whether that's a real memory. That's what remains with me. No memory of being in Lvov, being brought to the hospital, any doctors, nothing. Absolutely nothing of that. I suspect that when I woke up from the coma I was on the way back and didn't need much attending to other than being carried into that room and seeing my parents and I remember playing with my little red rubber dolly. It was a little boy doll.

INT: So that's all you had to play with.

KIM: That's all I had to play with, about seven-eight inches tall and about two-three inches wide. And I remember the Sinik with his little head.

INT: You don't have it here, do you? Did it survive the trip to the States?

KIM: Nothing survived the trip to the States. Nothing of my childhood. When we were-I don't remember when. I think it's when we came to the United States, someone sent us a photograph of my parents and myself when I was about two years old which I treasure. It's the only picture of me as a child that I've ever seen. I was cute. (Laughter) We used to dress up in Europe for a formal photograph so my parents were in their winter finery, my mother in her hat, my father in his hat, and I had a muff on my hand and this cute

little hat and a heavy little coat, and I know it was taken indoors, but we dressed up for a formal photograph.

INT: What do you recall of the reunion with your parents?

KIM: (pause) Not much. It was sort of seamless. I don't remember it being a reunion, but-I don't remember it being a reunion. I remember just going home with them. I don't remember the train ride. It must have been because I was in Lvov so we had to take the train to Vlodow.

INT: Do you remember anything about what was said?

KIM: Not really. Not really. I sort of have the emotional sense of my mother being heartbroken by my not being able to walk and their encouraging me and slowly teaching me to do that.

INT: They took you home while you still couldn't walk?

KIM: Yes. Yes. And I had to learn to do that all over again. Yes.

INT: And you were aware of her sadness?

KIM: Yes. My mother tended to hover over me without...thinking that I wasn't aware of it, again, wanting to shield me from her worry because she wanted me to not-she wanted to make me resilient and not be aware of how scared she was of losing me, and that was almost a given that typhus epidemic. What I do remember her telling me over and over and over again, and being very proud of it, my mother being very proud of it, was that the doctor said to her that had she not nourished me as well as she did, i.e., that meant had she not forced me to eat as she had, I would not have survived that illness.

INT: This is upon your return or even before you made it to Lvov?

KIM: Oh, this was upon my return. This was later, you know, in years of my adulthood and I would say to her that how she forced me, and she did force me to eat. She coerced me into eating.

INT: So that was after you returned and you were recuperated?

KIM: Oh, yeah. And into my adult years.

INT: She forced you to eat.

KIM: No, no. She would-no, no. I'm sorry.

INT: There was a period of time when that was the critical issue.

KIM: Right. This was-she forced me to eat when I was little, and then during the war there was no forcing me. There was no food so she didn't have to force me. After that,

she stopped forcing me, but she was coercive. She was abusive in forcing me. She would lock me in a room and sit me with my meal and-

INT: This is before you were sick. This was just her style of raising you as a young child.

KIM: This was probably before I was sick. Probably. I remember sitting in our-what was it, our living room? It had windows looking out onto the street, and she would lock me in that room, literally lock the door, and I had chicken. I had the white meat of chicken which I really wasn't fond of. I would chew it up, put it in my hand and drop it out the window onto the people below, not giving one damn about who got hit with the chicken, but at many points my grandfather would intercede without her-I think without her knowledge. He would unlock the door and come in with strawberries and sour cream and would save the day, but I can't-I believe that was before typhus. I wouldn't be surprised if it continued after typhus because I really needed to be rehabilitated. I was-

INT: So the doctor commented that that was part of what saved your life.

KIM: That's what she says, that the doctor said if this child had not been as well nourished, forget it. She would never have made it.

INT: Did that style with food continue, not that she could any longer lock you in a room, but did she continue to be rigid about food?

KIM: Well, it's ironic because after that-

INT: There was no food.

KIM: There was no food.

INT: And when you eat-when you sort of reconstructed things, did she return to that style?

KIM: No, I was too old to do that, but she was very, very conscious of what was nutritious and what was good to eat and she would travel on foot far and wide to buy fruits and vegetables and meats that would be nutritious, so her consciousness about food always remained, but she no longer was coercive.

INT: What is your impression about the impact of that particular episode on your later life?

KIM: Responding to all those words, I think it made me angry and made me feel helpless about controlling some of my environments because I really couldn't. I was trapped, locked in a room. But the saving grace was my grandfather who was my knight in shining armor and he would appear out of nowhere and would save the day, so there was the anger and the optimism, I think a combination of both, that it would be okay but boy, was I pissed. Boy, was she making me angry. And I think my mother and I had that-that issue between us for a long, long time. She was a very strong person emotionally, very opinionated and the word was that she was never wrong.

The word from my father was that she was never wrong and I'll agree with that. She had a very, very strong opinion, but in later years, and that's truly in later years, I was fully aware of how well she took care of me. It was at a heavy price to me as a child, but she really did. I could always count on her to be rational, to make a good decision, whereas my father was much more emotional and much more volatile. My mother was harsher, had a hard time showing her emotion; didn't tell me she loved me. Didn't use those words until I was fifty-two years old, when I had this gigantic garage sale and earned a fortune by selling so much of what-I was liquidating my house, actually, moving to an apartment, and she said to me: "I love you." All I could do was smile inside and say that's nice, but I don't need to hear it now. I know it now and I knew it by then. There was no question that she loved me and would, I mean, would sacrifice herself for my welfare, but I certainly didn't feel it that way as a child. I felt harshness and lack of control when I was a child, all under the guise of doing the right thing but it didn't feel that way.

INT: So what was the price?

KIM: The price was that -- how do I calculate the price? But the price was that there was an anger between us. There was a test of wills between us, and I think the legacy was that I have carried over some of that to my children and I know that. I know that I did that.

INT: Some of what?

KIM: Some of that anger about food. I remember how desperately I wanted my children to have a good breakfast before they went to school. They couldn't care less, and I would-I remember screaming at them at the door. It was like-it was a legacy.

INT: The ways in which you were similar to her.

KIM: Yes. Yes. And I hope I also-I hope the legacy also was that I was rational and I think it was, that I took some of that from her as well. My father was the much more affectionate, affective person, but I could not count on him being constant. He would respond to his emotions of the moment and would be irrational at times, and-

INT: Irrational?

KIM: He would react with rage, not only-my mother would react with anger and distance me. My father would react with rage and smack me or scream at me. He was much more reactive to his environment, and felt the responsibility of his family much more so than my mother, who depended on my father being able to provide for us and protect us. But she was the one who would intercede for me when my father was furious with me. My mother would only get angry, but kind of quietly angry. My father would become enraged and I was the one who could make peace between my parents, by interceding with my father, but ultimately that sort of got old because I realized that this is the life they had and they loved each other to death. I mean, they adored each other, but what a crazy relationship they had, and my mother would turn to me and say: "Talk to your father." When I was younger, up until probably when I was fifteen, sixteen, I was

convinced that my mother was doing my father wrong, that he was this wonderful person and she was just too tough on him. Ultimately I came to realize this was a very balanced relationship, that they were both a little crazy and a little wonderful.

INT: Would you-I know this is a hard question because of the age you were before the war, but would you describe them similarly before the war and even after the war?

KIM: Not at all. Not at all. I hardly knew them as a couple before the war. I didn't know them as a couple before the war. I-

INT: Did your father rage before the war?

KIM: Probably not. Probably not at all. I think the war changed him. I think my father lived with guilt that he survived and his brother and his father did not and I will demonstrate that by recalling the many times that he would tell my mother in a rage at my mother, "I wish I was with my father and my brother." He would say that.

INT: How was that connected to what was going on?

KIM: When she would provoke him and he could find no way of getting back at her, he would just say to her, "I wish I was with my father. I wish I had died with my father and my brother." And boy, they had a way of provoking each other that was masterful. It was wonderful. And the sweetest thing was that two weeks before my mother died my father, I believe, called me to come over. He had no idea that she was dying. He called me to come over to adjudicate an argument between them, and in the course of that-they didn't share a bedroom at that-they didn't share a bedroom for many years, as probably from the time-I'm guessing but maybe from the time my mother was sixty or sixty-five, something like that. My mother died at seventy-seven. My father called for me to come and I lived an hour and a half away, because he just couldn't take it anymore, the fighting.

So I came and by that time I was pretty cool about how this dance went and my father laid down on his bed, called me into his bedroom and said to me-and my mother was physically incapacitated in the sense that she could get around but she really was dependent on my father for her legs much of the time, and he said to me, "I can't do this anymore. You have to find a home for Mother." As I had done many times before, when he said other things, I said, "Okay, we'll talk about it. We'll do it," fully knowing that he didn't mean it for one instant. It was in heat of the moment. That was my father. He would say things in the heat of the moment and then it sort of disappeared.

My mother was not like that. When she said something she meant it. So I said, "Okay, we'll think about that." My mother died two weeks later and in his grief, as he was trying to cope with this enormous loss, because she really was his life -- I mean, he took wonderful care of her, just wonderful care of her. I said to him, "Daddy, remember when you said to me how hard it was to care for Mommy." He said, "I never said that. I would have taken care of her for the next twenty years if only I had her here today," and he promoted her to saint, which was fine. It was just fine. He also bemoaned the fact that my mother could have enjoyed so much more. She could have gone to so many different places. She could have spent some more money. She could have enjoyed her life. And I

said, "Daddy, you know, she really lived her life the way she wanted to," and she did. He said, "Oh, she could have had so much more pleasure" and-well, months later, there was a reunion from our hometown, from Vlocdow, in Boston and I tried to get my father to come with me, to go with me. I didn't-eventually I didn't go either.

INT: This was organized by individuals?

KIM: By-I don't remember but I think there was some group of "Vlocdowers" that were getting together and it would have been nice for my father. It was his people, his town. It wasn't like my mother's town. And he said, "No, no, I don't want to go." I said, "Daddy, remember what you said about Mommy that she could have enjoyed." He said, "Yeah, but she could have, but I don't want to," so this was-it was wonderful that he-he was a wonderful husband to her in terms of caretaking, but their fights were legion. They became humorous to me. Unfortunately, they were not humorous to my parents.

INT: Humorous at what point in your life?

KIM: Long after I was married. Long after I was married.

INT: So in your twenties.

KIM: Oh, yes. Twenties and thirties.

INT: Then it finally hit you, looking at some distance.

KIM: Yeah. While being there for them. I mean it was bizarre what they would fight about. My father would push her buttons like crazy.

INT: Were you able to get that perspective on your own, in your own growth and development, or did you- (end of tape 2, side 2)

KIM: I was able to get that sense, just from observing the wonderful times they had together and the absurd times they had together, and knowing always that they came together and truly were inseparable, even as they always talked about "I can't take it anymore, I can't take it anymore." It became a way of life and I was always the one-well obviously the only one that they turned to and one or the other would say, "I can't take it anymore. Help." My father had a very, very upsetting habit of threatening to kill himself if the stress from my mother didn't abate.

INT: Beyond his statement of "I wish I had died with my father and brother?"

KIM: Yes. Yes.

INT: Specific plans?

KIM: Nope. No plan. No. But the threat that he was going to kill himself, so how he would play that out, I think, is that when he went shopping. Now consider that my mother was very dependent on my father physically and they were very interdependent

emotionally. Absolutely. But she was more dependent on him physically, he on her emotionally. He would go shopping because he did all the shopping. She was not mobile. And he drove. She did not drive. He would say to her, "I'll be back in half an hour" or however time he would say to her. Well, it would take him about two hours, three hours, and she would literally nearly faint from worry. "Where is he? G-d forbid what happened to him," and in fact in 1979 he did have an electrical heart stoppage. He was revived by CPR. There was no damage to his heart, but he was in a store. He fell down. There happened to be a nurse around and she administered CPR so this was a very traumatic experience for my mother.

INT: But when he left like that-

KIM: It was not in anger.

INT: Right. He went shopping. He said half an hour; it was three hours. Her fears were that something happened to him, not that he had taken his life.

KIM: She didn't-no. For the most part I believe it was something happened to him but sometimes-

INT: It was in the air.

KIM: Yeah. She really worried because she could not live without-well, she didn't want to live without him, but it would have been very hard to live without him. It was really quite a just occurrence that my mother died three and a quarter years before my father, because he was much more able to survive physically without her. She could not have. She would have needed constant help. She would have needed to be in a safe place where someone would do things for her, because she was helpless, but it was very unexpected because while she had emphysema, never having smoked, but she had scoliosis, she had chronic bronchitis. She really was not at risk. She had many osteopathic problems. She could hardly walk. She had sciatica down her leg. She had had some spinal surgery, but she was never at risk in terms of heart. Never. My father had had this heart attack or this heart stoppage and so when she had a heart attack at age seventy-seven, it was totally unexpected. Totally. Fortunately for those of us who survived, she lived for five days beyond the heart attack and we got a chance to prepare for her death and the children got a chance to say goodbye. I got a chance to say goodbye, and my father-I knew that she wasn't coming out because the doctor said she wasn't coming out, so after my mother died, he absolutely sanctified her, and that was beautiful. It was just wonderful.

INT: In statements of threatening suicide which came, I guess, in the rages, how did your mother cope with this, think about it, explain it? How did you deal with it as a child and how did it change as you grew up?

KIM: I think my mother was aware of his changeability. She dealt with it fairly well. As far as I'm concerned, she-it was just a part of who he was, but I think it made her more provocative. She was scared to death of losing him. She was absolutely scared to death of losing him. I remember when he had that heart stoppage. We were in the hospital for a few days together and she vowed, she made another covenant with G-d, she would never

bug him again. I said, "Mommy, don't promise anything you can't keep," and sure enough, she went back to bugging him again, and of course he provoked her. I mean it was a real, real dance that they did together.

INT: Some strong personalities.

KIM: My mother the stronger one, absolutely the stronger one. My father the far more affective and loving one and my mother the more rational, more competent one. When she was in the hospital she said to me without getting me to commit to her, but she said to me, "You know, you'll really have to come to Daddy once a week and help him pay the bills." She was convinced years before she died that he was going into Alzheimers -- which he was not -- but I didn't know enough; I didn't see him minute to minute. He was not. So I heard that. I certainly didn't commit to her that I would do that but in fact I did do that. I came once a week. I didn't have to help him pay the bills but I would come once a week, spend the night and leave the next morning, which to him was like a two day visit, and it was wonderful for both of us, because while my mother was living my relationship with my parents was really through my mother. When they would call, my father would get on the phone and say, "Is everything okay?" "Yes." "How are the children?" "Fine." "How's Dave?" "Fine." "Are the cars okay?" "Yes." "Is anything broken?" "No." "Here's your mother." That was our conversation. Everything went through her, and whenever they would speak to me they would refer to me as the "kind," the child, and I was into my fifties when they died and I was the child, which was very sweet and very wonderful.

INT: How did you understand the ravings and expressions of wanting to die?

KIM: (pause) I think he felt very alone. None of his family had survived. There was only a brother. His father had died and his brother had died. He had some cousins in Israel but he had no family here and no contacts. His entire life was through my mother and myself and that-I think he may have felt terribly guilty for surviving and his father and brother not surviving. I really don't know how to answer that question but I understood it perhaps best as having so much responsibility on his shoulders for providing for his wife and his child, for wanting so much, for having had so much, but having it no more, and he was an incredibly hard worker and a very bright man. He worked seven days a week, not only in the little grocery store that he bought when he came here but beyond that, he would come upstairs at ten o'clock at night and he would do all the fixing in the apartment. Now there was also his stepmother whom he called Tchatcha. It was really his aunt who survived with us and who came to this country with us, so he had three people and himself to provide for. My mother was not able to work, having always been sickly, having this bronchial condition. Certainly my grandmother was not in any condition to make a contribution other than to keep the house. My mother worked with my father in the store but it was all on his shoulders. It really was.

INT: So you thought it was the pressure, the responsibility?

KIM: I think so.

INT: The loneliness. Some guilt about-

KIM: I would suspect. I would suspect.

INT: But as a child, it didn't throw you into confusion or panic or fear or sadness?

KIM: What threw me into confusion and fear was his outbursts, his temperamental outbursts. Here was a man who clearly adored me. I mean there was no question. And then he would lose it under pressure, and I-I wondered, what was this about? Why was this happening? So I became a very good child and I really became a parent to him at some level, and because he was so responsive to me, temporarily to be sure, not permanently, and because my mother often confided in me, which was not appropriate, but I think all of that shaped me into who I eventually became in terms of my work, because not only were my parents able to turn to me or felt able to turn to me, but other people, other adults in my life...and I think being an only child was really helpful in that regard, because I grew up with adults and they all found it comforting to talk to me. I often wondered, huh, you know, what-

INT: You discovered the talking here in your teenage years.

KIM: Absolutely. Earlier than teenage years. I was eleven when my cousin in Poland-she was seventeen, talked to me about her boyfriend who was absolutely drop-dead gorgeous, only he had syphilis. It was a minor detail, and she talked to me about his syphilis and I was eleven years old. Only I didn't know I was eleven years old, because she and I were friends. So it was cute. To this day she reminds me that when she was married I was fourteen. I gave her advice on how to treat her husband.

INT: What did you say?

KIM: Oh, I told her how to be good to him sexually and emotionally and I knew it all. I knew it all then, but I grew up with adults and the conversations I heard were unbelievable and I took it all in.

INT: Okay. Going back. You said that you feel the war changed your father, that before the war he was not a man prone to rages.

KIM: Not that I knew of. Not that I knew. But I never knew him before the war.

INT: Because he was in the store.

KIM: He was in the store. I never knew him. I really got to know him during the war and he was not-I don't remember a rage. His first rage that I recall was when I was eleven. We lived in Germany. We were in a displaced person's camp. My friends were of all ages because we were certainly-there weren't enough to go around. I had one good friend. What was her name? I forget her first name. Steinbach was her second name, her last name. Anulka was her name.

INT: Anulka?

KIM: Anulka, A-N-U-L-K-A. She and I were friends and we had friends of many, many ages. I was at a party. I was eleven. I was at a party and there were these gorgeous guys there. They must have been eighteen, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, and I remember one of them saying to me in Yiddish, “Vun vanu vista,” where are you from? I was so shocked that this hulk was talking to me. I said, “Ich,” meaning I? And he said to me in Yiddish, “Now I know where you’re from because of the pronunciation of the word ich.” That-I believe that night I came home. We were in the DP camp in a certain sequestered part of town protected by the American Army and I was later than I promised to come home. My father was so distraught. Now I say this now from the vantage point of an adult but at the time what happened is I came in, he was so enraged that he took a belt to me. He was so-from this vantage point I know that he was so frightened about where I was that he couldn’t control his reaction. My mother stepped between us and protected me from him, which was a very powerful message from my mother and a very scary message from my father, so I knew that he was unpredictable, but it did not feel-

INT: But it felt like out of the blue.

KIM: Absolutely. Out of the blue. That’s-he would react that way. My father’s neurology was not nearly as strong as my mother’s. He was under the thumb of his father. This marvelous grandparent, grandfather, who was my world, was not the man to my father who he was to me. He was loving, accepting, nurturing, supportive. I’ve given you several examples of how wonderful he was. To my father he was tyrannical, demanding. He was autocratic. He was a very wealthy man. No question about that. He begrudged my mother the electricity it took to iron.

INT: Your grandfather?

KIM: My grandfather begrudged his daughter-in-law the electricity that it took to iron. He felt that she was taking up too much electricity. She was using the iron too slowly. This must have been during the war because my mother would never iron before. She had maids. That was the story. He was tyrannical. He was a Prussian autocrat. I didn’t know that man.

INT: But you would see it, right?

KIM: I didn’t see it. No, I didn’t see it. I never saw it. To me, he was this loving-

INT: So it never happened in front of you?

KIM: Never. The legend was later.

INT: So your parents would speak of him later?

KIM: Yes.

INT: And you-

KIM: I never saw that side of him. Absolutely. It was like they were talking about two different people, and it didn't touch me. I felt bad for them but it was only intellectually feeling bad for them because to me he was just-this far outweighed any, any stories I heard about him. I heard he was feared in town. He was a very-he looked like Kaiser Wilhelm. He looked very, very official and formal.

INT: Was that his roots, his cultural roots go back to Prussia?

KIM: No, no. His parents owned a "kretschman," which was an inn, a drinking hall. He just had this regal bearing. He was an incredibly good looking man. Very strong willed. The legend also goes that a doctor told him at some point, long before I was born, that he must stop smoking or he will get sick, and on a dime he stopped smoking. That day. That was the end of it. This was a man with an iron will and he was the most gentle influence on me. I was-I got everything from him. Unconditional love. Totally. He would walk the streets with me with his cane, his beautiful cane and he would write the alphabet in the dirt, in the mud. We would read. We would go by stores and there were books in the stores and I would read the titles to him and he would be just so incredulous. He would read to me all the time. We went for walks. We talked. He was my companion. He was my friend. So when they talked about this other person-

INT: You didn't know that there was anything rotten in him?

KIM: Nothing. Nothing. He was Prussian. He was absolutely Prussian, but my grandmother thought he was wonderful. She gave me a sense of him that he was a wonderful person. She respected him. She loved him. She did everything for him. I suspect that he was a very cool cucumber to everyone but me. He was loving. And my father told me in the years that we had together after my mother's death -- and we really had some wonderful times together -- he told me about how wonderful his mother was to him and how she depended on him and loved him and thought the world of him. He was-he was her favorite, but more so than her favorite. He was her social support, because her husband, my grandfather, and she were very distant.

INT: And there was another brother, older or younger?

KIM: Younger. Younger. Probably much younger. I was born to my father when my father was twenty-seven. My mother was twenty-two. My father was twenty-seven, and Henry must have been maybe my mother's age or younger. There was a story that occurred to me but I forget what it was about. Oh, yeah. I don't know if this is relevant to you or not but this is probably the defining story of our level of intimacy, my father's and mine. After my mother died, my father had said to me...weeks went by and he was really grieving, appropriately so, sad and doing fine but he really-he said to me, "You can help everybody else. Why can't you help me?" He was referring to the work that I do. I said, "Daddy, I am helping you. You're doing just-you're just at the right place," and in eighteen months-I'm leading up to the story. This is not it. "In eighteen months you're going to feel much better than you feel now. You're never going to get over Mommy's death but you're going to feel much better." To the day he called me up and he said, "You know, you were right."

But the defining story is probably a year and a half after my mother died. It was something like that, maybe less, maybe more. We were sitting on his couch and he said to me in his heavy accent. He says, "Tell me something. What's the matter with me? I had a wet dream last night." I said, "So?" He says, "So where does it come to me? I'm taking medication. I'm don't have a wife. Where does a wet dream come to me?" I said, "Daddy, obviously your brain knows one thing and your heart knows another." And that was the end of that, but that he could share that with me was pretty wonderful. (Pause) And really magnificent for me that as close as I have been with my mother, and we were -- we never had a very emotionally close relationship -- but it was a wonderful relationship. It was good. She got mad, I got mad. She got glad, I would tease her, "Okay, go to your other daughter," you know, "Go to your son." She had no other daughter, no other son.

With my father it was a whole other level of relating. A whole other level. We could be we were very emotional and very expressive with each other. My mother didn't know how to kiss me. She didn't kiss. We would touch cheeks and she would kind of kiss me on the side into the air. My father and I were very affectionate and he conveyed that to my children as well, and he was wonderfully instrumental in my daughter's choice of work. As you know, she's a rabbi. They-she has tape recordings. She taped them, my father and herself, singing "niggunim." [Hebrew melodies] In his last years, my father became the gabbai in his synagogue and he led the prayers; he led the services. He knew it all. It was incredible that he tapped into this knowledge that he had not used for eighty years, and here he was, knowing so much.

INT: Was your daughter influential on that? Was her movement towards-

KIM: No. It was the other way around. It was the other way around. His knowledge and curiosity...I mean my father lived with a dictionary next to his bed. English dictionary. He knew many languages and he knew them at a level that, you know, I say I know eight languages but I know them just to maybe get by. He really knew. He knew Polish beautifully. He wrote and spoke some Hebrew, quite a bit. Wrote and spoke Yiddish. Wrote and spoke German. Wrote and spoke in Russian. I mean really wrote it and spoke it. There's a difference between reading-speaking it and writing it, my goodness. He spoke Ukrainian. I'm sure he wrote it as well. I don't remember him writing in Ukrainian.

INT: Just by being in the town.

KIM: Yes. Cause he sure had no book learning so it was not any of that. Very curious man. Read practical things. No philosophy. Neh, don't give him that but one of the things he said to me in his-in the years after my mother died, under Gorbachev's rule of Russia he said to me, "Can you believe it? I have lived to see Russia without Communism?" This incredulous, curious about everything. About everything. But not an intellectual. In no way was he an intellectual. He was intelligent, practical, knew how to win people. We survived in part by his being able to be-to allow himself to engage people of all ages, all creeds, in Europe during the Nazi occupation. No, wrong - during the Russian occupation his store was closed. The Russians took it over. He found work as an orderly in a hospital run by Ukrainian nuns and a Ukrainian doctor, Dr. Martinovich and it's because of that

connection that we made a pit stop on the way to the forest in the courtyard of that hospital, because the mother superior knew him, liked him and put us up for the day so that the Nazis wouldn't find us. I remember he would come to my parents' apartment every so often and stay overnight.

KIM: Hm.

INT: I don't recall whether or not he had business, but I don't think he did. I think he just came for friendship.

KIM: This was in the United States?

INT: Yeah. In New York. In Queens.

KIM: He would stay overnight? (Surprised voice)

INT: Yeah.

KIM: I would never have that memory.

INT: And I was home. I was home.

KIM: I would never have that. Alone, without my mother?

INT: Without your mother. Now it could be that maybe it was a work situation but I don't think so. I think he did a friendship visit once a year, once in every six months.

KIM: Really? Was he helping your Dad maybe?

INT: No, no. So it was after my father's work. I don't know if it was for his work. I don't know what he did the next day, but I know he came with a bag and I know he slept over and I remember sitting at the table for hours talking. I loved to sit with him and I don't remember what I thought of it then except that I liked this, but now in connection with you, he was very striking and if that truly was a friendship visit and I think it was, the way you talk about people and the way you're the sort of link in the family and go to visit and say hi, go to the simchas, does that like-that must be a similarity between the two of you, because my sense is that he came to connect with my parents.

KIM: When did you hear another perspective?

INT: ...and not lose contact.

KIM: My father was a very outgoing person, but he really was focused on his family. It was my mother who did the mitzvot, and I would not be surprised if she got him to do that and sort of paved the way for him to do it, because he wouldn't have thought of it himself I don't think.

INT: Maybe he tried to help my father with my father's needs.

KIM: I know that my mother and your mother were very close and my mother was very worried that-this probably you know. She was very concerned about helping your parents make their way in some way.

INT: That could be. He might have come to cheer my father up.

KIM: It could be. I know that she was worried and she would have made that-my father wouldn't have thought of that. He just wouldn't have done it. He wouldn't have left his family and if anything, my mother was the one who would have done it.

INT: Would have sent him, your father.

KIM: Mm-hm. Because he was the businessman, you see, and he could connect with your father if that was an issue. See, I really didn't know why they were worried, but I knew that they were. I knew that my mother was. My father was more of an isolated-she made those things happen and I can imagine her saying, "Go to Herschele," and I know that when your parents had a store not too far from us on Houston Street that we would often go there. We would often go there and to see how things were going cause your mother has never been a very well, very healthy person and my mother worried about her and they had the longest conversations. They really, really were connected.

INT: I know he liked me.

KIM: Yes, he did. He loved children.

INT: And I loved sitting at the table.

KIM: Oh, he was the most interesting man, my father. He was wonderful. When my Polish child came to this country and I brought him to my father's house and for two hours or longer my father held forth on Polish history to Vajo. Now Vajo is an educated man. He's an engineer. He went through graduate school in Poland. My father's mission was to convey what he knew. It was wonderful. And Vajo sat there with great respect and listened like it was oh wow, new information. My father did that.

INT: Okay. Go back in time to trace my questions. I want you to talk through the story of what happened during the war, but before that, let me go back to the time that you were ill, taken on the train unconscious, separated from your parents. That episode in and of itself, separate from the political events, did that event-(end of tape 3, side 1)

KIM: I have been deeply depressed about two or three times in my life and the last time that I-not the last, the time before the last, whenever, but it was sometime in the eighties, I went to a chiropractor, the one that I work with. And he said, without knowing my history, by doing some kinesiology, some manipulation of my body, he said that based on what he could feel through my response, my physical responses, that my issue, my deep-seated issue was abandonment, fear of abandonment. This was really interesting to me because I had been aware of that and it's one of the reasons why I could not bring myself to divorce sooner than I did because I was really afraid of being alone and given that information and my awareness of it, I believe it goes back.

INT: So where is this? How old are you and-

KIM: Oh, this was in my fifties when the chiropractor-

INT: Not yet divorced.

KIM: Oh yes, I was divorced by then, yes.

INT: Oh, okay.

KIM: This was probably in '89 maybe. I could almost feel the feeling of being four years old and being abandoned-what felt to me like abandoned.

INT: When was that?

KIM: When he brought that-when he brought that emotion into words. Actually, he identified an organ in my body that was being affected and then he had a-he had a chart what that means, what emotions that goes with. It was fascinating. I then-

INT: You'll forgive me but I trust you.

KIM: You can look at me as if I'm hokey, but it connected for me.

INT: I believe that.

KIM: I have a-I know a young woman who does a process called one brain where through head pressure and some sensation that she believes she has in her fingers. She said to me, without knowing anything about my background, "Something happened to you when you were five years old," and she went on to almost explain that it was that kind of sense of abandonment that happened to me around that age. I was quite incredulous about that. She had no idea. I mean, she had-but I then told her what had happened to me when I was around five years old, but yeah, that sense of being abandoned was-

INT: So put it in a mental health term other than an organ being affected. How did it affect your life?

KIM: I think that every time I was threatened with that fear I would become very severely depressed, and when my son got married, this was a sort of abandonment for me. I went into a deep depression. The thought of being divorced was-it was just unthinkable for me, because I couldn't imagine being alone.

INT: So it didn't matter what kind of leaving it was, any kind of fear would trigger it.

KIM: I believe so. I believe so.

INT: Did you notice at the time that could you say to yourself, "Oh, my son's getting married; that's why I'm depressed."

KIM: No. But I could say to myself, “Kim, something is happening here. What is it? Okay. That’s happening. All right.” And I could feel that could be the connection. I felt abandoned.

INT: So you speculated something about it.

KIM: Yes, and intellectually, but emotionally I just knew how rotten I felt and how awful.

INT: How long would those times last?

KIM: (pause) The one very, very severe one-interesting that you said when your son was bar mitzvah. What word did you use? It was-

INT: I felt like a grown up.

KIM: Like a grown up. When my son-it wasn’t at my daughter’s bat mitzvah but my son’s bar mitzvah, threw me into a depression. I guess it was a passage of some sort. I don’t know. Now what I don’t know and what I can’t tell you about is what else went into that, because my marriage was certainly eventful and there was always that sense of “Oh my G-d, this can’t work but here I am in it but I’m afraid to get out of it. But yeah, I love him but I can’t live with him and uh, uh,” but my son’s bar mitzvah which was twenty years ago, was a whopper, and how long did that last? (Pause) Two months?

INT: How did you recover?

KIM: How did I recover? Not with medication at the time. I think time. I never missed work. Never missed work, but boy was I miserable. I mean the days that I didn’t work-I worked Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The days I didn’t work I didn’t get dressed. It was over a summer. I remember it was over a summer because my children were in summer camps. My daughter was fourteen, my son was twelve, and he was bar mitzvah that October. I could not imagine going up on the bimah. I couldn’t. I did. And I’ve had several episodes. One after my son was married. Notice what the male abandonment means here. And that-I’m not sure whether it’s more connected to the hospitalization or losing my grandfather, but that was-that was a biggie, losing my grandfather without a goodbye. Never seeing him again.

INT: Describe that.

KIM: (pause) Somebody told us that he’d been shot. (Kim is crying) That’s it. I was seven. He left the house. I never saw him again. It was-I’m sure I didn’t realize at the time what the impact of that was. I never saw him again. I never said I love you. I never said goodbye. He was gone. I have never been able to think of that event without tears coming to my eyes, particularly as we were told that he died with the “Shema” [seminal Hebrew prayer] on his lips.

INT: So this was someone who witnessed it or was part of it and escaped?

KIM: Yes, exactly. It was someone who was there and who escaped. Probably-

INT: He came to your home, to where you lived-

KIM: In our old town. Probably someone who-what the Nazis did is that they dug-they had the people dig their own graves and then they just piled in the-shot them and piled them in. This, as I recall, was someone who pretended that he was dead but got out of the pile and they never covered the graves with earth and he came to tell us that they saw my grandfather rounded up and what happened. Whether that's factual or not, I don't know, but that's what we heard.

INT: But you recall the day, the event, the time you were told? Can you see the person in your mind's eye telling you?

KIM: No. What I recall is a Nazi soldier and Gestapo coming to the house. My grandmother was standing here, my mother was standing here and I was standing next to my grandmother and this Nazi soldier was standing here, and my grandmother, who spoke flawless German, said to him, "How are you, sir?" I don't remember...she said to him, "You are such a cultured nation. Such educated people. How could you have taken my husband?" And he shot her through the heart. He put a bullet through her. Missed her heart by this much. She survived. And he left. That's how I knew that my grandfather had been killed. We were standing on the balcony between our two apartments. By that time we were in the one apartment. By that time we were all in my parents' apartment, and in all innocence she said this to him, so he shot her and he left. Again, from his perspective, he probably had no answer for her. I mean, you know, what do you say to a woman-?

INT: So simultaneously your grandfather was killed and your grandmother was only forty-five then. Anything of what was going on inside of you? Do you recall, separately from...a shock from the feeling?

KIM: I don't. I knew that whatever needed to be done would be done and I was not responsible for doing it. I always knew that. I always knew everything that was going on at first, I could tell, without being held responsible for fixing it, without feeling that I have to do something, other than between my parents, their fights, but in those-I felt very protected.

INT: So what happened with the knowledge of your grandfather's death? Was it talked about by the adults at the time?

KIM: Oh sure. But we had-my parents and everybody had to go into action because we knew that my father was next. We knew that.

INT: And also your grandmother was on the floor.

KIM: Right. Oh, but we got her to the doctor who was our friend, Dr. Yelles.

INT: That was immediate.

KIM: Immediate. It had to-I mean there was no time to process. We had to go into...do it. We? They had to do it. And my mother took her to the doctor-no, must have called the doctor to us. I mean she was not in transportable condition and Dr. Yelles, who your mother knows, he-

INT: Saved her, in the apartment.

KIM: I'm sure. I don't-I can't tell you because I don't know, but he saved her. I don't know how it happened but I would guess that, you know, if I had a seven year old or a six year old at the time, I would remove that six year old from the bloody mess and have her attended to someplace else and take care of business. I don't remember what happened. But my grandmother lived.

INT: Is it your sense that the avoidance of your grandfather's death was conscious and there for you or was there a time when it went underground?

KIM: It never went underground as I recall. Never went underground. I knew that he was gone. I didn't-I couldn't take it in that he was gone. I mean, he was just here. He loved me. I loved him. But I knew that he was gone. No. Many people had been killed by then. I don't know if my Uncle Henyo was gone by then.

INT: I'm going to approach you with my repetitious questions because there may not be any way of talking about it but I'm going to try again with sort of what the child, what you, as a seven year old, does with that. Is that then-a juggle with words-is it a life changing event? Of course it's a life changing event, but is it, as a life changing event, what did it change? What did it do? Why is it the poignant story that brings tears so automatically and other events did not? Maybe just that it was him.

KIM: I believe that it was him. He was my most significant person. He was more significant than anybody else in my life.

INT: Does it change-did it change for you in whatever child version you were aware of a sense of how one trusts, relies on, depends on?

KIM: I think so. Absolutely. But remember, this was my grandfather, not my father. For me, that was a very important distinction because I could still physically rely on my father and my mother, but he disappeared from me, from my life, and it was-I believe-this is all, you know, kind of intellectual dissection here.

INT: Imaginable conceptions.

KIM: I believe that it did change my life, but having had him for those seven years was what changed my life. Having lost him was very sad, devastating in fact, but having had him is what was wonderful. And then we went into action.

INT: Tell me all about that. How it happened and the people and always keeping your perspective of it in mind, what you were seeing, thinking, feeling, doing as all the adults were going into action.

KIM: There was-I'll take you back to the Russian occupation. When the Russians took away or shuttered my father's store, my father had some notice of that, and he-together with whoever, took out some provisions from the store that he was able to hide, and he hid it in a closet that was built into the wall and he placed a wooden closet in front of that closet so it wasn't visible to the outside. I was told, and this was when I was probably five or six-year, because the Nazis came in when I was six and this is under the Russians -- I was told to keep it a secret. Little did they know. I did keep it a secret, except from my best friend who was Christian. At that point. I don't know how that happened, but there was a Christian little girl. I don't remember who it was but I told her. (Whispers) I told her about the closet because it was exciting.

Somehow, my father found out that I told her. I don't know how. And I came back from seeing her, from playing on the street, and he refused to open the door for me. He would not let me into the apartment because I had told that. It was probably the scariest seconds of my life. It didn't continue for a long time, but it was the first time-now that was probably the first rage that I remember. He was, again, from this perspective, he was trying to keep this stuff without anybody knowing and here I went and blabbed. I didn't know what I had done wrong because it was only my best friend. Best friends don't betray you, right? They don't...and he wouldn't let me into the house. It was very scary for me. And I wouldn't be surprised if it caused me to be very wary for the rest of my life, kind of looking over my shoulder.

INT: In sharing your secrets?

KIM: And trusting people. So, back to after my grandfather was killed, at some point and I don't remember when, whether it was before my grandfather was killed, probably after, my father and some other people dug a hole-well, there was a cellar under our house and it was not made out of wood. The steps were not made of wood. The steps were dug out of rock. My father removed probably the third or fourth step from the bottom, as I recall. There was a flight of stairs going down with no railing or anything, but he removed the third or fourth stair and dug a hiding place behind that stair. This was our ingress into there. And it was, as I recall it from my little vantage point, it was a good size. It was narrow. It was the width of a stair, but it went back and those of us whom lived in that house, and there were now three families in our apartment.

INT: All Polish or there were beginning to be-

KIM: All Jewish.

INT: They were all from your town?

KIM: Yes. What the Nazis did is they cleared the periphery of the town and had all the Jews come into our little town, so the people who lived in their apartments had to double and triple up, depending on what they decided, so what we were able to do is get my grandmother and grandfather to live with us, you know, and then another family, the Kahns, Mr. and Mrs. Kahn and their daughter. Somehow there were five-there were eight of us. The three of us had lived and because the Kahns were strangers, they got the

bedroom so that they would be sort of private. Mr. Kahn snuffed tobacco and rocked [?] the house every time he did that, so somehow the hole must have been prepared, maybe before, I don't know, but my father dug that hole and there were some other people involved. I don't know who. I don't know who. But he dug this hole in the back of this stair so that when the Nazis came around to clear out all the men, we could take refuge there. We were-ours was the first house in the ghetto. It was not the first house on the block. It was the second house on the block, but the reason it was the first house where the barbed wire began was because the first house was owned by a Ukrainian man and he had a hardware store down there. So he dug this hole and we would hole up there when they had the actions, the round-ups.

INT: Who would be allowed in the hole?

KIM: The people who knew about it and I think it was the Kahns, my grandmother, my parents and I. I think that's all it was.

INT: And the Kahns daughter was how old?

KIM: She was an adult, at least in my thinking she was an adult. The Kahns were very old. They must have been in their fifties.

INT: So this was not a playmate for you.

KIM: No, no, no. She must have been in her late teens or twenties because kids don't discern that, but she was an adult, and with each roundup we would go down there and at night we would go up for food and when things had blown over we would come out. When we were told that it was the last roundup, my parents told me-where was my grandmother? She was there. My parents told me and I probably said this to you the first time around, I don't remember, that they were going to pin a note on my coat-did I say that? And when I objected and I said, well, if you were going to give me away why did you ever give birth to me they decided not to lay down on those train tracks, and we tunneled our way into the house next door. Am I repeating myself?

INT: No, no. All of you started to dig beneath the house?

KIM: Mm-hm. But the Kahns were not there. They were not-they must have gone in another direction, but my father and my mother and my grandmother and I-my father took out a cinder block from our cellar. We went into the main cellar, out of this cave, because there was no egress from there. Went into the main part of the cellar where the steps led to and I don't know how, but he got permission from the Ukrainian man next door for us to go into his cellar. We also found out that a Jewish family had been permitted by this Monvigah, this Ukrainian man, to build a shelter under his store with beds, a metal garbage can that served as a refrigerator. Is this new to you or-?

INT: This is all new.

KIM: They had put provisions into that quote unquote refrigerator. There were three beds on one level and there was-these were boards. These were boards with something on

them, and one was just about this much under the ceiling, the floor above. About that much. There was one other family with us there. It was a husband, a wife, the wife's sister and the husband and wife's two children.

INT: And they were friends from the town?

KIM: They were people from the town. They were not friends. I don't know if they were already there, cause they weren't with us in our cellar. They must have already been there. They had the three beds-the two beds below, on the floor level. There was one other bed on that level and my parents had that. There were five of them. I don't know how they had just two beds.

INT: Let me clarify that. So you were digging to create a hiding place?

KIM: No. No. My father removed cinder blocks between our cellar and the cellar next door. The digging was just to make a passage to get into that cellar without going outside.

INT: Right. And then you joined this other shelter that this other family had created.

KIM: No, they hadn't created it. Another family had created it but they were killed, so these people somehow were there. It wasn't their shelter nor was it our shelter. And my father removed these cinder blocks and we tunneled our bodies through. I remember him pushing me through from behind and my coming out on the other end. It wasn't like having an MRI. It wasn't-if you heard about it you feel like you're in a coffin. It wasn't a very long passage. You got to see light at the other end, and then he helped-no, first my mother and then me. I don't remember. I remember going through. I think I was the last one before he tunneled his way through. My mother or my grandmother. I don't remember who came first. And we stayed there for many weeks.

INT: And you were able to bring your own provisions?

KIM: There were provisions in that garbage can.

INT: Prepared by the first people?

KIM: Yes. And I remember eating bread with butter with onion and sugar and believe you me, that was a delicacy. Anybody who hears it today goes "ich." It was a delicacy. I loved it.

INT: So the Ukrainian man who owned the house and the store was-allowed this, helped this?

KIM: He permitted that, yes.

INT: He permitted it. But he didn't do anything in any active way to help.

KIM: Well, he did a lot in an active way because if we had been found, he would have been shot. I don't ever remember knowing consciously that he was providing us with

anything other than what was there. We would listen for his shade on the store-it was a metal-like a grate that would go up. We would listen for that every morning and we would know that he was there and then the grate would come down at night and we would know that he was at home. One day the grate didn't go up. I don't know how, but we later found out or soon found out-we knew we were in trouble when that happened. That meant bad things. We didn't know that he had Jews under his home. We later found out that he had been sheltering Jews under his house where he lived. They had been found and he was shot, he and his whole family were shot.

INT: His whole family meaning his wife and children?

KIM: Wife and children. Don't know how many children. I know he had a wife and I know he had children. Don't know anything about how many. Then we had to leave there, because we knew that if the Jews were found under his home-

INT: How did you get that information?

KIM: I don't know. I don't know. I have no guess. I mean I could play Sherlock Holmes and assume that my father on some level knew that there were Jews living in his home. I don't know. I don't know.

INT: So who was the-

KIM: Maybe somebody came to the store. I have no idea. I don't know.

INT: So who was the adult who then moved into action? Was it your father who realized and he would think and plan and do?

KIM: Yes. Yes. He and the sister of the woman, Tapa. I remember her being also very active and there's an example of her to the letter. We knew that we had to get out of there now. The men hadn't showed [showered?]. We didn't have different clothes. We were-it was-living there was very eventful. We lived there for quite a while, I'd say-

INT: Some measure of time?

KIM: Weeks. Weeks.

INT: Eventful meaning between the people or just coping with living?

KIM: Yeah. No, coping with living. Between the people was minor. Kracha, their younger daughter and I were the same age and we were appropriately fighting with one another. They had an older daughter, Ludia, who was six years older? She was six years older. She was more-we were seven or eight, yeah, but she was not a part of our-(end of tape 3, side 2) It was many, many weeks that we lived there because I trained myself to wake up when I was having a nightmare. I literally trained myself.

INT: How did you do that?

KIM: I told myself two things. First of all, I told myself that when I was having a bad dream I would hit my head on the pillow and wake up. I literally did that. The other thing that I did, I don't know how-I don't know who-how it happened. I said to myself, I'm going to think about those horrible dreams ahead of time, so that they don't get me when I'm asleep, and I remember having them and waking up. Now I was under the ceiling. I was right up there, and there were mice and rats parading around my bed, literally parading around my bed. The most-it was both funny and disgusting. Funny and disgusting thing that ever happened was that my dad, my father, would sleep-he always slept with his mouth open, always on his back. He would wake up in the morning, there was mouse droppings in his teeth. It's funny now. I mean what do you do? What do you do? He would pick them out of his teeth. There were mouse droppings there. Nobody was disgusted. Nobody was appalled. It was there.

INT: Tell me more about the dreams. What were the dreams?

KIM: That we were being caught. That we were being killed. That's what they were about and I remember deliberately saying to myself, "Kim, this is not real. You're going to wake up, that's it. You're going to wake up."

INT: And you did. You realized it wasn't...is this a lifelong skill that you-

KIM: Um, I haven't had those terrifying dreams. I haven't needed to call upon that skill. I mean nothing is as terrifying.

INT: So those dreams ended when that situation ended?

KIM: Yeah. I had bad dreams, but nothing that terrified me.

INT: Were your bad dreams in your life war-related dreams, Nazi dreams?

KIM: No, never.

INT: Other kinds of dreams.

KIM: Never. Never. Never ever.

INT: Was that conscious?

KIM: I don't think so. I don't think so. I was-I felt very protected by my father and my mother. I felt very informed. I felt safe within the craziness. I felt safe.

INT: Even in the morning the gate didn't go up?

KIM: Even in the morning the gate didn't go up. There was no panic. We knew, they knew, that we needed to do something and I knew we would do it. It was that kind of safety. It was. As insane as it sounds, it was.

INT: You know that it sounds extraordinary. You know that.

KIM: Of course. Of course. But I think it had to do with my mother's and my father's rationality. They didn't panic. It wasn't like, "Oh my G-d, now we're dead." It was, "We have to do something and we're going to do it." It was that kind of one step after another. There was never any kind of frantic...

INT: So they were in sync in that way.

KIM: Yes.

INT: And these other people?

KIM: Also. Also. Yes. I had the sort of gut notion, gut feeling, that my parents took the lead in the survival but I don't know. It just felt that way.

INT: And what kind of play did you do with the other child?

KIM: I don't remember. I do not remember. We talked about the Russian films we had seen. We sang Russian songs that we had had experience with prior to the Nazi occupation but-

INT: During the Russian time you were in school, right?

KIM: I was never in school. Never in school until I was liberated.

INT: But in general were children going to school during the Russian occupation or that shut down schools?

KIM: I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. I don't have a clue. My friends were my age. I don't know. I can't tell you. Kracha and I, we-I don't know what we did. We did a lot of talking and vying for attention, I guess, and being obnoxious I'm sure. But not too bad. We weren't children. There was no time to be children. And so the plan was that we would leave that hiding place in the dead of night, maybe like twelve or one o'clock in the morning, and we would wend our way into the forest because we had no other options. There was nothing else to do. The provisions were running out and they were going to come after us because Monvigah had been found-I don't know how soon after. It must have been very soon after that we set out into the forest.

INT: Did you have to shimmy back through that tunnel?

KIM: No.

INT: You just went out of the house.

KIM: Right. Through the store, because there was no point in going-if we had shimmied back we'd be in the ghetto. This building was outside of the ghetto. So coming out of that building was not as danger provoking, but by then the ghetto was no longer guarded, I don't think. The ghetto itself was no longer-the town was but the ghetto itself was not because it was Judenrein, you know. There was nobody left. So we made our way into

the forest. As we were passing-we were walking in the street rather quietly and unobtrusively. A Nazi patrol was across the street. If we were on that side of the street they were on this side and they yelled "Halt" to us.

INT: What word is that?

KIM: Halt. Halt. Stop. It's a universal word and we stopped and there were two men, four adult women and two children. And we were fearing death and they said to us in German-they tried to fix their lantern on us, their flashlight.

INT: Oh, the lantern.

KIM: It wouldn't go on. It wouldn't go on. So they thought maybe we would depart and they asked us in German where are you going. It was a difficult moment. Tapa, the sister of the wife from the other family answered in Polish and she said to them, "We're coming back from a picnic." They must have had some Polish people with them or somebody because-or they didn't understand what the hell she was saying but she answered in Polish which was interesting because she could have answered in German but she didn't. And they waved us on disgustedly. If they had seen us, they would have known who we were because we were in disarray, to say the least. And-

INT: And they didn't assume necessarily that you were Jewish people?

KIM: I'm not sure that they were that-I don't know. They didn't-they didn't get the answer that caused them to pursue us or that we were whatever they were seeking. Whatever. They let us go, and we found our way into the forest. We had nothing, absolutely nothing with us. Nothing. No way of surviving at all. No food. No money. No nothing. And so my father and Mr. Inber, the man of the family, would go out at night to the neighboring farms and-

INT: Go out from the?

KIM: From the forest.

INT: You were just in the open?

KIM: Just in the clear. Hardly in the open. We found a little clearing with trees. And they would go to the neighboring farms and dig up potatoes, bring them back, and the mothers of the families would slice some potatoes and we would drink dew from the leaves in the morning because there was no water for us. I played this game with the kids in school. I said this is a test. What do you think we drank? They had some interesting answers, including urine. And those potatoes had a lot of moisture in them, so my mother would sit there, I remember. She would put it in front of me. She had a tiny little penknife, and she would slice potatoes literally paper-thin so they would go far. And she would give me some sliced potatoes and give some to my grandmother, some to my father. That's what we ate.

At one point Mr. Inber said to my father that, you know, “what were we going to do? What were we going to do? Where are we going to go?” And he said that he had nothing to give anyone to keep him and his family and my father said to him, and Mr. Inber knew this. My father had been a very wealthy man and he had buried, my father had buried a lot of jewelry, coins, whatever, in our basement and my father said to him, “If you want to risk your life, I will draw you a diagram of where my things are buried. If you want to risk your life and go there and get it out, we’ll share it and then we’ll both have something to give to somebody, but I don’t want to risk my life and I’ll take my chances.” But you realize that there are many events that happened before, after and between that this is not-this is the highlights of what happened. There were other times. As I’m telling you this I realize that there were some other things that happened in between but these are the peaks.

INT: Okay. I will be coming back.

KIM: I figured you would. But the one event that comes to mind that was very-very important and very defining for me is that there was a family friend named Trisha, a Christian, a Polish woman, a Catholic woman, who came to us into the ghetto, and my mother was sitting in our living room, and telling my mother that based on my mother’s appearance and my appearance, she would like to offer to my mother the opportunity to live with her family on Aryan papers, but she could not do that for my father because he looked Jewish. And my mother said, “I don’t want to be without him. I came with him, I don’t want to be without him.”

INT: What was defining about that moment for you?

KIM: The importance of my father and my mother to each other. My father would have been willing to have her go, to save her life and mine. She didn’t want to do that. She couldn’t do that. She didn’t feel or that it wasn’t right or that she didn’t feel safe or whatever. She didn’t want to be without him. That was, prior to my saying to my parents, “If you were going to give me away why did you ever give birth to me,” and I had a sense of cycle maybe.

INT: Put your words on that.

KIM: I didn’t want to be without them. As a child, I couldn’t imagine being without them and I expect that my mother couldn’t imagine being safe without my father.

INT: Did it ever come up to send you?

KIM: No, never. Never. Now you know that Fran, my uncle and aunt’s daughter-

INT: I don’t know anything about her.

KIM: Maybe go back to that before we go forward from the forest, because that takes us...When we were in the ghetto and I was six, my uncle and aunt were somewhere in the ghetto also, not with us, and they had this one year old. My aunt arranged to send her out

for a Christian woman and her brother, Nataalka and her brother, to agree to take her one year old.

INT: Who was this?

KIM: My aunt, Adele. Through her friend who was-who they're still in touch with. I forget her name. That woman was the go-between between Nataalka and my aunt, and my mother was carrying Fran, the year one old, in her arms. My aunt was walking alongside of her and I was walking on the other. We walked to the edge of the ghetto and gave up this child to Nataalka and her brother and then we walked back. Fran-her name was Stella at the time. She was one year old. I didn't know that it was happening. Nataalka and her brother moved to another location to pretend that they were husband and wife in order to legitimize this child. Fortunately, she had red hair and looked very Christian and they cut it like in a cereal bowl style. There is a picture of her. And they gave her away. They ultimately got her back and she obviously didn't want to go because those were her parents as far as she was concerned, and she was three.

INT: They didn't know at that moment what would be.

KIM: Oh, they knew that they would not survive. They pretty well knew that they would not survive.

INT: This was the red haired child?

KIM: Right. Just as my parents wanted to give me up. I wouldn't let them.

INT: She couldn't talk about it?

KIM: Right. And they could not take her into hiding because if they had any plan of going into hiding, they couldn't take along an infant. Either I had already or I would later witness a mother smothering her infant. That must have happened after-after this.

INT: So that was still in the ghetto.

KIM: No, the ghetto-we had been out of the ghetto already. No. Because when we were in a loft with many other people and there was one woman there with an infant, and all the adults gave her a choice. The infant is crying and they gave her a choice. You leave with your child or you kill the child because the danger was that we were all going to get killed. So she killed the child. She smothered her child.

INT: Do you remember anything about your-

KIM: It was surreal. It wasn't real. It was like she had a doll in her hands. She put a pillow over her face. Probably wasn't possible to feel it. I did not feel threatened. I did not feel endangered. It was a second-to-second issue of survival. Every second was-you had to figure it out. And my parents kept me informed and I think that's what preserved the sanity that I have. There was no mystery. There was no secret. Everything was an open book.

INT: That's so un-European.

KIM: Yeah. You're right.

INT: So a prevailing philosophy was you protect the children.

KIM: Mm-hm. I don't know whether it was my-my father would have been more likely to do it, but my mother's level of education I think influenced that behavior. I'm not positive, but I think my father would have been more protective and not acknowledge the adulthood of this child and say, "Oh, it will get better." I think. I think. Maybe not. But my mother was the one who was extremely rational and everything was an open book. There were no secrets. Just as there were no secrets about the craziness that was going on between her and my father. She never tried to distract me from that and it was open.

INT: But there were no adult comments about this event, this mother and the child?

KIM: If there were they were in the course of things. She had to do it. It had to be. There was no time for philosophy. You just did it. You just did it. There was no-you wanted to live. My guess is that in part, many people who survived did so with tremendous guilt feelings. Those guilt feelings came from doing things at the expense of other people. This never happened in my situation. I don't remember ever-or my parents ever feeling that they were doing something to keep others from living. It was-there were no secrets. There were no secrets about how desperately ill my father was in the cave where we were. He was threatened with blood poisoning and he could have died. This was open information.

This was no secret. We knew it, we were able to get from this point to the possibility of that point by living through it, and I was aware always, always, of everything that was happening. Everything. And I learned to speak Yiddish in order to understand what was happening, and that was fine. They weren't trying to keep it a secret from me. They were trying to keep secrets from the help, and I think it helped in keeping me unafraid, because it was pretty stupid that I wasn't afraid as a child but I wasn't. It didn't matter that I might be killed because I knew that if I might be killed they would be too and that was okay. I was with them. They were going to take care of me. Whatever happened, they were going to take care of me. It wasn't going to be a lonely process, like I wasn't going to die alone, and I knew they wouldn't let me die without doing everything, cause they didn't with typhus. They saved my life.

INT: Okay, let's end here.

KIM: Yes.

INT: Today is September 17, 1996. This is a continuation of the interview with Kim Fendrick, a child survivor. What I'd like to do is begin today with the chronology of what happened during the war, and we were up to the point of talking about leaving the underground hiding area that was part-under the store near the ghetto and then escaping to the woods. So I guess just pick up at that point in what were your experiences like then with your family, the circumstances, your inner sense of things and then what happened next.

KIM: Okay. The trip out of the cellar of next door to the ghetto was very eventful. We set out in the dead of night in order not to be recognized as disheveled. Had I covered that part with you before?

INT: Quickly, yeah. You encountered two German soldiers.

KIM: Right. I'm not sure how many, but I did cover that.

INT: Right.

KIM: Okay. As we proceeded, we rescued ourselves by one woman answering in Polish as to where we were going. We proceeded from there and dawn was breaking and my father, who had been an orderly in a hospital-had I mentioned that?

INT: Briefly.

KIM: We found our way-we found ourselves near that hospital and we realized that we would have to beg for shelter because otherwise we would be again recognized and taken away or shot or whatever.

INT: Under what context was he an orderly in the hospital?

KIM: This was during the Russian occupation when they nationalized our store and his business. He found work as an orderly in a hospital. His interest was very wide-ranging, and this was a hospital run by a Catholic nun, by Ukrainian nuns and a Ukrainian head-doctor, Dr. Matinoli. And then he hoped that they would shelter us on our trip through the town into the forest, and he-as we approached he knew the ins and outs of the hospital and we came in the back gate unrecognized by anyone. It was still dark. And he found the Mother Superior and she provided us with shelter. She told us that yes, we could stay there under these circumstances, that I would be in a-we would be in this huge courtyard which was on the inside of the hospital, and she pointed out four barrels. One barrel was at one end of the courtyard and three barrels were on the other side in the opposite corner. The courtyard, to my young eyes, was the length of a football field. I'm sure it wasn't that long, but it felt that long.

INT: How old were you?

KIM: I was about seven; seven probably going on eight. I was closer to eight probably. Yeah, I was closer to eight. And the barrels were made of wooden slats, vertical wooden slate in barrel shape. The barrels were convex, convexly shaped of these wooden slats, with metal running around the diameter of the barrel, and the Mother Superior told my father that I would need to stay in that one barrel, through which I could see because the slats were vertical, and my parents and my grandmother would be across the courtyard in the three other barrels. My father promised me that when dawn-when dusk came he would come and get me and I could see the other barrels. I couldn't see them but I could see the barrels. That was the only day that I was without my parents in the experiences of survival, without my parents or without my uncle and aunt. I was either with them or with my parents.

INT: And you were separated from the other family that you were hiding with?

KIM: Yes, we were. We were. And if you were to ask me where they were at that point, I couldn't tell you because I don't know. They may have found some other way of-I don't remember where they went, but eventually we-that night we-and I don't even know if we ate anything during the day. I don't have any recollection of that, but I remember looking through those slats and visualizing my parents and my grandmother in that corner, that catty-corner, away from me and knowing that they were there and knowing that they would come back for me because my parents-my father never lied to me. My mother never lied to me. And I had total faith that they would be there, and they were, and we found our way into the forest and did meet up with the other family. Don't remember how that happened.

INT: So you had a specific destination?

KIM: I suppose. I don't know. I suppose. Or maybe it was a time thing that we were going to meet. I don't know. But we wound up in the forest, not only with that other family, but there was a third family that was with us in the forest, a mother with her daughter, and the mother's sister that was with us there also. Don't know how they got there, but that's where we wound up, in the forest, with no means of finding shelter, knowing anybody, knowing what to do. And at that point the man of the other family, the husband of the other family, the father and my father would-did I say about how we ate in the forest?

INT: You said you went for potatoes.

KIM: Yeah. Mr. Inber and my father went to neighboring farms, again in the dead of night, and dug up raw potatoes and we drank dew off the leaves in the morning and when my father would bring the potatoes my mother would slice them paper-thin with this tiny little knife so that it would stretch as far as it would stretch, and dole it out to me. I remember her sitting doing that for me. I don't-I assume that my father and my grandmother sliced them on their own, but she fed me my slices of potato. As a child, I don't know what happened while we were in there in terms of arrangements and what would happen. However, I later learned that while we were in the forest, my uncle and my aunt -- my mother's sister and her husband -- had found shelter in a cave under the barn of a Catholic farmer and his family, his wife and five children, and my uncle let the word out to someone he trusted -- (end of tape 4, side 1) So this young man named Wieslaw was trusted by my uncle. It was my-it was my recollection, in retrospect, that he was half Jewish, but I have since learned that he was all Jewish or something like that, that he passed in some way, which was very difficult to do under the Nazis. They were very meticulous about identifying people.

INT: Spell his name.

KIM: W-I-E-S-L-A-W. Wieslaw. With a line over the L, which was [pronunciation of L] not the [different pronunciation], L sound. My uncle said to him -- again, in retrospect I learned this -- that should he find any trace of his family, meaning my father, my mother,

my grandmother and myself, that he'd like to know about it. And he'd like to come and get us into the cave because by that time, my aunt and my mother's two brothers had already been killed and his brother had been killed, my uncle's brother, and my uncle's father had been killed as well as my maternal grandparents. They had been killed. And my paternal grandfather who was killed much earlier in the Nazi occupation, so that was happening concurrently. As we were in the forest, he was hoping that Wieslaw would come across us somewhere in the forest. In the meantime, we did-

INT: Do you know whether or not there was some early communication between them that said eventually we will try and hide in the forest?

KIM: No. There was no communication.

INT: So your uncle was just on a lark.

KIM: He was shooting fish in a barrel. He was just-but he knew that we-he thought he knew that we had escaped from the ghetto, because he knew that we were in that cellar under Monvigah's store. How he knew I don't know, but he knew. The word hadn't gotten to him that we were killed. That's how probably he knew that we hadn't been killed so-because that word traveled quickly.

INT: So when he was in the cave, he still managed to get information.

KIM: Yes. Yes. I don't know how. Could be through Wieslaw; could be through maybe even prior to his going there. I don't know. But here we are in the forest and now there are-my family is four, the other family is five and the other family is three, so there were twelve of us and Mr. Inber tells my father that while he knows that my father is well-to-do, he was not and he has no-he assumed that we had-we had treasures with us, gold coins and gold. We didn't. But he said that he had no way of even paying anyone if he were to know someone or approach someone to shelter his family and my father said that while he didn't have anything with him, that there was a lot of stuff that he had buried in the cellar of our house in the ghetto.

By that time the ghetto had been dismantled. There was no-it wasn't being patrolled because nobody was alive in the ghetto, either they were dead or they were out of there as we were, and my father told Mr. Inber that should he want to risk his life and go back into town, he would draw him the map of where everything is buried and he would share with him anything that he would bring back in terms of value, so they would each have something to bargain with. Inber thought that was a fair deal and he set out and sometime later returned, saying that no, he had changed his mind. He didn't want to risk his life. It was too precious to him. He said he has two children and a wife and a sister-in-law and he wasn't going to do that so that's the breaks. So we had-risk nothing, get nothing.

And in the meantime, my uncle, through Wieslaw-Wieslaw happened to come upon us in the forest and frightened the blank out of us cause we were convinced that he was going to find us and inform someone about us, because many-many Jews, some Jews and non-Jews curried favor with the Nazis by informing on others, hoping to gain something for

themselves, whether it was in goods or in their lives, so when we saw him it was very, very frightening until he identified-

INT: You didn't know him before.

KIM: No. We had no-

INT: And had other people come upon you before him, or he was the first and only?

KIM: As I recall he was the first. We were in a clearing within the forest. We weren't exposed and I don't know how he found us. I have no idea how he found us but he did, and went back to my uncle.

INT: So what? He asked your name?

KIM: I wish I had the answers. As a seven, eight year old kid, I don't-I don't remember and I never asked. I don't know. I mean describing us certainly wouldn't have done it. I have no idea how that happened. My uncle might have a better idea and thank G-d he's still around to ask the question. I will ask him the next time I speak with him how that happened. There are many things I took for granted and only later came to question, "How'd that happen? How'd that go?"

INT: Before you go on, when in hiding under the store, you described a sense of knowing-that being with your parents was very important and knowing that they would take care of you and whatever happened you'd be together. Did you have a similar feeling in the forest or did the forest create other kinds of feelings?

KIM: Oh, no, no, no. My level of safety with my parents was-I think it was absolute. It just was. It always was.

INT: So you moved from here to there and-

KIM: Yes. Yes. They kept me informed. They told me what we're doing, why we're doing it, where we were going and how it was going to be. No, I had no-I had no feeling of being threatened as long as I was with them. I really didn't.

INT: Did you like it better in the forest than in the cellar?

KIM: No. No. The cellar was really a wonderful little hotel. It was safe. I had a soft bed. We had food. We were protected. The forest was-we were in the elements. While it was not cold-this must have been around July, August, there was nothing to eat and there was nothing to drink.

INT: Do you remember feeling hungry?

KIM: Sure.

INT: Do you remember talking about it? Did you express it or-

KIM: I don't remember expressing it. I don't. I probably did, but we were all in this together. It wasn't like some people had, some people didn't. This was really a communal thing and it was very different than being one person alone in a situation. We were all-you know, this was the way it was, and I felt-I felt safe there except for the fact that I knew that we were all hyper-vigilant. We were all-any sound that we heard around us- "What was that? What was that? Who's coming?" And then when Wieslaw appeared, it was-it was very scary.

INT: How did you occupy yourself?

KIM: In the forest? Well, there was another girl my age, Kracha. That was Mr. Inber's younger daughter and his older daughter Ruza, who was fifteen, and the daughter of the third family, Mela, and, you know, it was all-it was all one group. Kracha and I probably-we probably fought a lot is what we probably did, as we fought under the store. We had a very-that was our thing. That was-we fought. We argued. But we were all like-the age difference really almost was obliterated. We were-we were just a group of people and yes, I was taken care of as a child in terms of food but, you know, everybody heard what everybody else said. There was no-there was no delineation of information and I suppose my father and mother had private information that they didn't share with the others, but the group talk was the group talk and much of the time we were concerned about the sounds that we were making, so it was quiet and-

INT: Did you do any child play?

KIM: Not in the forest.

INT: Did you play house or fantasy?

KIM: I don't remember any of that in the forest. No. No. Don't remember that at all. I certainly had nothing to read, nothing to do, that I recall. I don't remember having a book of any sort nor a writing instrument of any sort. No. The last time I had done that was in the ghetto when my mother and I talked about teaching me how to read and write, so I knew how to read, which stood me in good stead later. Still does. (Laughter) So after Wieslaw found us-now we assumed Mr. Inber had indeed done what he said he had done. Again, in retrospect, in jumping from that moment to the future, when we were liberated eventually, my father went into the house where we had lived and into the cellar and found that everything he had shown Mr. Inber was gone except for one item that he neglected to put on the map and that was there. He dug that out.

INT: So retrospect, the assumption is that he went after liberation?

KIM: No. He went then.

INT: Oh, that he went then.

KIM: He went then.

INT: I see.

KIM: He went then. And just to put a cap on that story, my mother and father took him for a din Torah [Jewish legal judgement] to another town. We had emigrated to the western part of Poland, a place called Rvielsko-Biala.

INT: You have to spell that.

KIM: (Laughter) R-V-I-E-L-S-K-O, hyphen, B-I-A-L (with a slash across it)-A, which means white Rvielsko. Whatever. It's two towns. Rvielsko-Biala. There is a German name for it but I don't remember what it is. It was near Cracow. I remember going for a visit to Cracow. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful city. When we were in Rvielsko-Biala my father went into business and had a textile store with a gentleman from our town named Mr. Scharf, whose son now lives in Philadelphia, and whom I met at a diner quite by coincidence, having lunch with another person from my hometown. It was spooky that three people from Zloczow were having lunch at the same diner, two by design and one by accident. It was absolutely insane. He said he recognized my voice next to his booth. I recognized him once he stood up. His father and my father were in business together. They had a textile store as I said. So my mother went to the Rabbi in a neighboring town for the din Torah with Mr. Inber who did not live in Rvielsko-Biala, came from another part of Poland, and what stands out about that event is that my mother was adamant about the fact that he had done this and so was my father. There's no question in our minds, but-and I don't have to explain what a din Torah is to you. Obviously...okay. When my mother went there the rabbi approached them both and said, "What's this about?" My mother explained, Mr. Inber denied that he had done it, so my mother said, if he took it, may his children be cursed or may his children be sick or something like that. Something like that.

INT: Were you present?

KIM: No. And Mr. Inber was-he freaked out. He said, "She is cursing my children." And the rabbi said, "No she's not. She is saying, if you took what she says you took, may that come out in your children." Well, he was totally upset by what my mother said, which was more of a clue that, you know, he was slightly guilty. Be that as it may; put that aside. So now my uncle knows that we're in the forest. He tells my aunt that he is going to the forest and take me-bring me into the cave while he and another family, another man and his wife and his sister, who are in the cave with my uncle and aunt and my uncle's mother, while they dig the cave larger to accommodate my parents and my grandmother, not only me.

INT: When you say cave, it's hard for me to visualize that. Can you describe what you mean by a cave that's underneath?

KIM: It was a hole in the ground dug out under the barn. The ingress was from the barn. It was a square hole in the barn floor under the hay, covered-disguised by the hay, about the size of a manhole cover only it was square, not round, and people were taken out and there was a hole, a cave dug out of the rock below.

INT: Did it exist before the war?

KIM: No.

INT: It was created for those reasons.

KIM: Yes.

INT: And how did your uncle come to be with this family? Was there a relationship before or-

KIM: Yes. Yes. Okay. My uncle is a skilled tradesman, craftsman. He is-he was a glazier and a carpenter and he and my aunt and their baby, no, he and my aunt and his mother -- the baby had been given away by then -- he and my aunt and my uncle's mother were in a labor camp in town. Because my uncle was a skilled laborer, he-had he not been Jewish he would have been the foreman of the work force, but because he was Jewish he was a worker and the foreman was a Christian man named-his last name was Jaremkow. I don't remember his first name. I used to have it with me. It was [first name]. It was [first name], and his wife's name was Tekla, T-E-K-L-A. His last name was Jaremkow, J-A-R-E-M-K-O-W and he was the foreman. He happened to have been a farmer. He had a farm and five children, but he was the foreman of this group of laborers in the camp.

My uncle, who knew a whole lot more about the work than he did, was very helpful to him. My aunt was a friend of this man's daughter, Yanka, who was also in a labor camp or, yeah, I think she was in some capacity, not as a prisoner, obviously, as my uncle and aunt were. So as the day of reckoning or the day of dissolving this work camp came to their attention, the word was out that another Commandant was coming to eliminate the people in this labor camp and my aunt lobbied with the daughter while my uncle lobbied with the father, begging, asking, hoping that they would shelter my uncle and my aunt and his mother.

At first, the farmer, Mr. Jaremkow, agreed and there was also a friendly overseer, an S.S. overseer in this camp, and he kind of took a liking to my aunt and he sort of kept them informed of what was happening. They had a little lead time to make some decisions for themselves and Jaremkow agreed that he would take them in and they -- one day the liquidation of the camp happened very quickly -- and they had to run and they were told that they needed to run and they escaped to some place where Mr. Jaremkow knew where they had gone but they were not in his-in his shelter yet. While they were there, Mr. Jaremkow came to them and said to them that he had changed his mind because the risk was so enormous and it was, and he had five children, the youngest of whom was twelve.

My uncle and aunt appealed to his sense of renegeing and conscience and said that, "You promised us, we're going to die if you don't do this," and again he changed his mind and said, "Okay," and so that's how they-and I'm not sure how the other family found their way with my uncle and aunt but, you know, you're a thief for a penny, you're a thief for a million dollars. The risk was not in how many people he sheltered but the fact that he sheltered any, so that's not surprising that somehow he agreed to have the other people there, so the two men, my uncle and the other man of the other family, his name was Izio Wilner, W-I-L-N-E-R, went about-I think that they lived in the barn for a while. I'm not

positive, but I think that they did, the six people, while Izio Wilner and my uncle, whose name was Izio Silber, dug this cave under the barn.

INT: How do you spell Izio?

KIM: It's Isaac, or in Polish I-Z-I-O. It's a diminutive. The other man's name also was Izio, and they dug this hole by day and by night they wheel-barrowed away the rocks. The farm was located-it was a large farm. They were not in close vicinity to neighbors but still they were visible. However, by night neighbors would not see any activity, so they would wheelbarrow away the rocks that they had excavated during the day. Not excavated but dug up. It wasn't hard rock, it was just wet rock, so they did that and by the time-we flash-forward to my uncle coming to the forest. Oh, you said you couldn't envision the cave.

INT: Now I understand.

KIM: You get the idea. My uncle came with Wieslaw to the forest. My uncle was saying that he's going to go and take me and dig the cave larger to accommodate my parents and my grandmother. This is all without asking the Jaremkows about this because when he went to take me, he did not want to hear the word no. He just didn't want to hear it. He didn't want to ask because I mean there's a limit to how many people he wanted to feed, and he told my aunt that he was going to go into the forest and get me, and my aunt, to my recollection, said to him-again, this is something I think I heard later, "Don't go because you're going to die. They're going to catch you and shoot you and you have a responsibility to your wife, to your child, to the Christians and to your mother," and he said to my aunt -- and this was my mother's sister's husband. He said to her, "My brother has been killed, your brothers have been killed, your parents are dead, my father is dead. If I survive this, I want to have family, so I need to go and get them." And he came into the forest and so all of us-I think he was taking me into the cave and then he would come back for my parents and my grandmother. His responsibility certainly wasn't beyond that. So-

INT: Do you remember anything about that meeting?

KIM: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

INT: What was it like?

KIM: He was the angel of mercy because I knew-now Wieslaw had come back and told us that he was going to come and get me, so I anticipated this visit and I had been very close to my uncle and aunt before. My uncle and aunt had had no children. I am six years older than their oldest daughter, so for five years my aunt was my buddy and of course my uncle was her husband and while I didn't see as much of him because he was involved with other things, she was my buddy and she took me for walks and she played with me and we were very close. So they were very safe people for me and I knew that I would get out of the elements in the forest, and I felt nearly or every bit as safe with them as I did with my own parents. There was no delineation for me. I didn't-it wasn't as if I was being taken from them, although I was, but I knew that again, this would happen. He

would come back for my parents. There was no doubt in my mind. This level of confidence was never shaken, as stupid as that sounds. It just wasn't.

So he came and the negotiations began. What was there to negotiate? Well, the mother of-not Mrs. Inber but the other mother, whose one daughter was with her-she had another older one someplace else, she was there with her sister and her daughter. That woman, and I cannot remember her last name, but I remember her daughter's name which was Mela, M-E-L-A, she said to my uncle, "When you come back, you're going to take all of us." He said, "I can't. I can't do that." She said, "Well, you're going to because if you don't and if the Nazis find us, we're going to tell them exactly where you are." So my uncle felt pretty helpless with that notion. There were twelve people there. He came back to the cave. Well, he took me by the hand and we started walking and not having been properly nourished for quite a while, I eventually said to him-he was holding me by the hand, by my right hand and his left hand, and Wieslaw was on the other side of me. I said to him, [Polish word for uncle], which means uncle, I can't walk. I can't. My feet just wouldn't carry me. I just wanted to fall down. So he sat me on his back and I held on. It was a piggy back ride, a wonderful piggy back ride. (Voice shows emotion) He and I remember to this day how I kissed his neck all the way to the cave. I don't know how long the trip was. I don't remember.

INT: What's moving you? What's touching you?

KIM: My uncle. (Kim is crying) That wonderful feeling of safety. Being protected again. That's what he was doing. And the fact that being as exhausted as I was-exhausted is the wrong word. Being as weak as I was, again, there was someone there who responded and, I mean, I could almost remember what it felt like touching right up to his neck as he walked very purposely with that large stride of his, which he does to this day. To this day he takes these long bike rides. And we got to the cave and my aunt had prepared, believe it or not, little green pears for me. I don't know where they got them. It doesn't matter. But she, to this day, she recalls that I said to her in Polish-and I will not say it to you in Polish what I said to her. "Auntie, you'll always have little green pears for me, right?" And they were a delicacy I hadn't tasted in a long time or anything solid except for raw potatoes.

INT: How long were you in the forest?

KIM: A good question. Six weeks? Two months? I believe-I'm quite sure that I got into the cave in September, so it was July and August somewhere there in the forest. And he and Izio Wilner, my uncle and Izio Wilner, proceeded to dig the cave again. Now I never met the Jaremkows coming in because I never met them. They weren't supposed to know I was there. In the course of the next I guess few days or something, my uncle owned up to the Jaremkows that this-oh, he owned up as to what he had done and that, of course, there was going to be no increase in food. That was not an issue. How much was I going to eat? And again, it wasn't a question of how many Jews you hid, it was the fact that you hid any and it was okay. We kept getting the food on the same basis as they had before.

INT: Was there a payment here?

KIM: There was no payment here.

INT: No one had anything.

KIM: There was no payment. There was nothing here. Amusing aside, I remember my aunt cutting my hair and changing the part from one side to the other and my getting an enormous headache from having my part changed. If you've ever had a part in your hair and you've changed it you'd know what a headache is. Somehow she didn't-I forget what side, from what side to what side she did that but there was always a competition between my mother and my aunt and I guess she was going to be a better mother to me than my mother had been or whatever, but she cut my hair. Not real short, but she cut it.

INT: A slight detour.

KIM: Sure.

INT: The statement by your aunt and the response by your uncle which you are quoting, which means it was open to the family and was probably discussed.

KIM: As far as I know, yeah.

INT: Was it ever a source of tension between the two sisters or everyone understood where the statements were coming from?

KIM: I think everyone understood completely where the statement was coming from. Now my aunt has a different version of that statement. That's not what I recall being told. She has a different version and I blocked that out, but she has a slightly different version, because I said this on a national TV show. She was hurt by it. She felt that I was implying that she didn't want us saved. That's not what I was implying, but that's how she perceived things that it wasn't that way. I forget what her version is. In addition to this, as an aside, what- (someone knocks on door). Where was I?

INT: Her version.

KIM: Yes. I forget what her version is, but another factual part to this is that- (end of tape 4, side 2) Unbeknownst to my mother and my father and obviously to myself, my aunt had made tremendous effort to rescue her younger brother from a work camp. Her older brother, my uncle, had already been killed, and the younger one, whose name was Belo, was in a work camp. She somehow connected with him and urged him to leave the work camp and come into the cave with her, and he said, yes, he would do that, but first he had to wait a day or two to convince his girlfriend to do that. The day or two passed and the whole camp was eliminated and he died. To this day, my aunt blames herself for not being insistent enough in rescuing him. Had she succeeded in getting him and his girlfriend into the cave, she and my uncle would not have looked for more trouble and more family, because at least they would have someone there, and this is very clear. My aunt knows.

The reason that I survived is because my uncle died. Had he been-had he had the foresight to come out of there, my uncle and aunt would not have, and I can't blame them. I mean there are just so many people that one can rescue, but they wanted somebody, so she wanted family also, and had he, had Belo come there, that would have been "dayeinu" [sufficient/enough]. You know, that would have been it. So now here we are, and hardly second best but certainly not-he was her baby. My aunt was the third of my grandparents' three children and Belo was the youngest. He was the baby, and much, much younger by many years. Adele was then, in '44, she was thirty-one. Belo must have been all of twenty-some, because he was my buddy. He was very, very close to my age, I mean as close as an uncle can get. He must have been nineteen when I was four. Something like that. So he must have been twenty-three or so, and she wanted to save his life. He was a young person and had hardly lived. So that's how we came to be rescued.

Now my uncle comes back from the forest with me in tow and tells my aunt what Mrs. Goldman-that was her name -- Malu's mother was Mrs. Goldman -- what Mrs. Goldman said about they have to take everybody in or they will tell if the Nazis find them. Well, my aunt, who's a very resourceful woman, very resourceful, very clever, very, very clever, she said to my uncle that what my uncle and my aunt have to do in taking in my parents and my grandmother, they'd have to take the children from the other families. If they take the two children and the adults are found, they will never tell where we are, because they would have a stake in their children's survival. And that's what happened.

When my uncle halfway had dug this cave-he and Izio Wilner had dug this cave bigger and when I tell you bigger it was easily doubled in size. When I came in it was probably eight feet long and about five feet wide, probably four feet tall, five feet tall. By the time they finished digging it longer, it was-the width was the same and the height was the same but it was now fourteen feet or fifteen feet long, so that the six more people were there. And he went into the forest by himself, I believe -- maybe with Izio, I don't remember -- and brought back six more people: my parents and my grandmother and the three girls. Eventually, the Inbers found shelter on their own, probably with some of the stuff that he had commandeered from my parents' wealth, and they wanted their daughters back and my aunt said, "No. You can only have one." The other one remains, essentially as a hostage, because they could have been found and they would have been forced to tell, so they returned the younger of the two daughters, the one I had been arguing with and fighting with, so that eliminated my source of argument, also my source of amusement.

INT: I cannot imagine what you were arguing about.

KIM: Just the same way as kids. I don't know what. Anything was worth arguing about.

INT: You're saying you were the pain or she was the pain?

KIM: Obviously she was. Obviously she was. I'm perfect. But remember, I was an only child so I never knew how to share and she had a sister, but whatever it was, we were nya, nya, nya, nya and yapping away at each other. I understand that's how it was.

INT: Was she a friend in your adulthood life?

KIM: No. Because she is the daughter of the man who robbed us -- so hardly, hardly. I have spoken with her older sister. They live in Canada, in another contact which I will maybe get to. So they wanted both of their daughters, reasonable to me, but my aunt said, "No. The younger one will go back, the older one will stay," and she stayed until the liberation, and she was fifteen and I learned a lot about all kinds of adult things because I was the only young child. Mela, Mela Goldman was a year younger than Ruzo so she was about fourteen. Ruzo was fifteen and I was eight. And my mother was the one who was in charge of Ruzo's morality. Self-appointed.

INT: This is in the cave?

KIM: In the cave.

INT: Why was her morality an issue in the cave?

KIM: Because...A good straight woman. I don't know how it happened. Have no idea how this happened, but a nineteen year old young man, Mundek, M-U-N-D-E-K, who had lost all of his family, found his way into this cave. I don't know whom he knew. I don't know how it happened, but one day there he was. Nineteen years old. So what happens between a nineteen year old boy and a fifteen year old girl? A hot romance. I remember my mother sitting Ruzo down on this platform under the floor-under the ceiling of the cave and saying to her, "Ruzo, you may not sleep next to Mundek anymore" because the last thing in the world we needed was a pregnancy. That was just about the last thing, next to the Nazis finding us, but guess who got the privilege of sleeping next to Mundek? Little me. But I was very, very, very, very righteous, and I knew that that was wrong and I said to my mother and to whoever was there, "Sure, I'll sleep next to Mundek, but you have to put a two-by-four between us. A piece of wood between us." And they did. (Laughter) Mundek had no designs on us little stupid eight year olds. You could be sure of that. But I was more than eight years old. I felt myself very, very available so that was my claim to my morality. That's why my mother had to protect Ruzo's morality because there was a serious risk-forget about morality issue but of a pregnancy.

INT: Was there a scene when the younger daughter left and the older daughter stayed?

KIM: Don't remember it at all. I think not. I don't know.

INT: I mean these are deeply emotional things that just happened.

KIM: You better believe, yes. Yes. But you see, it all happened in the course of daily life. This was our life. This was not something unusual. This is how you survived. This is how it happened. Somebody once asked me, a twelve year old in a school that I taught at in Morristown. "Mrs. Fendrick," she said, "how do you remember what happened to you when you were nine years old? I don't remember what happened to me when I was nine years old!" It was rather an aggressive question, but I understood, I think I understood perfectly and I said to her and I spoke a little defensively, "When your life turns upside

down one day, you remember, but when it flows along and the saneness of normalcy, you don't remember, but I remember because suddenly everything was inside-out, upside down and backwards." I don't know if that convinced her or not, but she said she could not remember at age nine. I don't blame her. I can't remember when I was fifty-nine exactly what happened because nothing momentous happened. I remember what happened when I was fifty-three. I got divorced. I remember that, but it was-it was-that's the way it was. That's the way it was.

INT: And there was a basic sense of cooperation around whatever food you had?

KIM: That was the one source of strife, the food. There were no arguments, there was no strife, but food became the battleground, so my father devised a ladle-No, we don't have it and I don't know that anybody has it. Probably not-A metal ladle, somehow, and he was a wonderful craftsman, my father. He was able to do anything with his hands. He devised a ladle whereby Mrs. Silber, who was the oldest person-that was my uncle's mother, the oldest person in the cave-would dole out the stew that would arrive every other day.

INT: Arrive by lowering into the cave?

KIM: By lowering it into the cave, exactly, in a bucket, as we passed up a bucket of waste. That's where I had to piss. A bucket of waste. Human waste, obviously. Mrs. Silber would dole out this stew with this ladle which was calibrated exactly to the top. She would fill it up and dump it into the little bowls and pass it out to the fourteen of us there by that time, and my father also devised something like a cheese cutter, with a very sharp-I don't know how he did it-with a very sharp, like a razor point, that would-that allowed for the width of the bread to be cut. What we got every other day was a pail of stew and baked potatoes, boiled potatoes actually, and a bread, and she would cut it with that cutter, that provided for the equal width. Each portion was of equal width so that nobody could say, "Well, she gave her family more because it's her family," and they entrusted that to Mrs. Silber as the oldest person there. She was probably fifty. Fifty-five.

No, she must have been older because my grandmother, who was younger, my grandmother was probably...she was the oldest person there. She lived to be, I believe, ninety-six or ninety-eight. When I sent her a Polish night letter for her ninety-fifth birthday-what else could I do for her? I thought that would be fun. She lived in California with my uncle and aunt, she said to them, "don't tell her but I'm only ninety-four." (Laughter) So yeah. Food was the one battleground. Food-my father had a very difficult time with hunger and my mother would give up a lot of her portion to my father. He had a very difficult time with that, a very, very hard time. That was the issue. That was the only issue.

There was one other thing that I recall that came up in the cave as an enormous problem and that was my father's abscess on his back. He had an abscess and he was really in danger of blood poisoning, of sepsis, and my mother and my father and my uncle and my aunt were planning on how they would deal with this if it came to the danger point where he had a fever and he had blood poisoning, and the plan that evolved was that my aunt

would go with my father -- in order to maintain people of the other family for the children -- that my aunt would go with my father to the same hospital where we had stopped at and they would seek out Dr. Martinovich who was the director and they would ask him to attend to this. In the meantime, Mrs. Silber, my aunt's mother-in-law, my uncle's mother, daily wiped out the wound with rags, so that it-that was the level of medical care and it never came to the point where he needed to be attended to by a physician. Until the day he died, he had this enormous hole in his back, about the size of half a softball. It was really a concave indentation that was all scarred over. It was in the middle of his back. So ten, eleven months later, we began hearing news-actually in April. This was September of '44. April of '45.

Well, let me convey another very, very important moment of our lives in the cave. The farmer had five children, a daughter and four sons. The youngest of the sons was thirteen and his name was and is Edjo. He was the only one who didn't know that there were fourteen Jews in the cave, that there were any Jews anywhere. The other four knew and left the farm in self-preservation. So he was the only one left on the farm. The others were sixteen and up, and by the way, Mr. Jaremkow, the farmer, was a man who enjoyed his alcohol on a Saturday night. He would go the local kretchmer, the local tavern, and drink himself silly every Saturday night. We were convinced that at some point he was going to spill the beans. Never did. Never did. Obviously never did, or I wouldn't be here to tell the story.

One day the thirteen year old, Bronik, was playing ball with his friends, and we could see the shadows moving because the only access we had to daylight was-we were subground. We were about six to eight inches below ground level. The six to eight inches that was above ground level was obviously was part of the building, but there was a hole on one of the walls and there was a-the hole was about the size-oh, smaller than a volleyball, larger than a softball. That size. And there was grass growing in front of it so it wasn't visible to the outside but it was-we could see daylight. This is how we knew when it was daylight and when it was night, and one day he was playing ball with his friends and the ball fell into the hole, and everybody-just as your eyes went oh, the rest of us went, "Oh my G-d. This is it. That's it. We're done for," because what follows a ball? A boy.

We saw Bronik, his face and his hand going ahead of him and his face covering the hole, looking for the ball, and we were convinced that he had seen us because we had seen him, but the law of physics being what it is, we later learned that he never saw anything because in putting his face over the hole, he obliterated the daylight behind him and since there was no light inside, that was it. We didn't know that until hours and hours later when nothing happened, but that was probably the most frightening moment of being in that cave, when he didn't know enough to keep quiet and certainly he would have run to his parents, "There are people down there." I mean what kid wouldn't do that? I mean what a bizarre sight if he would have seen us. No. I'm not going to ask you to get the ball back. I don't remember. Probably not, because that would have been a dead giveaway that some creature was down there, but that was the scariest moment.

Life in the cave was-it was rather the same. I did get to read. The Jaremkows being illiterate -- and they were illiterate, the farmer and his wife -- they couldn't buy a

newspaper nor could they go to the library to get books, but they had two classics in their home for their children, one a book of poetry and another book, both Ukrainian-Polish writers, and those were the two books that they passed down to us and those were the two books that I pored over day after day after day. Also my mother and my father drilled me in the multiplication table and the capitals of Europe and the one that stands out in my mind and always will be because it's so foreign was that the capital of Bulgaria was Sofia. I bet you didn't know that. Well, that's what it is. The others are pretty self-evident. This one was not. So that's what I did on my summer vacation, and I read those books and since they were illiterate, as I said, they couldn't—they couldn't get us newspapers because they would be held suspect and we wanted news.

I mean the adults really wanted to know what was going on in the outside world and no, we didn't have a radio and there was no electricity, none of that, so what Mrs. Jaremkow would do, what a resourceful lady she was, she would go shopping. Whenever she bought anything—bags were not as popular. They weren't at all popular in Europe as paper bags are here. She would require that the storekeeper would wrap whatever she bought, vegetables, meat, potatoes, bread, everything, wrap it up in newspaper. Lots of newspaper. And I mean lots of newspaper. And it would get wet and torn and she would come home and undo all these goods, dry the newspapers and pass them down to us in the cave, and that's how we knew what was going on other than what they told us.

But we had no news of the general front and how things were moving, so came April '45, the Russians were coming close to our town and Mundik, who had lost all of his family, was determined that he would join the Russian army. And Mr. Jaremkow said to him, "Mundik, this is too soon. They're not—they haven't secured the town. Don't go. The front is not safe." He wouldn't hear it. He wanted—he needed to assuage his family's death, and he joined the army and he died with the Russian army. But between April and July of 1944, the Russians and the Nazi were playing yo-yo with our town and it wasn't until July that the front had advanced west enough from us that the town was secure. The Russians had penetrated further, west enough, that Zloczow was not at risk of being taken back by the Nazis, and that's when we left the cave.

INT: Can you describe that day?

KIM: No. I cannot, as I said before. I cannot. We just left the cave. The focus was on, "Where do we go now? What are we doing now?" Not, you know—it was daylight and we came out. Beg your pardon, it was not daylight. It was not. Why didn't I meet the Jaremkows then? I never met the Jaremkows. Because they had told the adults that we are not to come out in daylight, because they didn't want their neighbors to know that they had harbored Jews, that we would come out at three o'clock in the morning, and that's what we did, so it wasn't a big—another night trip somewhere. We left the cave and we went into town, into the little town. I didn't know what we were—I just knew that I was safe with my parents. I didn't know what we were going to do, and next thing I knew, we were in this little house. I don't know how my parents found it. I don't know. My parents and my uncle and aunt and my uncle's mother. We occupied this little house with two bedrooms and a kitchen and it was really little. I mean this was a little house, like a hut. And now, this is the time where everything kind of blends together because there was no

danger anymore but life was strange, because now my father worked for a flour mill, bread kind of flour, and my uncle-

INT: Just walked up and got a job?

KIM: I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. I'm sure that he was well regarded. He was well regarded and he got a job.

INT: So this is people who knew him?

KIM: Oh my goodness, yes. He was very well known.

INT: But this is not the town where you were born.

KIM: This is the town. Zloczow.

INT: Zloczow.

KIM: Zloczow.

INT: You're back in-

KIM: I'm back in Zloczow.

INT: In your hometown.

KIM: Yes. We can't go back to our house. It was all bombed out, to our own house, and we owned also an apartment house in another part of town, but none of that was habitable, and here we lived in this little town-in this little house. I don't know how, I don't know how we got it. What was I going to ask my uncle earlier? What did you ask me that I didn't know the answer to?

INT: About your uncle?

KIM: Yeah. How did he get me? I forget what the question was. I don't know some of these things. I just know how it felt. This is a seven year old's perspective. Eight year old, nine year old's perspective.

INT: I asked you in the meeting in the forest, how they got to know. How did they exchange names? What were the greetings of things that happened that informed the forest ranger that your uncle's family was alive? That was the question I asked you.

KIM: I'm going to make a note of that, and I'm also going to ask my uncle, while the asking is good and he's not one to want to dwell on this at all, at all. How did we find the house? I mean not how they found it geographically, but what gave us access to that house? So here we are in this little house. My father has a job at a flour mill and he would bring home bags of flour and my uncle was working at a lumber yard and bringing home some money. Both men are bringing home some money, certainly not enough to advance our standard of living to any extent. We had absolutely nothing except what one piece of

jewelry that my father found in the cellar buried, and my mother and the two older women, my grandmother and my uncle's mother, set about baking rolls from the flour, and my aunt and I sold them to the Russian soldiers that were in barracks in the town, and that's how life started to be normalized.

INT: Did you sustain any ongoing relationship with any of the other people who were in the cave with you, or families just took off at will?

KIM: As I recall, families just took off. Every family for itself. To this day, when I ask my uncle and aunt what happened to Izio Wilner they don't know. We know what happened to the Inbers. They went, I mean we don't know what happened eventually. I know that they were-they are in Canada, Mr. and Mrs. Inber are now dead but the two daughters are alive. The Goldmans, Mrs. Goldman and her sister and her daughter-I don't know what happened. Mrs. Goldman wasn't there, but with Melo...I don't know. My aunt has since met Melo's sister and oh, she said that Melo was so excited to hear that she met my uncle and aunt and she would call them. Apparently she's very well-to-do in Texas. Never called them. Owes her life to them, never called them. Strange thing. Strange thing. Don't know. Don't know.

INT: I'll tell you what strikes me as strange, and this might be strange or it strikes me strange, that the whole thing of the din Torah. What a normal thing to do under such abnormal circumstances.

KIM: But this was not normal.

INT: Yeah, but why did Inber show? What did he want? He could have easily ignored a call by a bet din.

KIM: No, that would have given him-that would have-that would have trapped him further than if he doesn't show up; matter of honor. He did it to deny it all the way.

INT: Okay, because in terms of authority to carry anything out, to try and extract anything from him-

KIM: There was the honor authority.

INT: There was no authority.

KIM: No, that was the only authority, the moral authority of the Rabbi. Yeah, the only authority. Certainly they wouldn't take him to-

INT: Right. It just seems such a normal thing under such abnormal circumstances, but as you say-

KIM: Life don't make sense when it don't make sense. The whole thing was abnormal. The whole thing made no sense. You know, I'm telling you this as if it really happened. Do you think it feels like it really happened? It feels like, "My G-d, how could this happen? How could this happen?" But it happened. But what an anachronism I am telling

you this. It happened. That's how it happened. So shortly, much to my dismay, my uncle and aunt got their daughter back, and she is now three years old and a total pain in the ass to me. (Laughter) I am nine and she is three. She does not want to leave her-whom she knows as her parents, who are really brother and sister but they're the people that raised her. She is this red-haired little Polish kid. She speaks actually Ukrainian, and has no use for being in this Jewish household, much less use for me. There she had a little boy to relate to who-I don't know how that worked but she didn't want to come to her parents, and certainly the other people didn't want to give her up.

INT: Did it become a conflict?

KIM: Absolutely.

INT: They didn't want to give her up.

KIM: No. They wished that my uncle and aunt had never lived because they got attached to this one year old who was now three years old.

INT: So how did they work that out?

KIM: They just took her. Now they're still sending obviously stuff to Nataalka, the woman-Nataalka and [Nataalka's brother's name] are the ones who kept my cousin Fran, and Fran is sending things to her. I don't know how old Nataalka is now. My guess is that Nataalka- '55, Nataalka must be in her seventies, easily, if she's still alive, and also the woman who brokered-(end of tape 5, side 1) ...a deal. My aunt didn't know Nataalka and [Nataalka's brother]. Her name is Helen Michinska. She was a friend of my aunt, and she arranged for this woman to come to the edge of the ghetto to get my cousin. Anyway, my cousin has no-I mean she's three years old and she knows who her parents are, certainly not these two people who are coming out of nowhere and it was terrible.

It was terrible, but they brought her to the house where we were all living and she really was, I mean, you know, she was a three year old who didn't know anybody and I was the closest in age to her and she kind of took off with everything I had and everything I had was of interest to her. And why not? But I had been an only child among all these adults and here I had this competition running around, this three year old who came out of nowhere. We eventually-well, we did actually, we probably, we made peace in some way but what eventually happened was that-I was elevated to adulthood really. I was an adult. I mean I sold rolls with my aunt and I had lived a life that was totally-it was not a child's life at all, and shortly-shortly, but I guess it was months afterwards, we, my parents and my grandmother and I moved to western Poland, to Rvielsko-Biala.

I don't know how we-how this happened, what happened, but my guess is that they had to put some money together and between my uncle's work and my father's work and the women's work and my aunt and I selling the rolls we had some money together which I-I think they pooled it and that probably was a source of stress. How do you pool this kind of money, because certainly my aunt and her mother-in-law and my uncle made a greater contribution? There were three adults on each side, I guess. I don't know. But that became an issue. Money's always an issue. When you have the luxury of it becoming an

issue, it becomes an issue. And we moved to Rvielsko-Biala and I don't remember where they went. I don't remember where they went.

This was now in 19-this is now 194-the end of '44 probably. Oh, it had to be-no, it had to be into '45 because V-E day had not happened yet. V-E day, right. The Nazis were not squelched until June of '45. That was the formal end of the war, so I suspect that we were in Zloczow for quite some time, and I began third grade. Went there for a few months and because we were occupied by the Russians, the teachers who were Polish were required to teach us Russian. Well, my teacher didn't know Russian but my father knew Russian so my teacher, who knew my father from before this horror, was invited by my father to come visit every evening. He would teach her Russian and she would teach us Russian the next day. That's how we got around that one.

INT: So would you say the people of the town were open to your family's return?

KIM: I couldn't generalize that way. There were some people that my father had known, my parents had known, the higher level economically, educationally, that certainly-my teacher, for example, was a lovely woman and I remember what she looked like, but in general, you know, the peasants were hardly friendly, but we weren't depending on them. We were in a town where we were known as people of substance and whatever envy existed, I don't know. I remember being petrified of airplanes flying overhead, absolutely frantic, afraid of the bombs dropping, because bombs had dropped on us and I think I mentioned to you that when this conflict was beginning between the Nazis and the Germans, we were in our cellar and the bombs were dropping and my Nanny was holding me and her nose was sawed off by shrapnel. We went into the bomb shelter, into the basement, and she was holding on to me and her nose was right off on a diagonal. Yeah. I remember that. So when-now we were out in freedom and the planes were flying overhead but they were flying really from the east to the west. They were not going to drop-I was petrified, and my father took me by the hand and said to me, when you see the airplane, it's already passed out. That's how fast it moves and when you see it you don't have to be afraid of it. It's when you don't see it you have to be afraid, but of course when I didn't see it I wasn't afraid, but when you see it. (Someone knocks on door)

INT: Talking about the airplanes, it's the first time you've said to me, through all the stories, that you were panicked.

KIM: Now I was allowed to be panicked.

INT: You were in freedom.

KIM: Yes. Now I was allowed to be afraid, because it was real. I really didn't have to be threatened about my life. My parents could, I guess, you know, they could attend to it rationally.

INT: Was his-did his reassurances work?

KIM: Absolutely. To this day it works. To this day it works. It's wonderful. And I can imagine telling it to my grandchildren if ever they get afraid of airplanes, which they're

not, thank G-d. By the time you see it-and it's true. They're gone. They're gone. They're out of here. I became aware of the seasons at that point. I never paid attention to the seasons because we were just, you know, a "balagan" [confusing, disorderly situation].

INT: I'm going to jump to, I guess, a sort of more global question before we go on with the story. I want to make sure we get to the bigger questions and life in the States. But this sense of, you said before, "I was an adult." You said it better. You said, "I graduated into adulthood." That sense of not having a childhood. What are your thoughts on that and feelings about that and awareness of it? Does it mean something to you or was it just a fact?

KIM: It means a lot to me. It means to me that-the reason I do the work that I do is because of that, because I grew up with adults who trusted me, who shared with me, who heard me, whom I heard. The level of conversation was never at a child-like level. I mean really, it wasn't, except for before when this began and I was four then, and then between age four and age nine was this blob of just surviving and being-not only to age nine really, to age twelve when I came to this country. I mean that whole thing after nine, we were still running and-not running in danger but trying to figure out where to put our feet down, you know. I say "we" but it's really my parents, and from age twelve on, life had sort of a normal average tone to it, but I never-I don't know how to play as a kid. I don't work well with little children because I don't know how to be a little girl. I know how to play word games. I love playing word games. Couldn't stand "go fish." [children's card game] Could not stand it. It was stupid. I can play intellectual games. I can play information games. I can play factual games. Trivial Pursuit is great. But Candyland? Uch. That's for-that's not for me. I don't know how to do that. I don't like to do that. I never did that. I have a collection of miniature doll-miniature doll furniture in my apartment. That's my childhood. I had dolls before the war that, you know, I couldn't use because dolls were not-they were for little children. I was never a little child.

INT: Do you experience that with sadness or with -

KIM: No.

INT: It's not a sad reality?

KIM: No. No. It's not a sad reality. The level of safety that I experienced from my grandmother, from my beloved grandfather, that was wonderful.

INT: So regret, resentment, sadness-it's not part of what you feel when you acknowledge that you didn't have a childhood?

KIM: No. It just wasn't there, but I was with my parents, remember that. I was with my parents and I was safe and when I came out of the cave and we were living in Rvielsko-Biala after Zloczow -- because Zloczow-I don't even remember the library in Zloczow -- but when I was in Rvielsko-Biala, and I was now nine and a half or ten years old, my mother would take me to the library or I went myself. I don't remember whether I went myself, but I went to the library every single day as I recall. Took out three books, most of them were fairy tale books, and I caught up with all the fairy tales I never read, and I

just read voraciously. I just read, read, read. It was like-I took it all in. Some things I never caught up with. When I came to this country I gave up on the Funnies. I said no. There are some things I'm just going to give up because that's unimportant. I also -- when I came to this country I was twelve years old and I gave my parents a choice. They wanted me to go to Hebrew school. I gave them the choice. I'm going to learn English or Hebrew. They chose English. That was that. I couldn't do both. I read Hebrew sort of. Don't understand it much. I know a little bit. But never went to Hebrew school.

INT: Don't jump to the States. Just still in the journey from that town to the States.

KIM: After we got to Rvielsko-Biala I went to fifth grade, so that must mean that I was ten. Must have meant that I was ten. I was viciously persecuted by the kids, had some very well-meaning-

INT: In what way?

KIM: I'll tell you. Well-meaning teachers, especially one, my science teacher, who was very well-meaning but what he did is he held me up as an example of a smart child, and I was the only Jewish child. Well, that didn't go over very well. I had an art teacher who was the-who was my friend's mother's lover. My friend, a girl in my class, her name was Barbara; she was Polish. Her mother was having an affair with this art teacher. He failed me in art. Do you know many people who fail art? I don't. I failed art. My science teacher held me up as a paragon of smarts and intelligence and all. There was a brother and a sister, Yanka and Marick, in my science class and in my math class. The science teacher taught both, as I recall, and he rapped their knuckles for being obnoxious to me in class, so what happened? When I would go home, they threw lit matches at my back. I call that vicious persecution and I quit school.

INT: With statements saying what? About Jew or just-

KIM: Oh sure, sure. But that was-that was the least of it, you know. That was something that, you know, I was-that didn't hurt me, you know. Words-

INT: But it was. It was-

KIM: But it was. But it was. But the dangerous activity, the lit matches at my back, that scared me a little bit (laughter) and I told my parents, "I'm quitting school." We were moving on anyway, you know. We were moving on. And so-

INT: Why? Moving on why, because of events like that?

KIM: Oh no, because Poland was no longer a safe place for us. I mean it wasn't in any way a place where we wanted to stay. We were going either to Israel or to Australia or to the United States.

INT: You knew that?

KIM: Oh yes. We knew that.

INT: Was the clear at the point of liberation?

KIM: I don't know. I don't know, but I assume it was clear to my parents. I don't know. Don't know everything.

INT: But they wanted out of Poland?

KIM: Sure. So that's why we made our way from the eastern-from eastern Poland to western Poland and I quit school in fifth grade and obviously was there for quite some months afterwards because I got to know my cousin very, very well, whom I had not known in Zloczow. My cousin and her sister and their mother survived. This is actually my mother's cousin, but because she was six years older than I, we became friends. I was eleven. That's right. I was eleven. She was seventeen. She had a boyfriend. To this day, we tease each other about that. She had a boyfriend in the Polish army. He was Jewish. He was half-Jewish, and he was gorgeous. He was gorgeous. And he had gonorrhea, and she came to this eleven year old and said, "What should I do?" Because I knew everything. And I felt like, I'm not eleven years old. I mean, I didn't-you know, eleven meant nothing to me but asking me this very grownup question. (laughter) And she and I became friends. She didn't go to school; I didn't go to school. We spent a lot of time together, and I was seventeen years old as far as I was concerned. She's the one who lives near my son whom I visit every month or so.

INT: We need to go through your childhood and your marriage.

KIM: My childhood and my marriage.

INT: So get to the States.

KIM: We left Zloczow.

INT: You went to Germany, right?

KIM: We went to Germany illegally. We-my uncle and aunt and their daughter and his mother somehow, I don't know how, got to Germany before us. We could not get out of Poland legally, whatever that meant. I don't know. So we hired a truck from-somebody drove the truck. We sat in the back of the cab in the body of the truck and in the main part of the truck were chickens and essentially we were transported as chickens into Germany, and when we were stopped at the border-I'll never forget this-they came looking at what was in there and there were chickens, and I was inhaling the fumes from the truck behind the cab. I was-I had been carsick for a long time after that. I think it stopped now but I was inhaling the fumes because we were sitting in such tight quarters, the four of us.

So we got to Germany. I forget the town, but I knew-I was told that my uncle was coming again to get us to where he was with his family. He was in a little town called Degendorf, and I didn't want to go to sleep. It was late and I didn't want to go to sleep because I was waiting for my uncle and they said, "Go to sleep, go to sleep. We don't know when he'll be..."-no, I wasn't going to sleep. I was going to stay up. So I was in my clothes. I was laying down because I was so tired, and had to go to the bathroom, but I was so

deliriously tired that I got off the bed, pulled out my slippers from under the bed and sat down to urinate into the slippers. That's how totally delirious I was, but I wouldn't go to sleep because I wouldn't-I didn't want to miss him, and he came and took us to Degendorf. This was the part of Germany that was just-we went to Germany from Poland through Czechoslovakia. That's the journey through which we had to pass. That's where we were stopped, on that one border. Got to Degendorf, lived-now my uncle and aunt and his mother and little Stella were there too. That was a good year. I went to an all-to a one-room schoolhouse where all ages were together. Again, there weren't enough kids to make different grades.

INT: This was in the town Degendorf or in a Displaced Person's camp?

KIM: Both. The Displaced Person's camp was in the town of Degendorf. We all lived in rooms, in a single room, and my mother decided that it would be a good idea to give me piano lessons and I was game, so I took piano lessons from a woman who had been a concert pianist and she had lost her husband. She had a man who was her boyfriend. He was a man in his forties who had been-who was a concert violinist and he was always in her room whenever I would come for lessons and I took lessons for three months and she said I was the most brilliant student she ever had, but I should quit because I can't hear one note from another. It's all by memory. (Laughter) And she was right. I could not tell one note from another if you killed me right now. If you'd point a gun at me and say...I couldn't tell you. I am tone deaf. So I quit the piano lessons. Thank G-d for that, but I was such a good student that I memorized everything.

I'll try to skip the asides but one day I was walking into town from the Displaced Person camp, which was an enclave guarded by MP's, by American Military Police, who by the way were black and white soldiers and when I first saw them I said, those Americans are black and white. I never knew that there was a difference. That's who Americans were. So it was here that I learned about prejudice, not there. I walked into town. I was walking on the left side of the street, and coming towards me on the right side was this boyfriend, my piano teacher's boyfriend, and he was carrying lots of packages and I crossed the street and I said, "Can I help you?" He said, "Sure, that would be great." So we went up to his room and I'm a good kid. I mean I grew up with an adult, right? I trust everybody.

And I go into his room. He sits me down. He has a piano in his room, a much smaller room than she had. He sits me down on the piano bench and he kneels in front of me facing me. The piano is in back of him and in front of me, and he plants a kiss on my lips. I freaked out, but I didn't say anything to him because I was too frightened. I-oh my G-d, and I knew all about the facts of life. All about the facts of life. And he says to me, "Hush, kind [child]. You remind me of my only child who died in the war. You can go now, but don't tell anybody." I walked out of his room and ran to my father. Ran to my father. Told him what happened. His reaction was, "I'm going to kill him." And he took off. I said, "Daddy, Daddy, he only kissed me. He only kissed me." So he took off. Best thing that ever happened to me. He believed me and he was going to take care of me again. He never found him. Not that if he'd ever found him he'd probably-I don't know. Maybe my words rang and he-you know, but it was molestation without a doubt. I

avoided the man thereafter with a pounding heart. And part of me pitied him but red-haired men, Ricky included, are persona non grata for a long time and-

INT: What? Because of the visceral memory?

KIM: Yeah. Absolutely. Oh, that stayed with me for the longest time, the longest time.

INT: You're over that.

KIM: I think so. I think so. I mean the best thing that happened was that my father believed me and took off like a shot to kill him after. It was so funny as I think about it. I'm running after him, "Nein, nein, Daddy. He didn't do anything." We lived there for about a year, just about a year. It was a good year. My mother and I took vacation to a place where Hitler had had his home. We visited a beautiful place-It was the only place in the world where you could hear your voice echo seven times. Saw magnificent castles in Germany and went to the school which is eventful and then we emigrated to the United States. My uncle and aunt stayed behind. Their quota was not coming up. Quickly we came here in November of '47-

INT: Why were the quotas handled differently if from the same town?

KIM: Because my parents and I came on the German quota. Their birth, having been in a different place than my uncle and aunt's, officially anyway, and they came on the Polish quota. Polish quota was more limited than the German quota, so we came here in November of '47. My uncle probably-with my aunt probably came a year later. My father waited for my uncle to come in order to buy a store. They bought a grocery store. Fought-like Kracha and I fought from the minute they laid eyes on each other. They had very different approaches to running a business. My uncle left that business and bought a farm. Eventually, my aunt called me after I was married and told me that if my father didn't go back into business with my uncle-he needed my father's business acumen to run a business-they had three children by then, one of whom was my cousin Fran. Then one was born in the DP camp, Edith, Edi, and then Ralph was born here. But my aunt said to me, "If your father doesn't go into business with Izio, I'm going to kill myself."

INT: She told you?

KIM: Yes. I was around twenty-four, twenty-three, twenty-four. And regardless of that statement, which certainly had an impact on me, I called my parents and they were not speaking. They were-no, they were speaking but they were not friendly because of the...and I said to my father and my mother, "You owe him," my uncle. "He saved our lives many times," and he went into business with my uncle.

INT: On the farm?

KIM: No, he bought a shoe store. They still lived on the farm but the farm was not productive, and they fought again. This time my father left the business, and my uncle remained. They both amassed a fair amount of money. Very differently.

INT: So the conflict was between the men, not between the two sisters.

KIM: Oh G-d, no. Oh G-d, no. It was between the men but much more vociferous between the sisters. It was more emotional between the men, but it was fueled by the sisters. It was a bloody mess. Then again they didn't speak for a long time and my youngest cousin's bar mitzvah, my only male cousin, Ralph. I don't know if you know him. Ralph is now in his forties. My father refused to go to the bar mitzvah and I said, "You're not refusing. You're going." I said, "I'm going and you're going. You got to do this. This is bullsh--. This is baby stuff. You're going. This is not a time to say no." He went and they reconciled from that. It was never easy, and the sisters were constantly-- they are so different from each other. Constantly.

INT: So it's sad, after-

KIM: They had this history before. My aunt is a Shomer Hatzair [Socialist-Zionist], and my mother was very traditional-traditional woman. My aunt is a chalutz [pioneer]. Really in her heart she is. My mother was a traditional person, educated-

INT: So the war was an interlude.

KIM: You better believe it. That's what it was. And an interlude which-where family was still family. But if she had had a choice, my aunt, she would have rescued her brother, rightly so. Her younger brother, the baby.

INT: Okay. Let me focus our last at least fifteen minutes. I'd like to know what life was like for you in America in terms of your adjustment, school and friends, and meeting your husband, why the two of you got together, the marital issues.

KIM: My adjustment in America was not easy at all. I was tall. I was smart. I was gawky. I was not pretty. I was not a kid. I was a grownup in a thirteen year old's body and the only thing I thought I had going for me was that I was smart and I capitalized on that and made many enemies among my schoolmates as a result.

INT: This was overt?

KIM: Oh, overt. Overt.

INT: And this was where? This was in Manhattan? You lived in Manhattan?

KIM: On the lower East Side. Constant battle.

INT: Did you grow up on the lower East Side the entire time?

KIM: Yeah. We lived there until I was married. This was a very wise eighth grader with me and my classmates wanted to copy my homework. Not me, honey. That's the only thing I had going for me, standing out as a smart. She came up to me one day and she was a very mature young woman. She said to me, "Don't do this. You don't need to share your homework if you don't want to, but don't refuse in the way that you refused because

you're not going to have any friends, but you'd do well to help out." I'll never forget it. Never have. My father enrolled me in eighth grade, January of 1948. I was shaky, to say the least, in English. The mathematical terms-I knew the math but I didn't know what a dividend, divisor and dividend and sum and all those words meant. I was swimming. I knew some English when I came here. I knew-my mother had given me English lessons. I found it difficult, very difficult. I couldn't understand the speed of English. I mean I was the monitor, what you call a monitor. It was like a marshal in school, in the school in Manhattan. It had many floors and-

INT: This was a public school?

KIM: Mm-hm. I remember Geraldine Miller standing one level above me and talking to me in English and all I could say to her was uh-huh, uh-huh. I had no bloody idea, none, of what she said to me. Couldn't get it, because she spoke English quickly, as English is spoken. I had no clue what she was saying to me but I couldn't say to her "I don't understand." Couldn't do it. And I didn't understand, but I was a good student and- (end of tape 5, side 2) - and so I would have one year in the lower school before I began high school. High school was daunting, and that was good. Then I started ninth grade in 1949.

INT: What was the competition like in school? What kind of neighborhood were you in?

KIM: Lower East Side. As I recall, there weren't too many Jewish children. There was one girl who was my age, Marian Lynn, who was also a refugee and she was a German refugee. She was German-Jewish, and she and I became the closest friends. We lived-well, it was a block from the school so we lived close to each other and while in retrospect we had very few experiences in common, we had this background in common, and we played games and we talked about movie stars and we invented a game. It was fun. We were like Mutt and Jeff. She's about five foot tall and here I am, I was as tall as I am today. I was five eight. Now I'm five seven. I'm shrinking. And went to an all-girls high school, Washington Irving High School, which was good, because there was less pressure on social life and I graduated and went on to college, City College. Graduated second in my class. I was salutatorian.

INT: In high school or college?

KIM: High school.

INT: So you gave the speech in English?

KIM: Gave a speech in English. Did very well. Won many awards from the community and whatever and whatever and French department and history, whatever. The person who was the best in the class was Jeanette Moy, a Chinese young woman who edged me out by a very legitimate margin. My average was very good. Hers was stupendous, and she went on to become a physician. Nice girl. The person behind me was Barbara Housman, wonderful young woman. Had a stutter and she was thrilled that she didn't turn out to be salutatorian because it would have been nerve-racking for her. Those were good years. Those were good years.

INT: Good years meaning fun, happy?

KIM: Accomplished years. Comfortable years. Yeah. There was no stress. I wasn't-I wasn't reaching over what I felt I could achieve. They were non-threatening years socially.

INT: So you had friends?

KIM: I had Marian. There was a Polish girl named Frances Jewarsky who lived down another street. A nice girl. And I worked in the store, my father had a grocery store, through high school and through college. I enjoyed the people. I was an adult. I never was a kid. I mean I just enjoyed being with the people. My father would tell you that I adjusted terribly and my mother to working in the store and I probably did, but when I was there I enjoyed it. Went to the movies a lot. There were double features then. I would go in on the main feature, watch for the story, watch the second feature, the B movie, and stayed for the A feature, in order to get the nuance of the movies. That's how I Americanized.

INT: You went by yourself or with someone?

KIM: I went by myself to the neighborhood movie. I had to implore my father to release me from the store before the prices changed at five o'clock. I remember getting my uncle to plead my case. My father wanted me to continue working. It was Friday night. And I got my uncle to plead for me. My father was just so angry with me for wanting to leave the store. I said, "I want to go to the movies. I want to go to the movies before the prices change," because they went up from a nickel to a dime or something like that. My father would be angry. My father had a very short temper at that time. The pressure on him was enormous, enormous, with my uncle and he not getting along. I did my homework. We lived in a two-bedroom apartment. My grandmother and I slept in one room and my parents slept in the other bedroom, and we had a living room and...when we came to this country-we lived in the HIAS, in the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society building on the-you know, around Eighth Avenue-Fourth Avenue and Eighth Street, near Wanamaker.

My father went looking for work and one day, while he was riding the subway, he met a man who sort of sensed who my father was, the fact that he was Jewish and didn't speak English. Turned out that this man was named Morris Rosenthal from Chicago, a philanthropist, a very well-to-do man. What he was doing on the subway in New York I don't know but it was safe in those days and my father got to speaking in Yiddish and he gave my father five hundred dollars, in 1948, '47. Gave him five hundred dollars and told my father to outfit himself, to get himself some good clothing if he was looking for a job because he will never find a job looking the way that he did.

My father thanked him enormously, took the money, gave him our address or he gave him his, never used the money for clothes. He bought furniture with the money, pieces of which are still in my children's possession. We were at the HIAS from November. We landed on Veterans Day, November 11, 1947. It was-because it was a federal holiday they wouldn't take us off the boat. We had to stay on the boat one more day. So it was

fifty years in 1997. We docked in New York at that time. By January-we landed in November and we lived at the HIAS where they fed us, felt like a monkey. I thought I'd never want to see the HIAS again, but I loved them though. By January we moved into our apartment in the lower East Side. My parents paid nineteen dollars a month in rent.

My father was then employed by a Mr. Fischer who had a paper factory; sold paper bags. My father sold them door-to-door on the lower East Side, speaking the many languages that he spoke. He earned nineteen dollars a week and we paid nineteen dollars a month in rent and this is all in the course of waiting for my uncle to get here. We got support from the NYANA-New York Association for New Americans. Mr. Fischer gave us some money, I think. Mr. Rosenthal, I think, had given us some money. We considered the five hundred dollars for the clothing as a gift and didn't think of repaying, but then Mr. Rosenthal sent him money for the store which they considered a loan. Years later, when they tried to repay that loan, Mr. Rosenthal said to them, pass it on. He didn't need it and he didn't want it, but it was a debt of honor that my parents wanted to repay. I was never my age until I got into my thirties, I think. I was never my age.

INT: When you caught up somewhat.

KIM: I think.

INT: So how much time do we have?

KIM: Two minutes.

INT: (Laughter) Tell me about your marriage.

KIM: I met my husband, my ex-husband, at a camp reunion, Camp [name of camp]. He never called me after that. That was interesting. Met him again the following March at a college graduate dance. I was not a college graduate; I was taken there by a friend of mine. Met him again and he could not apologize enough. I thought he was gorgeous and he was tall and he was Jewish and he was an accountant and what more was there? And I fell head over heels in love and he did too and that was January. We were married the following January.

INT: Give me the shrink version of why you were attracted to each other?

KIM: Because I wanted to be married more than anything. Because he reminded me of my father in his sweetness and because he also was like my father in his eruption and he was as unreasonable, at times, as my mother. (Laughter) That's who we marry-to do it right this time, and I was absolutely crazy about him and he about me. The love never ceased. The respect and the love and the like stopped after a while. He came from a difficult background and to top it all off, he was diabetic but didn't know it so sugar had this incredible impact on his behavior and on his emotions, and I kind of just instinctively knew that and I would say that to him and he would say, absolutely not. You're just being a bitch.

Years after the divorce he said to me, "You know, you're right." But that was not the reason why we were divorced. For sure that probably added to it a little bit but, you know, it was hard for him to be a grownup, a responsible grownup, as I knew very well how to be unfortunately. He was also the seventh pregnancy and the only live birth of his mother, so he was treated with a kind of protectiveness that didn't allow him to be an adult, to grow up. He was unfortunately-he didn't know how to be a person. He didn't know how to give of himself. He didn't know what friendship meant. He just didn't know. He was so mothered, and he was nursed till he was three years old. His mother nursed him. But we had wonderful years together too. We had two great children. He has one of the things that is so wonderful about my husband is that he has this joie de vivre-he has this need to live all of life, and we never would have taken vacations had it not been for his driving force and I would have saved the money, but I would have lost a great deal and my children would have lost a great deal.

He was a very hard father in many ways. Once the children came of talking age, he couldn't-he couldn't cotton to their opinion, their own opinion. He's essentially insecure. He made me feel incredibly secure as a woman, which I had many doubts about, and he gave me a great deal of security in that regard and I think that the shrink version would be that I outgrew him. I no longer needed that kind of security that he provided for me, and to top it all off, to top it all off, he invested in a tax shelter which I thought I knew about when I found a three hundred thousand dollar bill to the Internal Revenue Service, when we had nothing to our name, because his fortunes have changed a great deal. That was it.

I knew that as devastated as my parents would be about my divorce, that's something they could understand and it's something I could understand. I could not live with the kind of insecurity and he compromised me at age past fifty, that he would do that. He didn't do that to hurt me. He just did it because he was a chance taker, but that was-that was the cap, and thank G-d for the IRS because I think we've both grown from the divorce, and I think his relationship with our children has certainly-maybe it stood still and maybe it's improved, but it has not gone backwards and my children were adults by the time our divorce was totally in accord and my daughter had said to me a long time before, I don't know how you stand it, but I stood it out of my insecurity. There was a very real need that he filled in my life. I never knew anybody else could marry me. That's the short version.

INT: And since the divorce?

KIM: I-if I had only lived one week beyond the divorce I would have been a very lucky woman. I love my life. I love my life.

INT: And you like yourself living it.

KIM: I love myself living it, and I love me. I like me too. And I like what I do and I like who I know and I'm going to keep my chin up. (Laughter)

INT: Okay, thank you. (Tape shuts) This is a continuation of an interview with Kim Fendrick, a child survivor. We're picking up with where we left off last time and also I

hear bringing in some new information. Why don't we start there? Describe what happened.

KIM: Sure. Some detail of what we had covered before. When we came out of hiding-

INT: Well, how did you get the information? What were you moved to do?

KIM: I was fortunate-I continue to be blessed with having my uncle and aunt available to me for information and while my uncle is very reluctant to talk about anything and take credit for anything, my aunt is very available and has all the information. She's in wonderful shape in terms of recall and memory and was able to fill in the information that I did not have for you last time, and that is among the little bits and pieces -- how did we happen to occupy this little house that we did when we came out on July 20, 1944, out of the cave? And she said it happened to be an abandoned house and we just occupied it because our own house was taken, was bombed out actually, was bombed. I don't know what their house was, whether they owned a house or whether they had rented, but in any case, the house that we lived in, which was a two bedroom house that contained all eight of us, the two families, my uncle's and mine was abandoned. We just settled into it.

The other, more important information involved the young man who found us in the forest, Wieslaw, how did he happen to find us? He was a forest ranger but it's not likely that he would have just come upon us. Incredibly enough, what happened is that in his travels, in his work, he came upon a woman named Petzenik, P-E-T-Z-E-N-I-K, who was, believe it or not, from his village, and she recognized him, otherwise she would have run scared. He was all Jewish, not half-Jewish, but was passing for being Aryan because he had-I asked my aunt this. How could he do this? He had his friend's papers--all of his friend's legal papers. How he obtained them she does not know and what happened to that friend she doesn't know, but he had all his friend's, his Christian friend's papers and therefore was able to pass himself off as Christian, so he met Mrs. Petzenik in the forest.

She recognized him as a kid from the village and he recognized her as a safe person and asked her by any chance did she know where Limuns Family was, which is my family, and she said I'll take you to them, because her sister, Mrs. Goldman, was with us. That was the woman who had Mela, one of the daughters, and she was...eventually Mrs. Petzenik joined us, and that's how Wieslaw found us. My aunt was also able to add a sweet little memory that my grandmother, who was my father's mother's sister whom my grandfather married after my grandmother died, my grandmother had the confidence to say to my parents that my uncle will come. She just knew that he would materialize out of somewhere, as he had so many other times when we were trying to find shelter. It was in little bits and pieces but was given to me by my aunt as I asked her about-

INT: And what are you feeling now? What are the feelings now?

KIM: The incredibleness of it all. Unbelievable incredibleness of it all. It is unbelievable. Often times when I speak about it in school, the children will say to me, "I can't believe

that that really happened,” and I will say to them, “Neither can I. I can’t.” But it did. So that’s what I’m feeling, the miracle of it.

INT: So it’s the fortune, not the misfortune.

KIM: Absolutely the fortune and the interrelationship, and my grandmother was a very calm, quiet, sedate lady, never showing much emotion, that she could come up with this thought that my uncle will find us, the depths of her were incredible. She was just a marvelous lady who lived within herself but there was so much to her. For her to have said this, wow! How much respect she had for my uncle, (Kim gets emotional) and how much hope she was able to give obviously to my parents by saying that and it happened.

INT: So it’s not just resourcefulness, it is devotion and loyalty that she’s talking about, right?

KIM: Right. Right. And this was a man with whom she had very little connection. He was in-he happened to be my-he happened to be her nephew’s wife’s brother-in-law. There was no-she didn’t know this man enough to know that this would happen, but trusted his character because he had been there for us before. Incredible. And my own sense of gratitude to this man (Kim is crying), to my uncle, who was the architect of our survival, not only his own and his family’s, but mine. Did I share with you what my grandson recently said? If I did share it with you just stop me but my five year old Joshua, when I went there in June-I see them monthly-when I went there in June I deliberately set out to do a little character building. I didn’t tell you this?

INT: I don’t think so. Maybe it’s by the punch line.

KIM: About heroes?

INT: Say it again.

KIM: When I went out there, I wanted to-well, I set out to do something specific and I said to him, Joshua-we were outside playing. I said Joshua, “Do you know what a hero is?” And obviously without waiting for an answer I said to him, a hero is a person who helps another person, even when he’s scared, and I said to him, “My hero is my uncle because he saved my life from the bad guys,” and Joshua pipes up with, “The Nazis, right Kimmy?” I said, “Yes.” I didn’t know that he knew the word Nazi and I didn’t want to associate it with any particular group for him cause he’s five years old. Well, a month passed and I came out in July again and we were playing with the neighborhood dog and he just looked up at me, my Joshua, and he said, “Kimmy, do you remember when you told me about your uncle?” I said, “Yes.” “And how he saved your life from the bad guys?” I said, “Yes.” He says, “I want to thank your uncle for saving Kimmy’s life from the bad guys.” Now did I tell you this before?

INT: The end.

KIM: And we went and called my uncle in California and he could not-he could not speak to me after that. Joshua said what he needed to say and I took the phone from

Joshua and it was dead. He had hung up because my uncle doesn't take to any kind of affirmation, praise, anything.

INT: So he just shut if off or you think he became emotional?

KIM: I think he became so emotional internally that he just-he just hung up the phone. He does not consider himself a hero because he didn't die. If he had died, and he can tell you this literally, concretely. "I would have been a hero if I had died. I didn't die." As his friend did.

INT: Which friend is he talking about?

KIM: He's referring to a friend who became a partisan and who also happens to be the biological father of a Nobel Laureate, a Raoul Hoffman from our hometown. He was very upset because Raoul was this young man whose Polish name I know is Gulush, that he took on his stepfather's last name rather than to claim his first father's name, in order to honor it as a secure, because his father was-truly he gave his life for protecting others, for saving others and driving us.

INT: Let me pick up a string of the story from your childhood-

KIM: Sure.

INT: ...and your parents and your aunt and uncle juxtaposed against what you're saying now about your uncle and have said before about your uncle, and I'm not going to phrase this well since no words can really capture it, but how did you integrate the reality of the relationship with your aunt and uncle before the war and during the war, and what I'm sure will be your lifelong sense of gratitude to him for saving all of you, and the conflicts between your parents and your aunt and uncle after the war in this country which went on for many years: How do you integrate, not how do they do it, but what did you do with that?

KIM: I absolutely dichotomized my relationship with my uncle and aunt and my parents, maintained both relationships totally, separating what was going on between them. There was-I did not take-the side that I took, when push came to shove, I said to my parents, "Cut the sh--. This is family and you owe them." When my uncle needed a hand-up in the business, I said to my father, despite the fact that my aunt was hysterical enough to say she will commit suicide if my father doesn't go into business with her husband, I said, "You owe it to him. He...and would have given and almost did give his life for us and you better do it," and I realized this was not a big sacrifice for my parents. Emotionally yes, but in terms of money or in terms of physical relocation, no it wasn't. This is where I stood when it came to attending my uncle and aunt's son's bar mitzvah. My father dug his heels in temporarily and said he's not going and my mother tried to encourage-said to him, you've got to go. He said no. He's not going. I was always the one who was able to influence my father. I think he would have done it anyway, but I was-it's like he needed to do it for me and I insisted. I said to him, you have no choice. You're going. And in a sense-it was like I was his mother in many of these little dumb things. My father had

loved his mother very, very much. I never knew her, but he was very amenable to doing the right thing for the women in his life.

INT: What was his mother's name?

KIM: His mother's name was what my Hebrew name is. It was Kosia, K-O-S-I-A, a name feminized from Kalman. She died before my parents were married, in 1933. I think before they met because my mother never knew her. She died at forty-seven. Since I'm named for her, that forty-seven year old milestone was a big one for me because I wondered if I was going to die at forty-seven.

INT: So what about day-to-day life? What about communication with your aunt and uncle? I think they spent a period of time not speaking to each other. Is that correct -- your parents and your aunt and uncle?

KIM: Oh sure.

INT: But did you stay in touch?

KIM: Absolutely. Consistently. There was no break.

INT: And what happened when they complained to you or when your parents complained to you?

KIM: I told them that was their business, not mine, and the siblings. The issues really were between my mother and her sister, and it extended to my father and my uncle and the women kept the pot boiling and they did their own little bit of pot boiling, but-

INT: And you never, ever, ever got caught?

KIM: Never. Never ever got caught.

INT: The unanswerable question-how did you learn not to do that? How did you know not to go between them and try and make peace?

KIM: How did I know that? I knew they were being stupid. I knew that. I knew there were some real issues between them, but these were-how did I know that? I'm speaking as an adult, rather than as a kid. This began-actually, this didn't begin for me until I was an adult, until I was twenty, when my uncle left the business on the lower East Side. You know, when you grow up with this kind of crap you just kind of get inured to it and you say, please, please. This is not for me. I love them all.

INT: You knew you would never succeed as the go-between?

KIM: It wasn't even a question of trying. It wasn't even a question of trying. I think I took a very reasonable view of all of the adults. None of them were perfect. My aunt was as different from my mother as Mars is from Venus, and her shtick were her shtick and I adore her and I know her, and my uncle has his shtick, and I've been-I've really been sort

of a daughter to all four of them, and as my aunt said I'm her fourth child. What my uncle shares with me about his marriage is quite extraordinary; and what my aunt has shared with me about...I really feel like a daughter to them in some very intimate ways. When my financial security was absolutely compromised down to the fact that I had nothing, my aunt said to me, "Don't worry. You're my fourth child in my will." That's the kind of relationship I have with them, so I really consider them as close to me-right now I consider them my parents. (Voice shows emotion) They consider themselves my parents, and I've made it my business to go out to California as often as I can. This year it will be twice. Now that's as much as many a child goes to visit their parents in California. (Blows nose from crying) I don't know how else to answer it. Does that make sense?

INT: Had you taken a different stance you could have sacrificed all of what you have today.

KIM: I never would have. I never would have. I never would have. I thought everybody was being a little-a lot nuts and yeah, the complaints continued, particularly from my father they continued, because he tended to take things at face value and blamed my-blamed the business for my mother's physical problems. I just listened and said, yeah, yeah, yeah, and that was the end of it.

INT: Did it ever affect the cousins?

KIM: No. No. My oldest cousin is the one who was closest to my parents but they never were all that close because they were-they never were that close. My mother was not a very warm, fuzzy, loving person. Very rational, very reasonable, but not a warm, fuzzy...and my father wasn't either beyond me- (end of tape 6, side 1)

INT: ...in effect also that it didn't interfere with the relationship between you and your cousins.

KIM: Oh no. It never. No, no, no. It never did. Mm-mm.

INT: Okay.

KIM: No, it never did. I was at my uncle and aunt's home very often, all throughout this period. There was no-they didn't connect me with that whole misery either. No. In a way they were all-they were children doing this. I mean this wasn't real to me. What was real was what happened between us in the war. This was not. This is stupid stuff.

INT: Was that very painful to you?

KIM: No.

INT: You could really put it aside.

KIM: I did, and I knew that if I put my foot down with my father as to what he had to do -- because that was the "menschlichkeit" [grown-up/mature] thing to do, he would do it and he did it, but he would dig his heels in like a little kid and say, "I'm not going. I'm

not going to do this.” It was dumb and it lasted a long time, yes it did, but if push came to shove, I knew they’d be there for each other. I knew that. They were. They were. They always were. And in a small way, my father paid back my uncle, in a way that’s totally insignificant in comparison to what my uncle did, by literally putting him on his financial feet by going into business. And then he left that business and allowed my uncle and aunt to reap the benefits of a store into which they eventually took another partner. They made a great deal of money so that they could now live in good style. Yeah. And when I called my aunt recently and gave her a choice whether to come for three days or four days, she said, “Look. You can come anytime, stay for as long as you want. You’re not a guest in this house.” And that’s how I am. I’m not.

INT: You just had that conversation?

KIM: Yeah. Because there was a question whether I would come Thursday to Tuesday or Sunday through Wednesday. That’s who they are to me.

INT: Okay. Fast forward to your marriage. Before that, tell me about your career choice.

KIM: As you know, I’m a family therapist, a clinical social worker. My career choice-I was that when I was, I think when I was nine, ten, and thereafter. It occurred to me at some point in my life that people were able to share with me stuff that was beyond anything a child should know about. I’m not talking about inappropriate things but emotions -- feelings, secrets, ideas, questions, that were beyond a child’s -- theoretically not in a child’s comprehension. But people found it easy to talk with me, and at some level valued what I had to say back and I said, “Hey, this is what I want to do for a living, since this is my strong suit.”

INT: Did you know that early?

KIM: I did. I did. I did. My idea a long, long time ago was to be a psychiatrist, because I thought that’s the only way one could work with people’s issues. Didn’t want to go-I’m terrible at science, never having been to school really until eighth grade. I knew nothing about geography. I know nothing about basic science. I said, this is never going to work. I mean, it’s never going to work, so my other thought was well, I’ll be a social worker, and the only kind of social worker there was when I was growing up was the person who would give out checks for the welfare department, and I’m thinking, no, can’t do that. So let me major in psychology. Great. I have an under-graduate degree in psychology going exactly nowhere, but it so happened that when I moved to this area, to a New Jersey area, I called the Mental Health Association who gave me the name of a woman who was starting a family service agency.

Without a graduate degree I helped start that agency in 1969 and promised myself that when my children graduate from high school I will get my Masters, hoping that they would never graduate from high school, because it was scary to think about going back to graduate school. I knew I was going to flunk. I knew I was going to fail out, but lo and behold, believe or not, my youngest child, daughter, graduated from high school and I started taking classes and enjoyed them very much and got my degree in ’85. I turned

fifty the same week that I got my degree and made this huge party for myself at which my parents were present. Big milestone. It was a surprise party, a surprise that I made it, that's what it was. (Laughter)

INT: And you now have many responsibilities?

KIM: Really not all that many. I continued with the agency-

INT: You are licensed?

KIM: I am licensed. I continued with the agency half-time, as I always was, and have avoided the responsibilities of administration and politics by remaining half-time and strictly sticking to clinical work and clinical supervision. Thank G-d for that. And when I graduated I opened a private office and a private practice, and it's been a wonderful, wonderful life. I love being strictly a clinician and all that that entails and managed care is a stupid idea but we live with it and we do the best that we can and I've become pretty expert at solutions, how this works too, and in fact we'll be presenting on that soon.

INT: I guess you'll have to do that at the seminar. I'm still digging in my heels, but I don't-because my work is not clinical practice so-

KIM: Right. And that's fine. That's fine. It's a blessing.

INT: Okay. Your marriage: You gave me, as you may recall, the shrink's thumbnail sketch on meeting your husband, why you were attracted to each other. Very quickly, sort out what the problems were and why it was important to get out. So short of repeating all of that, let me focus on-you had mentioned before that it was hard to get out.

KIM: Nearly impossible.

INT: Relating to many deeper issues for you and the rest of the family. So how then were you able to get out? What changed for you that enabled you to get out? What did it take to get out?

KIM: It took one event. One of the harder parts of getting out-or there were two parts. One, to put it where it is, I could not imagine being alone. Could not imagine it. That's probably the more important aspect. The other was I could not imagine justifying it to my parents. Those two things worked in tandem in that order. Security is very important to my parents and to me. When I found a notice under my husband's side of the bed from the Internal Revenue Service that we owed three hundred thousand dollars, I knew that that was the moment at which I said, "That's it. Dayeinu. That's it." And that I knew my parents would understand the reason why I was doing it.

INT: Was that a black and white turning point?

KIM: It was the black and white turning point to do it. That was the moment when I knew my marriage was done.

INT: But you had thought-

KIM: Oh, all along. All along. I had questions even before I was getting married, and that was not all black and white. My husband is a dear man, nice looking man, never meant to harm a soul, but his lack of discipline, his lack of future thinking, his coming from a very, very, very difficult background-I mentioned to you he was the seventh pregnancy and the first live birth for a woman who had some of the most serious emotional problems-it's a wonder that he was as reasonable as he was and at times he was not. And on top of all that, he was a diabetic. He was a closet diabetic. He didn't know he was a diabetic and his mood swings were considerable so that did it. That moment when I saw that, because I felt totally compromised in terms of security, and he knew how important a stable financial base was to me. Nothing, no big deal.

I don't need mansions and mink coats, never wanted one, never-he wanted to buy me one many a time when we were in significant chips. Never wanted. That's not me. But when I realized that my future was gone, no matter what happened, there was no way. I knew that was it. That was the moment. That was in June of 1986. That was the moment it was over for me. How it was going to happen I didn't know. I seriously believed that I was going to be a bag lady in Philadelphia, but that was okay; that was better than dying an emotional death. And when I told my parents eventually about it, there was not a pipsqueak out of them because they had-they knew that our relationship was difficult, as did the children. Very much loving, but really difficult in terms of concrete.

INT: So then when were you out?

KIM: I was never out. We physically separated. We terminated-I terminated our physical relationship even though we continued sleeping in the same bed, by June of '87. My husband said to me that he could not deal with the humiliation of my rejection, which was what I needed because I did not want to put him in a position where I rejected him verbally. That was the line in the sand. He said he couldn't deal with that and I said that I understand that, and he said he would move into the other bedroom. Threatened me that if he did that he would no longer socialize with me and my friends, which was no loss to me, but it was his last-ditch effort of bringing me back. He changed his mind the next day, broke my heart. I thought, oh, this was going someplace. Then that night he again reinstated that notion. By-this was June of '87. By August, I guess, well-he began trying to establish a social life for himself, which was fine, and I- trying to meet other woman and other people.

By probably about August, he said to me that the women who he was beginning to see didn't believe that he was separated, as well they shouldn't, since he lived in the same apartment with his wife, and they could never call up the house because they would get me or my answering machine. He said he needed to move out, and I thanked G-d for that. And indeed, by November, he moved out on a weekend when I made sure I was out of the house. I had given him the things that I felt I could-he was ready to leave with nothing and I didn't-he didn't take any furniture except for a bridge table or something like that, but we had, I think we had-we did have. We had three thousand dollars between us, so fifteen hundred dollars was his, fifteen hundred dollars was mine. He took that and

some household goods and dishes and things like that, and pictures and stuff, and he moved out on I think it was November 7 of 1987. Our divorce came through in January of '88. He was cute at one point after I filed for the divorce. He said, "Couldn't it be final after our anniversary, which was January 4, so it would be thirty years." I said, "Why?" He said, "I would just like that." This was not with great animosity but it had to happen. It had to be. And in fact my divorce came through January something, after our anniversary.

INT: That was...

KIM: Yeah, well we went on grounds. My lawyer asked me if my husband would agree to grounds and he said as long as it doesn't appear in the paper it would be fine with him. In fact it was for grounds. I did withhold sex from him, and I believe that's sort of grounds.

INT: That's ground enough?

KIM: That's ground enough, right. And that was fine. It was also the truth as I think about it. (Laughter) It was the truth. Not that I withheld it. It just never-I mean, it was an unspoken thing. He knew.

INT: So it worked for the two of you, for him to do-to take whatever steps he took when he wanted to take them.

KIM: Say that again.

INT: It worked for the two of you-

KIM: The marriage, you mean?

INT: No. The ending. The ending process worked because he took whatever steps he took when he was ready to, as opposed to you saying, "I want you to leave. I want you-"

KIM: Exactly. Exactly. Yes. And as he was leaving, as he was out the door, he was leaving with a very heavy heart and he was saying, "Maybe, maybe, maybe." I said, "Look, you never know." And that was not the truth from my end, but stranger things have happened and there's many a moment when I felt, "Oh my G-d, I'm alone." I said, "You never know. You leave and maybe..." but this was the way for easing the transition for him and I was more alone with him in the home, in the apartment, than without him in the apartment. It really was true.

INT: So what changed for you after?

KIM: Well-

INT: And tell me about how your parents reacted and what it all meant to them?

KIM: I told my mother that I was getting divorced in December of '87, in November of '87. She died December 12 of '87, two weeks after I told my mother. They knew that I was very, very unhappy. I never told them about the IRS until that moment because the burden was too much for them to hear about the IRS. Up to the IRS information, my mother was very, very upset, and my father was -- but only through her -- that I was considering divorce. After all, he wasn't a womanizer, he didn't drink, he didn't gamble. Those are the words she used, and he didn't have a...he brought home a paycheck, which at that point was very minimal but that was not the issue. Did I want to be "alein vie a shtein," alone like a stone, and at some point I just stopped talking with her about the whole issue because it was too much. She could not conceive of my being alone. She could conceive of my being without my husband, but she could not conceive of my being alone. My children were grown by then and out of the apartment. My children knew ever since they were teenagers that this is a problematic relationship. I've never kept the underlying issue from them, because I always believed that the way I maintained a modicum of sanity was because my parents were real with me and did not throw a blockbuster at me when it came up. They were-

INT: The underlying issue being the finances or the other emotional-

KIM: The other emotional. The finances became an issue very late in the relationship. My husband did-provided beautifully for the family, always kind of living on the edge with a job, always having a resume ready. Always, always, always, but he maintained a position for twelve years while my children were in their growing years from my daughter's age seven until nineteen when she went off to Brown University. We had a very, very fine income, and had quite a nest-egg, which disappeared because he-he was released from his employment and then he tried other ventures. But I was perfectly willing -- maybe not totally able -- but willing to undertake a larger part of the support of this couple, my husband and myself, if the other things had been good.

So my children knew, and when my daughter was-when she came home from Brown one Christmas, I remember sitting in our guestroom and another absurdity happened in the house between myself and my husband and probably between him and Susan, and she said, "Mom, I don't understand how you take this." And I said, "Susan, if I leave your father," -- this was a bit of a cop out -- "If I leave your father, the burden of taking care of him emotionally will fall to you." She said, "Mom, I'll take care of myself," which was sort of a freeing comment but I didn't believe it, nor was I ready, nor was I emotionally ready.

INT: Was that the first time she made that comment?

KIM: That was the first time she made the comment directly. That was the first time I said to her, "If I leave your father, the care and feeding will fall to you," but they knew for a very long time that-

INT: But they didn't interfere? They didn't come to you and suggest it by pushing you to-

KIM: No, no. I believe that they always knew that at some level I could take care of myself. It was not their responsibility. They had enough troubles making sense of the relationship. We had been in treatment, and indeed their father had come a long way in relation to them. My first effort at treatment was just prior to my son's bar mitzvah, when he was twelve and a half.

INT: Was it family?

KIM: Family therapy. Yeah. And I needed to-my own welfare, I figured, I needed to take care of me, but first and foremost I needed to take care of them. That's when we began-that's when we began family therapy with someone who was helpful to us.

INT: So it improved things?

KIM: It improved things to the extent that my husband was able to own up to the fact that yes, he was being unreasonable and not-it was a major, major admission, major sane-making position for my children to hear because they really didn't know what was going on, why was this happening to them or to me, and I always appreciate that very much. When my son was about fifteen, I remember exactly where I was, in a car with him, and I said to him, "Allen, so how are things going between you and your Dad?" He says, "They're better." I said, "What do you attribute that to?" thinking for sure that he would give his father credit. He said, "Because I'm growing up." (Laughter) Whatever the reason was.

INT: So let me clarify that. What you're saying as one element that was helpful is that you sort of acknowledged the irrational element on him.

KIM: Mm-hm. Absolutely. We were real. We were real. Nobody-my children did not think that I was in over my head in terms of being abused. They realized that it was emotional abuse, not physical. They realized that their father had very severe outbursts, mood changes, and at the same time, adored me as I adored him. We really, really loved each other. Probably still do. But I don't like him. I don't like what life represented for me with him, and I lost my respect for him. He has no, as we say in the business, he has no vision for a relationship. He tends to focus on the moment to moment.

After we were divorced, he was dating someone and that was fine, wonderful for me to know that someone would be taking care of him, that it wouldn't fall to my children, which it had. We spoke one day and he said, "You know, I'm really a changed person. Now, after dinner, I help with the dishes." "Oh my G-d, that's not..." I said to him, "that's not where it was at. But that's where he saw it. He always said to me, "If there's something wrong with me, I can fix it, but if there's something wrong with you, I can't have control of that," so he always focused on what he-the little things that he could fix in the relationship. I think it was a very constructive statement, but he didn't know what it was that was wrong, and I think that his emotional makeup really didn't lend itself to that.

INT: So did he ever reestablish any ongoing relationship?

KIM: No. If you mean a legal one, no. He's dated, but he has never remarried, and I think he had the opportunity to bring one of the women that he was involved with to my son's-to our son's wedding. I encouraged him to do that, and I'm so glad he didn't take me up on it because it would have been very hard for me. I was alone, and my father had suffered a TIA the day before. It was a very hard day for me, so I was very glad that he was there alone, without my having to confront that other connection, etcetera, etcetera.

INT: And socially for you?

KIM: In terms of love relationships? I have not had any. I've had some attractions relationships. I don't see that in the future. I don't-I would welcome it but I would think that if I was involved with someone he'd have to live in his apartment and I'd live in mine and we'd sleep together. A lot. (Laughter) But that would be it. I don't see any permanent-I don't see it. That's not to say it can't happen.

INT: Because you don't wish it or you don't see that there would be a man compatible?

KIM: The latter. Yes. I don't see that there would be a man that I would want to deal with or who would want to deal with me. The longer we live alone, the more comfortable we get living alone. Yeah. My libido is as strong as it is -- I'm not going to compare it to anybody else's -- but I have not met anyone nor do I -- I set my expectations realistically -- nor do I expect it. That doesn't mean that I'm not available to it. Very available to it, but it ain't easy. Back to being nineteen years old, tall, Jewish, smart and educated. Who is there? And also, I really-it's interesting that as I look at men who are my age, I see them as being very old. See, I still see the man that I married who was twenty-nine when I met him, so I want to try younger men or what it looks like. I don't know. (laughter).

INT: So would you say you've mastered the issue of being alone, or you've resolved it or what? How would you phrase your personal transition about these issues?

KIM: Being alone is no longer an issue. Being-living separately is a very comfortable place for me. Emotionally, I don't feel myself alone. I have many, many relationships, and I've gotten-with my father's death, I've come into my own emotions, believe it or not, as strange as that sounds.

INT: What do you mean by that? Can you describe that?

KIM: I was a child as long as my parents were alive. I became an adult after my father died. I was very close to my father after my mother died. When my mother was alive-three years passed between their deaths. A very important part of that, a very important part of that -- and in no way can I discount that is that with his death -- I became financially secure. That has allowed me to feel safe. Very important to me to have a base-a base, and I never could take advantage of-could use any of the money that he left to me, he and my mother left to me, until I was self-supporting, and now I have no trouble. For example, my plastic surgery on August 9, it was money that I needed to take out of my savings. I didn't-that's not, you know, you don't take out seven thousand dollars from your annual income and you can invest it in that, and that was-I knew that that was just fine with me and I didn't feel like, "Oh, I have three children. How can I be taking that

money?" Uh-uh. First of all, it literally is not, but also emotionally felt that it's mine to use and they would want me to -- as I shared with you earlier, about my mother, what's the word? Her message to me. That's what she would have wanted for me. Yeah. It's lots of guilt.

INT: Tell me a little bit more about feeling more like-feeling like the adult when your father passed away.

KIM: When my mother died-

INT: Remember, you've always been an adult, so there's an-

KIM: I'm talking about emotionally.

INT: Right.

KIM: I'm talking about emotionally, yeah. Well, when my mother died, my father transferred all of-not all, many of the little issues that he would depend on my mother for to me. When my father died, I transferred all of the-I don't know about all of the, but many of the-I'm not sure how to phrase this, but I was no longer accountable to him. I was now accountable to me, and I'm quite capable of being accountable to me.

INT: So that was freeing.

KIM: Very freeing. Very freeing. It's wonderful. And I miss him like crazy, but it was very, very freeing.

INT: What has been the impact on friendships, would you say, through this time period, your marriage and then divorcing and your parents' death?

KIM: I can incredibly tell you that all of my friendships have remained intact. They were never my husband's friends. Several of them, at least three of them, three couples, reached out to him. He never reached back, I think out of a sense of embarrassment, but they have all remained, every single one has remained my friends, and I've made some individual friends in addition. That was one of my real concerns. I remember speaking with one of my very, very dear friends during the course of deciding this. I mean this-this was a decision that I had been thinking about from very early on in my relationship but when it became serious for me I said, "Well, how am I going to have friends? I mean I'm going to be a single woman." And my friend said to me, "Do you think that we would abandon you?" I said, "Yeah. I don't mean abandon but certainly will be different." It hasn't-well, it has changed is that we don't go out as couples, that's for sure, but we go out. I have my special relationships with the women and even with the men. It's just been-it's really been incredible that nothing has changed and better things have happened.

INT: Would you say they're deeper-the relationships are deeper?

KIM: No.

INT: Except that they've been ongoing.

KIM: No, they're not deeper. They're the same. I noticed and I raised it with two friends recently, my two best friends, that while we would discuss sexual issues when I was married, they both kind of like I became an asexual human being, you know, like now and I raised it with them and I don't know that they can own up to it. I think it's real. I felt it but that's about it. That's about the only area where I think it's changed. It has not changed it any other way. It's been good.

INT: Okay. Now I want to ask you other kinds of questions and some retrospective questions. Another fifteen minutes or so.

KIM: That's what you think.

INT: I know. Between you and me, we could...(laughter)

KIM: By the way, I need to say- (end of tape 6, side 2) I began saying that I've given more thought to writing something. While my story is, thank G-d, not the only or one of very few, it is unique to me. There were very- there were so many moments of just unbelievable coincidence, G-d's intervention, whatever, that might be good for me to write. I don't know about for anybody else to read, but it would be good for me when I have time.

INT: Okay. No one makes the time.

KIM: Right.

INT: Maybe once you get this it will be a beginning. You'll get the transcript.

KIM: Right. I literally don't have the time.

INT: Okay. While you're talking about that, let me begin with this question and that is: What is your sense of the impact of the Holocaust on- so that's multi-leveled, because you're not only a child of survivors, you are a child survivor. But if you can sort of try and tease out those two influences, what has been the impact on you?

KIM: As you said, it's so multi-level. On a very basic primitive level, I jump at a sudden noise. I am probably more circumspect, more vigilant in some ways, and yet also trusting, because my survival has been an incredible experience of blessing and trust and I'm sure I haven't even begun to know how many- on how many other levels this is true, but on a- on a more profound level, I'm far wiser than I would have been without it. I am-

INT: Wiser in what way?

KIM: In terms of relationships. In terms of what's important in this world, what's transient, what's permanent. Trust issues, good, bad.

INT: Tell about trust issues.

KIM: I suppose that whatever really means, I don't really trust anybody, not really, and yet I can trust a lot of people at a non-at many levels I trust people but really, really, really, with me, I don't trust anyone. Interestingly enough, considering that orgasm is a total-issue of total trust, never an issue. That was-I was able to trust in that way, but when it comes to my safety, I don't suppose I trust anybody (Kim starts crying) except my uncle and aunt and my parents. And in a very-a good way-

INT: What are you crying about?

KIM: That essentially we're all alone. Every single one of us is alone. There's nobody that's there for us ultimately. That's very sobering and very freeing at the same time, because you can't be disappointed.

INT: But also very sad.

KIM: Yes and no. It's very sad. It's not sad if you think about it. How can it be otherwise?

INT: So why are you crying?

KIM: Because I'm crying about how much the people that I did trust and do trust mean to me, and how very dear they are to me. (Voice shows emotion) And how they never broke the trust and how I need to do that and I hope I do that for my children and my grandchildren. Never to break their trust in me, as my parents did, my uncle and aunt did for me. It is very freeing because you don't-at this point, I don't expect that anybody will take care of me. That's fine. You're not disappointed. You don't touch [?] yourself up and say, "Oh my G-d, how could this happen?" That's the way it is. We die alone, we are born alone, and it's in the course of that, between birth and death, we have good parents and people that we love and love us. Hey, that is important, and I hope that I can be that person for many people in my life, not only my children and grandchildren, but the people I work with. Never to break their trust.

That's a real issue for me, because I work with people. To be very up-front and to help them to know that there is someone that will-that will have real boundaries and not betray them, and that was the issue of my marriage. That was the central issue of my marriage: Betrayal. And I mean that in a very-in a very lofty way. I don't mean in any concrete way but betrayal. I never expected that my husband would not understand what security meant to me. I thought he knew. I thought he read minds. I thought I made it clear. He didn't, and that's what did it. That's what broke the marriage. That kind of betrayal. No other. The betrayal of not really understanding what was important to me, and the money was the final straw, but the-not tuning in to me emotionally, that's what did it, as it does to most women.

INT: What about the impact on your children?

KIM: Of the divorce?

INT: Of the Holocaust?

KIM: Of the Holocaust. (Pause) I think it's been a pain in the ass to them in many ways, because I need to know where they are at all times. They've needed to do a lot of work with their mother, to break me of that. When I know that-my son is married so I know that there's someone else looking out for where the hell he is at all times. But my daughter, who is unmarried, knowing that she's in a relationship and knowing that her boyfriend will keep tabs on her at some level gives me comfort. Then the Gulf War was on and Susan lived in Israel, came back for a conference. My father, alav hashalom, who was alive then, and I said to her, "Susan, if you need..."-well, I said to her, "If you need to go back to Israel, this will be on your own, but emotionally, I can't endorse it because I'm afraid." My father said to her, "If you go back to Israel I'm going to die." I said, "Daddy, you can't do that to her because you might die anyway."

But she decided-and I said to her, "You cannot discount the fact that you're the daughter and the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors. You can't. I need you to know that. You can do what you want, but I can't just say to you 'go with my blessing.'" For whatever reason, she ultimately decided not to go back to Israel and the Gulf War ended in January and my father died in March. Thank G-d for that. The guilt for her would have been a little bit heavy. Those are little ways in which the Holocaust influences my life. It might have influenced anybody else's life...I don't know. I mean, not being a Holocaust survivor, the same thing might come into play but I think personally, it has affected me and I probably don't begin to know how it's affected my children, because I don't know that it's measurable. I think that they've appreciated the fact that when I do some safety-crazy stuff like "where are you" and they don't appreciate it, but they will understand it at some level and kind of benevolently pat me on the head and say, "All right, but don't do this Mom. This is-don't do this to me."

INT: Benevolently?

KIM: Yes.

INT: They benevolently pat you on the head.

KIM: Yes.

INT: Because they know you will hear them ultimately.

KIM: Oh, I don't know if they know that I will hear them. I hope so. But they know that to get furious with me wouldn't be where it's at. It's not because I'm being intrusive into their lives. It's because I'm being intrusive into their lives for my lack of safety and...okay, so-and my son demonstrated to me in every way (Kim starts crying) that he knows how important his children are to me. Without being very obvious, he just shows it to me, and I appreciate that, because they are. They are my future. But essentially, my future was taken when all was taken from me and it was taken in the sense that so many of my would-have-been cousins, uncles, aunts were destroyed. Gone. So-did that answer part of your question?

INT: And your daughter-in-law understands?

KIM: I think so. Whether she understands it or not, she behaves in ways that, you know...I don't care how-what people understand or feel, as long as they behave in ways that are demonstrating to me that they care about how I feel. I don't care what they really feel. I may be-my daughter-in-law is a great communicator and I appreciate that so much, and that may be true of her regardless, but if in any ways that has to do with who I am, hey, that's great.

INT: Okay. So war and G-d. I just want to hear your belief in G-d together with your reality of the Holocaust.

KIM: I'm not sure that I do. I did not have a great sense of religiosity in my home. Faith was there, but my father was not a very observant man until the last years, until his retirement. He was involved with a shul. Tradition is something that was important to me, but not observance. Never was. I'm getting more in touch with my sense of G-d. This holiday season it happened for me, more so than any other. I don't know why. I was closer to my father than I had ever felt. I took my Russian family that I had befriended to a showing of a film which was a documentary in Yiddish by a Yail Strohm, a musician and film maker from Los Angeles. It was filmed in the Carpathian Mountains, in the villages, and it was a very moving, extremely moving film for me. It was the only movie I could take them to because Yiddish they speak some, English they speak very little. Between the titles and the Yiddish they got it, and I saw that on the day of Kol Nidrei, and that led me into an incredibly moving experience for me, never mind anybody else. Very private and very special for me. About an elderly Jewish man who goes back to his roots and how-

INT: I think I would have gone to see it.

KIM: Beautiful movie.

INT: You often mention G-d in terms of life circumstance events, that you're grateful for happening a certain way. Like you said that your daughter decided not to go back and I think you said thank G-d your father died a few months later so she didn't have-

KIM: Absolutely. Absolutely.

INT: Does that mean you see G-d's intervention that directly and if you do, have you always and how you understand the Holocaust?

KIM: It is almost seamless for me. It has nothing to do with yes, I see G-d's intervention. It's just a part of me. It's the way we spoke at home. I am not going to be able to make sense of this in terms of sense. It just is for me.

INT: So then, drawing the line around the Holocaust, what is your belief about G-d vis-a-vis the reality of the Holocaust?

KIM: I don't-I'm not sure that I see a connection.

INT: Between G-d and the Holocaust?

KIM: Yeah.

INT: So then where's the Holocaust in the world? I mean, that's not a good way of phrasing it, but if G-d is separate from the Holocaust, how do you understand the Holocaust?

KIM: I don't think G-d make the Holocaust happen or not happen. I couldn't explain it and I don't. No, I think G-d gave man a chance to do what man did and I don't-I'm not sure that-

INT: So it's an act of man in history.

KIM: Yeah.

INT: Could it happen again, do you think?

KIM: Absolutely it could happen again.

INT: In this country?

KIM: It could happen in this country, yes.

INT: Do you have a somewhat sort of active sense of that or is that just something that's in the back of your mind?

KIM: It's in the back of my mind. When the '73 oil crisis came up, I had no doubt that it could come up like a cobra out of the earth and it could happen any time.

INT: Did you feel that fear at the time or it was just a thought?

KIM: It was more the thought with a little bit of fear. Yeah. Oh, I have no doubt that it could happen again in a flash. In a flash. Back to my use of the word G-d, I will say to my grandchildren, to my five year old, "I hope to see you in about five days, G-d willing." Ultimately Joshua picked up on that and he said, "Kimmy, why do you say G-d willing?" Well, I do that automatically. My friends-I will also say that to my friends and like, you know, "You're this secular competent woman, why do you-why do you do that?" I said, "That's what I do." And I do that. I think it's like hedging your bets maybe. I don't know. It's like covering your bases and covering your butt. I don't know. It's part of me.

INT: It's certainly an acknowledgment...

KIM: It certainly is.

INT: ...that anything can intervene to stop you getting together.

KIM: Right. Right. Absolutely. That I know. That I know. That in life-

INT: And it's something like a wish that nothing intervenes.

KIM: Absolutely. And that life rests on a second, on a millisecond, change-millisecond. Just read about a man I saw at a sukkah party in the obituaries today. I mean, you know, small event...I just met him there with his wife.

INT: So this may seem like a lead. So why aren't you in Israel if you believe that it can happen at any moment in this country?

KIM: Cause I think that it's as scary to live in Israel as here, and I'm not afraid of dying. I am not. I like my life here. I feel competent about my life here. I would not feel competent about my life in Israel.

INT: And you don't believe Israel would offer you any additional security per se?

KIM: Never thought of it in those terms, but it wouldn't be a good tradeoff. It would not be a good tradeoff. That's not to say, as you mention that, that I haven't considered it in my greatest moments of fear-about what? I don't even know what. Maybe at those moments when life-when I realize that it could break out here, something could happen, or at moments of depression, when I've been clinically depressed maybe. I remember that fleeting thought crossing my brain and saying, "Can I do this again? I was twelve when I came here and learned a whole new thing. Could I do this again at my age?" But not anything really conscious. Now that you've sort of mentioned it, no. No. I have never wanted to live in a society where I am-where there are only one kind of people. Like when I moved to this area, I didn't want to live in a development that seemingly was all Jewish. No. My safety in my life has come from being part of the world. That's the Jaremkows, the farmer and his wife, were part of the other world, not my Jewish world. My Jewish world could not protect me. Protected me up to a point, but I needed the rest of the world. You need to live, I believe, you need to live in an integrated world, not in an exclusive world.

INT: So where else are you in terms of sort of general philosophy and the American political scene and diversity and ethnicity? Where do you put yourself? I want to lump it all into one issue.

KIM: I'm going to put it to you-

INT: You probably changed over time.

KIM: I'm going to put it to you in a different metaphor. I need to live for today and enjoy what I can today, and yet save for the future. Now that's, you know, that seems like a contradiction, but that's the way...we need to live. I support Jewish causes. I'm very much aware of Jewish needs, but I also support the United Way. I don't think we can afford to be exclusionary. Nobody can afford to be exclusionary. I don't think there's protection in living alone, in living in our own little corner of the world. I think it's very important to support Israel as an entity, but I don't believe that all Jews should live in Israel because Israel will be the weaker for it, not the stronger. And I will be the weaker for living there, rather than being in the greater world.

INT: And the more general political issues of this country? Where do you stand?

KIM: I don't even know how to answer that for you. Any specific thing you want to know?

INT: Democrat, republican, liberal, conservative?

KIM: Oh, oh, where am I on this?

INT: Ethnicity, diversity, PC?

KIM: PC makes me crazy. At the same time, I bristle at the idea of someone calling me a girl, and yet I consider myself a girl in many ways. I-you're right. I've changed over the years but bottom line, I believe that I am a Democrat, independent Democrat, Democrat independent, support liberal causes with limitations, will not-certainly will not support someone who does not support Israel, and yet there are limits to my support of Israel. The far right is-when they, the ultra-Orthodox compare the Reform to Hitler, kind of sickening.

INT: You have trouble?

KIM: I have a little trouble with that. And when they say that there's no compromises with Reform, that it's okay to kill a Reform Jews because they're like a cancer on a body-the Orthodox rabbi of Israel said that killing a Reform Jew is like a physician operating on someone with cancer, you cut out the cancer.

INT: The Chief Rabbi of Israel said that?

KIM: Yes. Yes. He did.

INT: Are you sure about that?

KIM: Yes. Yes. It's a crazy world. See, I've always known that when Israel divests itself of enemies from without, it will become an enemy within itself. That's the way it is. If we don't have "tzorus" [trouble] from outside, we find tzorus inside. We have the luxury of finding tzorus inside. Philosophy is probably not my strong suit, but living I hope appropriately is, but philosophizing is not. I don't espouse. I don't preach. I think I live more than I-much more than I preach, in the way that I believe life-more as an example.

INT: What are your reactions to conflict in the world such as in Bosnia?

KIM: It was one of the watersheds of my life. I had a very hard time with that. I really did. I could not envision my grandchildren coming to me twelve years from now and saying, "Kimmy,"-they still call me Kimmy at that point-"You're a survivor of the Holocaust. You wish that the United States would have interfered. Where were you on this? Where were you?" And I felt-I rationalized it to myself by believing that there were no good guys there and there were no bad guys. Everybody was nuts there. And it's the same way I explained my parents and my uncle and aunt. I wasn't going to get into this. I was very pleased that America took a stand and yet I don't know what stand was right there. I'm thrilled that Israel evacuated some Muslims, I believe. Yes. I don't know

what's right there. There were so many wrongs going on at the same time. I felt, in my helplessness, I tried to make sense of it for myself and tried to understand it as best as I could, and then went on to do-to work in the arena that I could work in, that would make a difference, because I certainly-

INT: What arena is that?

KIM: In my work. In my relationships and in my friendships and with my family, but not-it was really a difficult moment for me. A very-more than a moment. Difficult few months. What do you do? If I knew the right thing to do, I would have urged that someone do it, but I didn't know what was the right thing to do. I don't know that many people did.

INT: Elie Wiesel was very public about urging involvement.

KIM: Right.

INT: What was your reaction to him?

KIM: Absolutely more power to him, and yet he didn't know what to do either. He just said to-

INT: Do something.

KIM: To do something, right. I said that too, but what the hell do you do? Absolutely, do something. But it's kind of unfair for me to say to you do something without my-what do you want me to do? You have a right to say to me. Do something. I guess-I'm thrilled that he spoke out, but I'm not sure what he spoke out for except for saving innocent lives. I'm for that, but how do you operationalize that?

INT: Okay. I'm going to let you end with anything you'd like to add or say.

KIM: While I have done this in other venues, certainly not as profoundly as this one, this has been the most evocative, and I haven't done it like dozens of time. I've just done it for myself and I've been interviewed by Ira Brenner. Do you know Ira?

INT: Mm-hm.

KIM: I was in a different place at that time, as I'm sure I will be if G-d grants me longer life, I will be in a different place sometime in the future, but this has been a very, very important thing for me. Your questions have been beautiful, have been tremendously evocative. It's been an important experience for me and I thank you very much. (End of tape)