

INTERVIEW WITH JOAN FRIEDMAN

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INT: Today is October 31, 1996 and I'm interviewing Joan Friedman, who is a child of survivors. This is tape 1, side 1, and we're going to begin the interview now. I just want to know a little bit about your present family now, your nuclear family. Why don't you start with yourself in terms of age, birthplace, marital status, education, some of those things.

JOAN: Okay. I'm married. First of all, I'm fifty-three years of age. I was born in Shanghai, China. My mother is from Berlin, Germany. My father is a-on my father's side I am a third generation Russian Jew born in Shanghai.

INT: Meaning your father was born in Shanghai?

JOAN: Yes. My father was born in Shanghai too. In other words, it was his parents who walked over, but his parents were very, very young, but they did come in one of the pogroms from Russia, but my father considered himself a full citizen of Shanghai, which was another whole story. But anyway...At 1949 the communists came to Shanghai. My family had to leave. My father had to leave immediately because he was a journalist and so politically he had to leave, so he left first.

INT: Wait. I want to stick for a minute with your family.

JOAN: Just my family, okay.

INT: With Joel-is a lawyer. You've been married how many years?

JOAN: We've been married twenty-seven years. Well, I don't know. We got married during-we were married at first Israel conflict. It was 1967, so I don't know how many years, twenty-seven, twenty-six, something like that. We have two children. Ruth is just twenty as of yesterday and she's a student, she's a junior, at Brown University. Daniel is also just turned fifteen. They both were October babies. And he's in the first year of high school, and Joel-I'm married to Joel, who's from Chicago and whom I met in Wisconsin in graduate school, and he's a lawyer in Philadelphia but he works for the federal government. He's not in private practice. Is that about it? I have a cat and I live in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, and Swarthmore is the place that I have lived longest in all of my life.

INT: What would you consider your socio-economic status approximately? Middle class? Upper-middle class?

JOAN: By my standards, upper-middle class.

INT: Which means?

JOAN: Which means by world standards and certainly by American norms, middle class to-lower to middle middle, because Joel is a civil service person, so we don't-

INT: But compared to-

JOAN: Compare to what I compare to as upper-middle class.

INT: Okay. Religious affiliation?

JOAN: Religious?

INT: If I-your synagogue is Reconstruction?

JOAN: Yes.

INT: You belong to any other-

JOAN: Why Reconstructionist, you want to ask?

INT: Okay. You can tell me.

JOAN: It's a very good reason. Because when we were looking for a synagogue when the children were young and we lived in Swarthmore where there were three other Jewish families, we were very, very friendly with the Simonoffs, who are very dear friends of ours, who belong to the Reconstructionist synagogue and they went crazy about their rabbi and so we wanted to be with the Simonoffs where we never even went to explore any other place. That's why we're there, as opposed to the philosophical mind of the Reconstructionist.

INT: Right. Okay.

JOAN: Which in fact we're not altogether in sync with, but anyway...(laughter) That's another story.

INT: At this point you're affiliated.

JOAN: Yeah. Yeah.

INT: Do you have any political or Zionist affiliation?

JOAN: Meaning? You mean other than philosophical?

INT: Yes, other than philosophical. You're not active in the Zionist Organization of America?

JOAN: No.

INT: Or anything like that.

JOAN: No.

INT: Okay, fine.

JOAN: Subscribe to all the stuff but I'm not active in any of it.

INT: Okay. Now I'm going to ask you a little bit about your family of origin, similar kind of questions and then you'll start to tell me the stories in your family. You told me Dad was born in Shanghai. Your parents had actually walked from Russia?

JOAN: Well, that's what the family story is.

INT: Tell me the family story because the myths are as important as the facts sometimes.

JOAN: Yeah. The story was that after one of many pogroms, I think-let's see, I think one of my grandparents was from Kiev, the Kiev area, and the other one was from the Odessa area. I don't know which one-I don't know how they came together. Actually, I don't know if they walked together or they both came independently. They were very religious Jews. This I remember from things my father said and anyway, why Shanghai? At the time for them, I don't know, there might have been some relatives there. So they ended up there and it's interesting. I guess my grandfather on my father's side was an accountant or somebody like that and he and his wife were very devoted to each other. They had three children, my father, the oldest, then my Auntie Esther, she's the middle one, and Izzy, Isaac, who's the youngest. My father's father died I think of some sort of natural causes. I mean, I don't know, diabetes or something like that, at a fairly young age. I don't know what age. But the wife followed him within the month because she couldn't live without him. It was one of those things.

INT: How old was your father at that time?

JOAN: Quite young. I think he was around-someplace between twelve and fifteen. And that's an interesting family history because my father's maternal name, last name, was Chaiken, and there were lots of Chaikens in Shanghai. Some of the Chaikens are the same as Chaichin. They're all around the world now. They're very, very rich. They originated like a cocoon on that part of the world. But anyway, so Chaikens were a very well off family in Shanghai and there were several sisters and brothers and all belonged to the very high echelons of society except for one. One of the Chaikens was a woman by the name of Ethel, and Ethel was the one in the family who stayed home to nurse everybody while everybody went away to school and to college, so Ethel actually never learned to read and write but she spoke Yiddish and a broken Russian. She was the one who took in the three kids and she-Ethel and Gedalia, her husband, raised the three Ladar children, so that was my father's side. I remember Ethel. I remember Gedalia.

INT: What were they like?

JOAN: It's a little bit hard to say because subsequently I've done so much reading about shtetl life and stuff, but I mean I would picture them in a shtetl. Gedalia had one tooth. I remember that very clearly. And Ethel had very, very long hair and it was always all rolled up over the ears, the pigtailed that they used to do. You know, it's not an unusual peasant custom. I guess you could say all over Eastern Europe. Other places too. And she had these beautiful waves in the front, those waves that in those days you used to make by hand. I can see now that she must have pressed it in the morning or whenever she washes it, which clearly was not every day because they didn't used to do that, and she was-I remember her as a full-bodied woman, somebody in whose body you could sink your nose in.

INT: Sort of nuzzle in.

JOAN: Nuzzle in. And Ethel always wore something with pockets. Key to her life. And this I only know in retrospect because as a child I didn't particularly know that she had no means, but I know now she had no means, however, she always had rock candy in her pocket and where this rock candy came from, now as I think about it I haven't a clue, but it was always there, so you nuzzle up to Ethel and you stuck your hand in her pocket. There was always, perennially. I remember that at one point in my life we lived in Ethel's apartment. It's a very complicated story but at one point we went from living here to living there because there was bombing in Shanghai and we were in Ethel's-

INT: But this is all in Shanghai?

JOAN: All in Shanghai. And this is-and I remember one room. It's still a relatively large room, I guess, in my memory, with a big-appears to be big in my memory, pot-bellied, whatever you call that, wood-burning stove in the middle and it used to be fed and that part of the room-I remember the room being large because I remember a lot of people in the room, which meant all of us were in the room, that is Gedalia and Ethel, my mother, my father, I and I think my Auntie Esther was there at the time. I assume my Uncle Izzy must have been because he lived with them, or maybe at that point he was no longer living there. I'm not sure. But that was the-those who lived in there. There was always the smell of soup. Always. There was always food.

INT: How did your father feel about Auntie Ethel and-

JOAN: Absolutely devoted. Absolutely devoted. I think he thought of them as his mother and father.

INT: And as he grew into late adolescence, young adulthood, where did he go? What did he do? Did he get an education? Where did his life take him?

JOAN: Yes, he got an education but also it was a different world, and the specifics of the world that he lived in-in those days, journalism and being a newspaper boy, what he always called himself, newspaper boy, it was a trade. Well, maybe in New York at the time they were getting degrees in journalism but in the rest of the world they weren't, so he always-obviously he was able to write. He didn't have problems writing, so somehow, at some point in his life and I don't know that detail-I don't think I know the details-

INT: So you don't think he was college educated or he just had this skill and it was in a world and a time and a place?

JOAN: Yeah. I don't think he was college educated. I think he was self-educated. I think he did that all his life. I don't remember my father ever without something to read in his hand, and in later life-I mean it was that or the N.Y. Times, but there was always something in his hands. I don't remember my father's eyes ever being up. In fact he used to talk with his eyes still reading. He used to watch television while he was...I mean I never figured out how he could do all those things, but anyway...No, I think he was self-educated. I seem to remember something about a university, some conversation about a university, but I truly suspect that this may have been at

the time perhaps that university was also like a Sorbonne where you could go and take classes and listen to lectures without actually registering. That kind of thing. But he was self-educated and he started in the newspaper business and loved it and succeeded and was very successful. He became-he was editor of several newspapers in Shanghai, and Shanghai at the time, you got to remember, was still like New York.

INT: I'm not familiar with Shanghai. We're talking about the late thirties here?

JOAN: Forties.

INT: Can you describe a little bit about Shanghai?

JOAN: Shanghai was the most cosmopolitan city in the world. Among other things, it was an open port to Jews. No questions asked. So you had that whole mixture of European, German, Polish and whatever, Russian, upper-class Germans, educated, who landed up there.

INT: They were fleeing what was happening in Europe already?

JOAN: In Germany, yes.

INT: Okay.

JOAN: There was-at some point historically, Shanghai was divided up into an English concession, a French concession. This is an historical fact. I'm sure you know about it. And so that these enclaves existed, as I say. It was somewhat of a combination of a Washington and a New York in that ambassadors were there in charge of their localities, as it were. The famous Bund that the communists refurbished-it's a beautiful large avenue that is like the Champs-Elysees or like the Avenida de la Reforma in Spain. This Western concept of the wide boulevards and the best restaurants or French bakeries. My mother would say even after twenty years in New York that the best French food she ever had in her life was in Shanghai. Very cosmopolitan. Very worldly. Everybody who was anyone was there. And my father often said to me you could buy anything, and he was right.

My father personally trained some rather important journalists. My father knew personally...who would end up in the New York Times and Salzberg. I have correspondence of letters that my father would write to the people who were at the foreign-what's his name? Philip Taubman and the people like that in the New York Times, you know, at the Russian desk and China desk and people like that used to call him, and my father would write a letter off an article, and I never saw my father's letter unfortunately, but I had the series of letter that I found when I was rummaging my father's drawers and people saying, "As usual you were right about the statistic." I checked it. And my father was saying that from his apartment on the Upper West Side, not from any office full of libraries and dictionaries. (Laughter) What do you mean? (Imitates her father's voice) That kind of stuff. So it's just interesting. My father was a very well-rounded person, which makes my mother's story very interesting I think too, because he has this whole other side. One thing with putting up with the Holocaust and another thing is living in my father's world. (Laughter) I mean, it's something that's absolutely unexplainable.

INT: How do you put that together? How do you see their marriage and their relationship?

JOAN: I think it's wonderful. I really am convinced that this woman was madly in love with this man all of her life. There is absolutely nothing else that explains to me...(laughter) They also spent large chunks of their lives physically separated, which I think in their case was good.

INT: Do you think that fueled perhaps the romantic passionate love on your mother's side, that there wasn't years of day in and day out living, that at times he was away from home?

JOAN: No, I just think that my father was such an unusual person and my father was so ever changing and ever a surprise.

INT: Can you describe him a little bit in terms of ever changing, surprising?

JOAN: I will give you what I usually say to myself and I expect that Joel will agree. I think, I wish, my father had been my friend and not my father.

INT: Because?

JOAN: He was a wonderful man who gave to everybody, who enriched everybody's life, but he wasn't a father in the sense that we think of a father. I mean, I didn't feel that if I had a problem I could go to him, certainly not a financial problem. Also because of where I come from, I always felt-I mean, I didn't go to my parents with problems. So that was another story.

INT: Because of the displacements that they had been through or economic problems?

JOAN: All of the above. And it didn't take too long to live in their house and be a good Jewish girl, which my father always instructed me I had to be, although he never exactly explained to me what that meant, but I just have to be a good Jewish girl. It didn't take long for this good Jewish girl who clearly inherited some of his views to figure out the logistics of the family, the emotional weak spots maybe.

INT: Could you describe them a little, and what you and I say here is totally confidential from out in the community?

JOAN: Oh yeah, no, I don't have a problem with that. I just don't know that-I mean, I will speak and you will decide whether that is-whether I've answered your question or not.

INT: Could you describe the...

JOAN: It's a really big problem. I remember the first-it sometimes seems to me the first memory I have, of real memory I have of my father because I have a lot of family memories. My father used to tell this wonderful story that when I was a baby I could barely walk, he took me to the newspaper office and showed me off to everybody and I sat there for four, five hours listening to everything everybody was saying and perfectly composed and asked some intelligent questions. Excuse me. I don't know if I can believe that or not. I mean, I don't know why he would lie

about it except that I was the most perfect human being that had ever been created, so there's that aura of...I think I can say my father assumed a lot for me.

INT: Assumed?

JOAN: A lot of me. I was his daughter. It was assumed that I understood his soul and his heart, which I sort of do today.

INT: Did you then, as a young girl?

JOAN: I guess in some sense I did and in some sense I didn't. I knew-I mean, I always knew we were different and I knew his vulnerability, as opposed to my other friends' vulnerabilities. The other friends I had were regular people. They had their suffering that everybody else had, but they hadn't landed there with the baggage that mine landed with-the stuff we never talked about. It was horrible stuff that somehow one would hear or somehow one wouldn't hear but I never-just horrible stuff that had happened, and because of horrible stuff that happened, I could never, ever, ever forget, no matter what, that I was Jewish. That was inculcated every day, but what exactly did it mean? He assumed that I had inherited his sensitivity, his sensibilities, his intellect, that I could-I would know what he was thinking-more than what he was thinking, because what he was thinking was what everybody, every single human being should think, you know, honesty, liberty, freedom, humanity at this age. I mean, it just went on forever. He kind of took those things for granted, although those were the pillars of the family life. Those were the conversations.

The flip side of that was that there wasn't enough money to eat (chuckle) because-that's putting it a little bit drastically, but it was a struggle for my mother, because my father decided when he arrived in Venezuela that he wasn't going to-he wasn't going to get involved in politics and this kind of stuff. He was a reformed man. The world over there-life of the mind was crap and he was just going to be a businessman and he was going to work hard and feed the family. Well, he was a total failure at that because in fact my father really was what you would really call an intellect and that's all he was. That's what he did for a living. He was an intellectual. If anything, he probably should have been a yeshiva bochur. He should have spent his entire life reading books and studying texts, only maybe not the religious kind, but he should have been a scholar. And it didn't relate on a day-to-day basis sort of. This was all taken for granted. I mean, I take for granted that you're going to cook and I take for granted that you're going to eat and take a shower. I don't have to teach you these things. That sort of thing a little bit. And so the business went kaput. I mean, several times this was, and my mother I'm sure told you some of that.

And so what he became very clearly was that he became an idol in the small community, where a group of men-which is not unlike what happens in Europe in a shtetl where you put people and you worship them. He was the reigning intellectual of the town. He could tell stories that nobody else could and he could digest information. He read every possible newspaper or magazine that fell in his hands, and we even subscribed to the New Yorker. No one even knew what that was.

INT: When you lived in Venezuela?

JOAN: Oh yeah. Foreign Affairs, which I don't know if you know but it was a fat magazine, and nothing that you would read. I mean, it's just-just kind of stuff that comes out of the think tank in Washington, the Political Times. That kind of stuff was floating around our house, and so when he talked about something it was always assumed that everybody knew the basic facts. He talked over everybody's head, but he always made sense and knew what he was talking about so we listened. It was a mechaya. So he was accepted in town that way, and so we were accepted in the high class and the low class. We were accepted everywhere because of my father. The friends that I hobnobbed with were very clearly in a very, very different socio-economic class than we were. It was pretty obvious. It just never was an issue to my father. Why should it be an issue with your house? It's who you were, it's what's in the brain. What's in your brain-you're a good Jewish girl. You've got a Jewish brain. Use it. This was my education. You got a Jewish brain, you use it.

INT: Did he see a Jewish brain as somehow better than other brains?

JOAN: Absolutely. And it came with an obligation to be used. That was your obligation. How it was supposed to be used, that was...it couldn't go to waste. You're sitting? What are you sitting? There's so much to read, there's so much to be done, there's so much to think about. What are you sitting? (Laughter) Excuse me, I'm four and a half years of age or whatever. So I grew up knowing that you had to do these things, important things. Like what? I don't know. Important things. Have important thoughts. And serious things. Help people. Whatever. I don't know. I don't know. Did I give you some of an idea?

INT: Mm-hm. Let's backtrack, because these stories sort of weave in and out. To Mom, a little bit. Tell me a little bit from your vantage point. Where she was born, what her family life was like, how she met your Dad. How you heard those stories. How they came.

JOAN: My mother talked very little about it, as I remember, while I was growing up, and as I think about it through the filter of age and life, it did make sense. By the time I was in a position to hear stories, shall we say, for it to sink in, my mother had already-she was on her third change. I mean, I was five years old when we got to Venezuela. Before I was five I don't think she had serious conversations with me about who she was and where she came from.

INT: Except that you were intelligent and beautiful early in life. (Laughter)

JOAN: No, I'm sorry. Because of the intelligence I did not need to be told that.

INT: Oh, okay. (Laughter)

JOAN: That's how this worked for me with my smart Jewish girl. You do not have to be told these things because a Jew has the...The idea was, after millennia of suffering, you know in our mythic unconscious, you know. You know what it is to suffer. We know what it means to be persecuted. We know those things. We do not have to be told that. That was part of my understanding. But as I piece everything together, some of it is stories and some of it is what I remember.

I sort of, I think I remember my mother first and foremost as being an incredible beauty. My mother was a beauty, and a very desirable female and I think-my mother was fairly young when she went to China, and my mother was-may have been a lot of other wonderful things but an intellect she wasn't. I don't know if she was particularly interested. She was sort of an average, nice young woman who was very, very pretty and liked going to parties and stuff like that, and I think when she got to China, you know, her life was not easy but I don't think that she was thinking of applying to the university or things like that, whatever that was, or other of her contemporaries were, and my mother was not sitting up in a dark room writing her memoirs of what had happened to her in Germany. Luckily for her. And she's always had that personality so that was already...and I gather that-

INT: She left Germany what year again? Do you remember?

JOAN: Early, I think. '33 or '34? Well, she's seventy-six and I think she said something about-

INT: Fifteen, yeah. [may have left in '35 or '36]

JOAN: She was very young, and it's important the generation that she belonged to. I mean, they were very young and she's often said to me, I'm sure she said to you, I mean, children were to be seen and not heard. So that's not just her, that's the entire generation. That somewhat continued, I'm sure, in terms of how she foresaw how she's bringing us up, not that she had the luxury of saying, well, "I'm going to read this book of mine." (Imitates her mother's voice) I mean, it happened and then there was the other war and you picked up and you left, but life went on, as she said, and when I was younger and things were still okay in Shanghai-it was up and down, I mean, we have pictures of many evenings in cabarets and nightclubs. Life was...My father used to say to me, "You think New York is something? That's because no one there lived in Shanghai."

In terms of the nightlife, everything was so-the good and the bad and the corruption and the...everything, everything. You know, Arthur Rubinstein was...whatever. They had Frank Lloyd Wright build a hotel in Japan at about the same time. I mean, all this stuff was all contemporary. A very big racy world. So they had a group of friends, they went out to dinner. I'm going to show you before you leave, my mother, there's a picture of her upstairs. This is a posed picture. People-men, I'm sure, come up to her and say, "Could I paint your portrait?" And so there's a picture of her upstairs when she's pregnant with me. She told me that. And it's-(end of tape 1, side 1)

JOAN: ...enjoyment of life.

INT: And how do you think she and your father got together? You describe very different-

JOAN: Oh, very easily. Love at first sight. My father-I think my father, a little bit like my brother and a little bit like my son-this part I don't particularly want to be public (laughter), have an incredible charm. I don't think it's kosher to say in this PC world that we live in, but it's definitely male animal sort of charm. In my father's case it had absolutely nothing to do with his physical appearance, because he was a very ugly man. I mean, he had a big Jewish nose and he had, you know, his own ideas of how he dressed and all that kind of junk. But he took over a

room when he walked into a room. I can imagine-I can only imagine using that spark, that type of attractiveness, and focus it on a woman. I just think-then they were also-there are wonderful stories about, you know, life was different in those days too, but the idea of my mother decided something and he didn't pay any attention to her the first time they were in a group of friends. I don't know, whatever.

So she decided she's going to go after him and whatever, and my grandmother, my grandmother was a very important media, my mother's mother, because my mother's mother was more of a kindred spirit to my father and she smelled it a mile away. She knew what it was. She preferred it, I think, not to be a spouse. She would have preferred an accountant. I mean there were evidently quite a few courtiers because it was a small German community where she was and there were several others hovering around my mother, I guess. So there was always a bond between my grandmother and my father, an intellectual bond. They loved each other very much. That really helped my mother. So I think she was a very young woman who was very beautiful who had some strange experiences in her life. Tragic, yes, and strange.

INT: But by that time?

JOAN: Well, when she came from Germany. You know, what happened to her in Germany, the early years, I'm sure she told you. The stuff was not-I mean, in Germany she did not see dead bodies. She saw those in China, but what did she see in Germany? She was a captain of the swim team and she couldn't swim and her brother couldn't swim. The stuff that was around her, even to the extent that she did or did not know or did or did not pay attention because the adults probably were still talking about that and oh, nothing's going to happen and all this kind of stuff. I don't imagine my mother and my uncle reading a newspaper. Children did not in those days anyway. They knew what was happening from the conversations in the family. Conversations in the family were probably pretty hush-hush.

INT: Her mother was divorced by that point?

JOAN: When I say family I mean the extended family. Her grandmother...

INT: Okay. Because her maternal grandparents were involved.

JOAN: Right, exactly. And they were very, very wealthy, very established, very German Jews. You know, Hitler wasn't going to touch them and they had tons of money and horses and stables and you know, evidently the house must have been very large because there was a music room and a library room and-I mean, all this stuff would come up in conversation, and they vacationed, the whole family vacationed in the mountains. Not everybody was doing that in those days, so you get a picture of an upper-class, magic mountain...so they would have had time to leave. I mean, it seems to me had they chosen to, but why should they leave?

So my mother had a lot of experience of certain kinds of discrimination, I know. She told me stories, which she may or may not have told you about, you know, her friend so-and-so who overnight disappeared. Things like that. Those are very important things that you feel, but it wasn't necessarily that they disappeared, and she did not grow up with the pictures of concentration camp victims the way we did. Our generation did. So her scariness was very real,

but different. Her first actual blood and suffering she saw in Shanghai in a sense, you know. So it was still-she said to me once, well still, they used to organize things. I mean they used to go to the movies. I said, "What did you do?" "We used to go to movies and then Granny used to worry. 'Don't go to the movies so far away because I want to make sure I know where you are because of all the disappearing.'" But they still went to the movies and they hid...They did all the naughty things that teenagers do without some of the other weight. The famous story about her-one uncle, who was a family dentist, I don't know if she told you this.

INT: I'm not sure. We had little time.

JOAN: That her mother called up Leo, whatever, I don't know what his name was. "Hello." And the voice over there and said, "Can I speak to Leo?" And so, "There's no Leo here." They lived in the house for twenty years. "What do you mean there's no Leo? Where are they?" And they weren't there. This sort of stuff. It was very horrendous. It was different, you know.

INT: So there's a real sense of being frightened and vulnerable because people disappeared, and as you said, not the blood and gore and death.

JOAN: Yeah. A very deep and a very scary sort of thing as to exactly what it was, and by then her father had disappeared. But then they had been divorced for a while, so maybe she heard that he was in the Underground. I don't think so. I don't think she heard this until after the war. Where's Ludwig? Well, whatever. At that specific time nobody was worried about Ludwig because Erna, her mother, was taking her two kids out of Germany and Ludwig and everybody else was staying. Whether Ludwig was in the Underground at that point or not I don't know. They were divorced, so maybe they didn't have the daily conversations. It's not that she suddenly missed her father or something like that.

INT: What's your understanding of how your mother's mother decided to take the family out of Germany?

JOAN: Very simple. She decided she wasn't taking any chances. It didn't look good to her, and the rest of them just could not part with their money and their belongings, and she said, "Well, it means I stay here. To me it looks like...I don't want to take a chance." My grandmother was a very smart woman.

INT: Did you know her?

JOAN: Yes. It's Ruth's middle name. Erna. A very strong woman for her generation. Whether she had the-I tend to think that she had the foresight to see what was coming. If nothing happens, great, but if it happens...and there was a limit as to how much money they could take out of Germany, and my grandmother bought-she spent whatever money she had. She bought on the boat ride to China-there was a limit as to how much cash they could take out, so whatever, she bought American cigarettes and she got a lot of money for them. She sold them on the boat. She was a woman they would take into Sorbonne, but a woman that comes from a very, very pious, very religious Jewish family-Hasidic I guess you could call it, but who evidently she also knew. My mother said to me, "If you think I was pretty..." There were lots of stories, and I think she spend a couple of years at the Sorbonne. Well, a young woman at nineteen, twenty years of age,

did not leave Berlin and spend a year in the Sorbonne. I mean, it just wasn't done in those days. Lord knows who she came in contact in the fiery years of her youth. She was just a fascinating woman, and my mother said the fact that she was very, very intelligent and very articulate and very beautiful, she was invited to many places. So she was a woman who, I think, said, "I'm going to do whatever I have to do."

INT: Things don't look good here. Things are happening here that make me uncomfortable.

JOAN: Right. She obviously had made her decision with Ludwig, and that must not have sat very well with the family and all that sort of junk and whatever. Whatever the reasons were, and I think he was among other things playing around, because Ludwig was quite a lady's man. You know, he played the piano, but he played the piano sort of, you know, in cafes, you know. So whatever that was, I don't think that was the only thing, but whatever-at one point she said, "Excuse me, I don't need this." Well, they didn't used to do that too much.

INT: Right. That is unusual for that time. We'll move away, and we'll come back to some of this. Just give a short snapshot of Joel's family, where they came from, what country they left.

JOAN: From what I know, they all came from Russia. They are Margolises, Jacobsons on his mother's side, Friedmans. All from Russia. Joel's father was born in the United States, and some of them came via Norway at some point in their lives. This was clearly before World War II, so we're talking pogroms.

INT: Right. So that's Russia immigrants, '19's, early '20's, through the '20's.

JOAN: Right. Why they ended up in Chicago, this I don't exactly know. I'll have to ask Joel's mother to answer some questions, but anyway, I have a wonderful picture of Joel as a baby being held by his father, and his grandfather present and his great-grandfather, who was a yeshiva bochor, and never really learned to speak English. I mean, I think he came over old already...because he had to study, but that's not unusual. But in the picture he's all dressed up. It looked like a picture right out of Isaac Bashevis Singer. That, in a nutshell, is the generations in Chicago. Joel, infant Joel, being held by his father.

And Joel's mother, actually, I think, Joel's mother might be even more than, you know, her mother, Joel's mother's mother-I think they're more than one generation and they're all from the Ohio area, Columbus, Ohio area. Joel's mother too lost her mother when she was very young and was raised by an aunt, and then at some point she got to Chicago and she met Joel's father. Joel's father's family consisted of nine brothers, wonderful family, whereas Joel's mother was an only child. Well, her mother died. The only child raised by this other aunt who had three or four other children, and then she met Joel's father and then got married. She must have been about seventeen or something when they got married.

Joel's father was an incredible man, really had an incredible high I.Q. and he got a full scholarship to the University of Chicago. Now this was unheard of, first of all, for the time, second for a Jew, but he couldn't accept it because he had to work to support a family. Eventually he went to law school. At the time, law schools were more of a trade school. You could just go to the law school. And he did eventually become a lawyer although he never

practiced the law except as it came to his own business, and he just went into business. He had a drug funding business, a tiny business-in those days, I don't think they do this anymore, they supplied drugstores with everything except medicine, whatever drugstores have. You know, everything from food supplies to everything.

INT: Right.

JOAN: He had an ugly, yucky warehouse. He was a non-union shop. He employed Black people and Mexican people...Italians, Black people, whom he literally adopted. He made sure that those guys, that those salaries went home to the women. There are stories and stories about Grandpa how he rescued his workers, his warehouse people.

INT: Do you think that in some way that related perhaps to Joel choosing a wife whose background had been disrupted, your family's background?

JOAN: I don't know.

INT: That there was a sensitivity to that in some way?

JOAN: I don't know.

INT: Have you and Joel ever talked about how as a child of survivors with a mother who was displaced several times in a short time period, getting passed on to you as a person and what it's like for him to live-

JOAN: We have never, ever talked about that because it's never been necessary to talk about it. It's been very evident in our life.

INT: In what ways is it evident, so evident that you don't have to talk? Can you think of an example?

JOAN: Well, it always seems to me that I, you know, I always say to my mother, I say, "Can you imagine the Friedman's when I walked into their living room the first time?" (Laughter) I mean, then I also think, as most other Jewish parents of that generation and certainly of our generation, at one point they said, "Thank G-d, at least she's Jewish." I mean, I was. I was kosherly Jewish, I mean, on both sides, which is more than his younger brother did. But I was hot stuff. I was real hot stuff in those days.

INT: (Laughter)

JOAN: I'd lived in New York at that point for six, seven years, and I got to the University of Wisconsin from New York. I mean, you know, I went to the boonies from the big city and I was Miss Universe. It doesn't sound like much, but in their family it was. I mean, I smoked. I didn't-I probably dressed-I probably dressed more, shall we say, provocatively than...I still do, but certainly in those days than his sister or his mother or any of this comfortable upper-middle class Chicago Jewish third generation Jewish families. Everybody had gone to-Joel went to Hebrew high school. I mean, they all had kosher.

INT: Joel's family kept kosher?

JOAN: Oh yeah. His mother and his sister still does. You understand? Here comes this Latin from Manhattan. I mean that's kind of hard to take. So I think-I don't think that Joel was, as any of us are not particularly cognizant of what we're doing when we're doing it, you know. It's like my mother would say-my mother was so fascinated by your always asking her about her cope, cope, cope. What did she cope? What's to cope? What's do cope? She defines cope for me. (Imitates her mother's voice) I said, "Thank you, Mama, I understand what you're saying." "Can you imagine Carol keeps asking me how did I cope." What kind of a cook...and my mother thought that was the stupidest question.

INT: (laughter)

JOAN: Couldn't you guys-the university brought you, you couldn't think of a better way to ask...so anyway, I think that when these things are going on you-I mean, I imagine that Joel was attracted and whatever, fell in love, and then said, "Whew, thank G-d she's Jewish." Whatever.

INT: But do you think that-you said that it's so evident.

JOAN: Oh, in our life together since. I don't know if that was evident in the beginning but, I mean, we knew each other for about a year, a little more than a year. We lived together before we got married. I would venture to say that I did not have any-I don't know again, but I don't think I had any major neurotic outbursts in that year, that first year that we were together. I was really ecstatically happy and in love and all that kind of stuff. Aside from being ecstatic and in love, it was the happiest year of my life. It was the only year of my life that I was totally independent. I was able to go to the University of Wisconsin graduate school because I got money. I mean my parents didn't have any money. I went to Hunter College. [free NYC college] We didn't have any money. And I worked the whole time and I lived at home. And I got the money to go to University of Wisconsin, which was \$375 a month, and they deferred my tuition and I had got an apartment. It was the happiest year of my life. So there were a lot of happy things going on. And then the year after that Joel and I lived together, and that happiness continued. I have a very strong sense of self-esteem, which means I was actually doing well in graduate school. I was teaching and that seemed to be well received. It seemed that maybe I was capable of doing something.

INT: What brings the fear now when you think back on that time?

JOAN: I don't know. Well yeah, lost youth. I think. I don't think there's anything...One of the tragedies of my life is that I'm not like my mother. My mother had one foot in tomorrow and I have one foot in yesterday. It's very sad to think almost with quite a bit of regularity of what could have been. This was a trait my father had too, and a lot of things happened in my father's life that were destiny that led him along, and it happened to many other people. In a certain sense it happened to my mother when she went along. I don't know what it is but it's-I don't know. In any event, I don't think that in that first year I showed my true colors. That's what I guess I...you see, because the shell was still intact. The shell that had been created for many years, that took me from Venezuela to New York at the age of eighteen. I decided-I did not write to a single

friend at eighteen. I severed all my relationships with all my friends in Venezuela because I had thought this was it. I got to start new here. So whatever shell you build along the way, that was still intact. That was relatively intact. And little by little, Joel started working away at it. Obviously, just his mere existence, the fact that we were married, we were sharing-I was kind of leading a normal life. I mean, some of those layers had to start peeling off, I guess, and I think little by little the true colors did start showing, and they were no picnic for him. They were no picnic for me either.

INT: Do you think some of that, as you peeled off the layers, and who emerged, was a result of the history of your family being displaced that had consequences on you?

JOAN: Undoubtedly. (Long pause)

INT: What ways do you think had the most impact or were most profound on who you turned out to be as an adult, particularly your mother's displacement in Germany to Shanghai to Venezuela to New York? (Long pause)

JOAN: I don't know, because I don't really know what I turned out to be. I don't know. It's hard because whatever I turned out to be at twenty is not what I am today so that's another thing, and today I'm much more where I should have been when I was twenty-two. I keep thinking to myself, if I only had been as strong as I am today, whatever that means. I'm not so sure how strong I am, but then, I keep saying to Joel, "My G-d, what I could have done." And he said, "What? What could you have done?" (Long pause-tearful) I guess I could have fulfilled my father's dream, the expectations. I don't know-sort of this super person. There was one-the problem was, in a way I always felt to just be able to harness my father's intelligence, just harness it, but he had-well, he clearly had what we today would call chemical deficiencies, which in fact could probably be physiologically determined at one point.

INT: In terms of depression?

JOAN: Yeah. It doesn't take a deep thinker to be able to figure out where that came from or how it originated. I mean, whether it's genetic or whether it's environmental or where it came from in him, he had it, and why not. All that is just so much stuff. There were certain moments of his life he really couldn't cope and I know that. I've seen a very, very dear friend in Venezuela. His name is Dr. [name of Dr.] who had just come back from the States. He's a psychiatrist and he had just come back from the States. '52-'53. They were very close, and they were different from some of the other people in Venezuela, and I know that my father was on some medication. I suspect in those days it might have been something like [medicine's name] or whatever was out at the time. Probably helped, who knows? I don't know. It's too complicated to talk about. It's too complicated to say this would have helped, that would have helped, and the complication is then what is it that I-how do I figure what my debt is, and it was never clear to me what the debt is. (Soft voice, cracking-holding back tears) It wasn't as simple as saying, "Why didn't you go to medical school?" Oh, thank you, that would have been very easy.

INT: It was a much more complex message you were getting.

JOAN: Yeah. So I guess it was impossible to fulfill the dream, he just never fulfilled it, therefore no matter what you do or how much you do of it. That's not good enough. That's a very uncomfortable way to live.

INT: Yes, it's a very difficult way.

JOAN: And that's it. But you get better and you find mechanisms, and every so often a mechanism could break down for a combination of reasons. The next big breakdown actually came right after Ruth was born. That was terrifying.

INT: What happened?

JOAN: It was a total feeling of (pause-tearful) I can't do this. I remember we were living at Strath Haven Condominium, and Joel got up in the morning and was going to go to work and I said, "How can you go to work? We've got this little baby here. How can you leave her with me?"

INT: Caring for her was so overwhelming and so impossible.

JOAN: Evidently.

INT: How old was she then?

JOAN: Five, six months.

INT: Looking back, do you think you may have had a postpartum depression?

JOAN: It lasted about two years. Then I had a pre-partum depression. (Laughter) It was part of life. But in my case, it was compounded, I mean, with all the other stuff. So then you go to the next stage and you build another...and then you come to a certain point and you look back and say, "Look at all the energy that I spent building all the sh-- walls." For what? I didn't have a choice, because I was my father's nice Jewish girl because that part wasn't a crime, and where does my mother fit in all of that? That I don't know. I have a very clear picture of where my father fit and I think that my mother was very busy trying to make a life for us. By very busy I don't mean necessarily busy as you and I. Obviously the life in Venezuela was different, but not that-my mother did not have the key to my intellect. My father did. I love my mother, but I am my father's daughter. My mother herself will admit that my brother is a little bit-my brother is physically exactly like my father, but his emotional make-up is much more like my mother's.

INT: How would you describe that?

JOAN: More resilient. For whatever combination of chemical, connections-I don't mean more able to deal with...my brother's had a very hard time too, and that's another really interesting story. If you really wanted to know the reaction my father's and mother's life had on somebody, my brother would be a better, much better subject than I.

INT: Why do you say that? He is younger than you?

JOAN: Younger. You see, my father had an effect on me young. (End of tape 1, side 2)

INT: Joan Friedman on October 31, 1996. You were talking about the impact it had, your parent's relationship, had on your brother and how it's different for you.

JOAN: I think that-I think that my mother had a greater impact on my brother's life, for better or for worse. In retrospect, I think, for worse. She shielded him a great deal. He was the baby. Neither one of them exercised any control or authority over him, my brother, and as a young child I became the mother. At one point in my early life in Venezuela, my mother was sick. I think she might have suffered one of her many abortions. I don't remember though. I remember that my mother-or it may have been something, you know, more serious. I think she had an ovary removed. I remember some sort of surgery, and in those days it was not unusual. It necessitated her being in bed for quite a while after she came home. And that was it. That was the key for me to take over.

INT: About how old were you?

JOAN: I think I was about six maybe. I remember-I remember, in fact, there's a funny story related to this that one day I decided that my father's ties all needed cleaning, so I took all his ties out of the closet and washed them. (Laughter) And, you know, an older sister, you know, you take your brother down the street, do this, do this, so I did all those things that older sisters do, but I think I did it too much and too well, and they used to joke, and my mother will tell you this, that the only person that Moishe listened to was Tvasy.

INT: Which was you.

JOAN: That was me. Tvasy.

INT: Is that a nickname or a Jewish name?

JOAN: It's Tvasy. It's a nickname that my mother made up for me.

INT: How do you spell it?

JOAN: T-V-A-S-Y.

INT: The connotation being-

JOAN: I think "tsastikila" or something. Maybe Ethel used to use it with me. My mother says she started it and probably tsastikila or something, and my father would always call me Tushkila or Tsastikila, always the Russian-Yiddish.

INT: Tushkila meaning-

JOAN: Tushkila 'cause I was like a fish. I used to pee a lot, I guess. (Laughter) It was Tushkila, Tzadika. Anyway, so I think the messages for my brother were different. Whatever happened when I sort of took over, and they let me take over, it was probably the only order in my

brother's life. I used to-you know, my mother would say, "Okay, now Moishe, go to sleep." So he didn't go to sleep. And I would look at him and say, "Go to sleep." (In loud, stern voice) And he was afraid of me so he'd go to sleep. This started a whole relationship that was not really good for him that my parents didn't supervise. I mean, my brother had a tremendous amount of talent and he was very bright and it just wasn't...

INT: Molded sort of?

JOAN: Yeah. They were both incapable of doing it. They were incapable of doing it.

INT: Why do you think your Mom was incapable of doing it?

JOAN: My mother was incapable of doing it because my mother's role at the time was, I think, just to offset my father who was already, you know, would get off on tantrums and she was just always the peacemaker. I mean, she wasn't-you know what I mean? She wasn't a director or a leader. She was a peacemaker, and as long as everything was okay, everything was okay and everything was okay because she made sure everything was okay, so everything was okay. (Laughter) And so my brother sort of grew up a little bit unsupervised, I guess I should have said.

INT: And you stepped in and filled that role.

JOAN: Whatever. To whatever degree and whatever. And then with my own life and then we moved to New York and my brother was at a very vulnerable stage. My brother was-

INT: I think your mother said he was thirteen.

JOAN: Thirteen.

INT: So he was bar mitzvahed in New York?

JOAN: Oh yeah. And my father was in Venezuela. My Auntie Esther who had gone from China to Palestine, from Palestine to San Francisco and was living in San Francisco for a while, came to New York and lived with us, so it was my mother, my aunt, Moishele, I think, and my father came. Those were very hard years in New York. We shared an apartment. They both worked.

INT: So you came to New York before your father came?

JOAN: Yeah. And-

INT: Because? How did your mother get you and your brother here?

JOAN: Well, my mother, Erna-my grandmother Erna came to visit us in Venezuela at some point in the Fifties. I was getting to be between seventeen and eighteen. It was clear that we either had to leave Venezuela because there were no Jewish boys or I would meet them in the United States to study or something. There was some discussions. My father's business was

worse than ever. I mean, it was just going absolutely nowhere, and my grandmother decided maybe we should all come to the States.

INT: She was already there? So this is your maternal grandmother already in the States.

JOAN: The one that sold the cigarettes.

INT: Okay.

JOAN: She had gone-she went from Shanghai to Brazil and from Brazil to the States, and she was...So she was already in New York. At that point already-let's talk about a fascinating story. She-did I tell you about my grandmother's story? Because she remarried in Shanghai. She married in Shanghai.

INT: Yeah, that she did say.

JOAN: And when she moved to the States, Ludwig, my Poppy, who they saw his name on a list of displaced persons and was in San Francisco, he came to New York and they lived together, all three of them.

INT: Oh, your mother did not tell me that.

JOAN: And they were best friends and whatever. My grandmother-it seems that Ludwig lived with, was rescued by some woman, a non-Jewish woman, for a certain period of time. Till my grandmother died, she would send packages to that woman Christmas time. I mean, I remember we used to go shopping, she and I, to Alexanders, [department store in NYC] and she would say, I...She would begin-you know what...Oh, you see something, I'm going to give this to Elliot behind my back, so, you know, this could go into the Christmas package and she would call me Lily or something, I forgot. That was the kind of relationship that could have formed in certain historical moments that defy all definitions. They just don't fit in any...anyway.

I forget where we were, but my brother had a hard time. Me, my father, my lack of guidance, I think, again, and knowing that he's a fine Jewish boy and what does that mean and all that crap. And he was very talented. He was at the high school of music and art in New York and he got in with the wrong crowd. By the wrong crowd I mean the daughter of the director of the Museum of Modern Art and the de Koonings [artist] and the Jackson Pollocks and that world in which he did not belong, and he went to it in a big way and he had a nervous breakdown. And one could probably very easily document this in a very simple Masters thesis. It wouldn't even have to be very profound, after how over his head he was. Perfectly capable of doing it because he's very smart, very charming like his father and he had everything. He wasn't doing it for work. But he was moving in these circles in New York.

INT: And this was-

JOAN: At the age of, oh, seventeen, eighteen.

INT: Still in high school at Performing Arts.

JOAN: Oh, that's where he met her. And this young woman, whose name I can't remember right now, but who was the daughter of-this was the rise and fall.

INT: This daughter of the director of the Museum of Modern Art.

JOAN: He was personally acquainted with all the young people who were in the New York, the Bach Ensemble that did all the stuff in the Sixties.

INT: Were drugs involved also?

JOAN: No, I don't think drugs. Maybe marijuana and pot. I'm not so sure, but I don't think drugs and I don't think that's what did the stuff. It may have been part of it but-

INT: So what did the stuff?

JOAN: Oh, that's simple, very simple. It's living a fake world up here and having this whole empty space here. How insecure? "Who am I? This is just a show. This is all a performance. I know it's a performance because I can read this book. I'm so smart and I can actually tell people what this book is all about, and these people aren't really impressed, and I can sit here in a cafe in the Village all night expounding Ezra Pound [poet] and I'm seventeen years of age. I've never taken a literature course. What do I have to do my homework for? I can drop out of high school." They asked him to leave. This was my father's life, in a different sort of way, except that my father could pull it in the world that he lived in in China. There was enough substantial-there was enough people who knew a) his real worth and he produced his newspaper articles. Then we went to Venezuela, he created another life for himself in which people accepted him simply because of who he was, and he managed that. Moishe-it was-

INT: Do you think it felt for your brother similar in both having created a shell, a veneer that had to do with Dad's expectations and who this big-

JOAN: Sure. There's no question about that. The difference between Moishe was maybe, I don't know, in some ways he was lucky. In some ways he was lucky to have his breakdown.

INT: Because?

JOAN: Because it forced him to look at himself. That breakdown was a very serious thing for him, I always thought. That was the summer that I was graduating from college.

INT: Was he hospitalized?

JOAN: Yeah.

INT: How long? Do you remember?

JOAN: ...in those days it was different. It's hard to tell.

INT: Right. It wasn't twenty-four hours. Right.

JOAN: He was at Bellevue and then they took him to this wonderful place on the Upper East Side, a New York hospital. I forget...anyways. I would say a couple of weeks, maybe more.

INT: Maybe a month?

JOAN: I don't remember. It was a while actually, I think, because I was working-

INT: Do you know what the break was? Did he try to commit suicide? Did he get delusional? Do you remember any of that?

JOAN: (Long pause.) Oh, I took the phone call.

INT: You took the phone call? What happened? When you picked up the phone-

JOAN: I'm trying to think. It was the police, I guess, was calling. "Your brother is at Bellevue Hospital. He had a nervous breakdown." I believe those were the words. I don't remember. It might have been. Maybe in those days they didn't call it that. Maybe they-I don't remember. I didn't wake up my mother.

INT: You did not wake your mother.

JOAN: No.

INT: What did you do?

JOAN: I went down to the-I got in a cab and I went down to Bellevue.

INT: So again taking care of him like you did.

JOAN: Yeah. That was really something.

INT: How old were you?

JOAN: I'm five years older than he is and he was, I think-I was graduating. I must have been-

INT: About twenty-two?

JOAN: Yeah. Anyway, that was the summer that I was graduating and I was going to Italy. I had my ticket on the S.S. Aurelia. The S.S. Aurelia was a very famous ship that took students who had no money. It took the long way to Europe. A whole bunch of us were going.

INT: What year was that?

JOAN: '65. And I had worked, you know, throughout and saved some money. I had some money and I had only a one-way ticket. That I didn't know. I...My mother, a one-way ticket. They were kind of hoping I was going to find an Italian Jewish prince. Anyway, so because that happened, because of Moishe's breakdown, I didn't go, and I decided to accept the fellowship to go to Wisconsin. I figured I needed to stay around. And that was a very important break in our

lives because then I left home, so when he came home from the hospital it was he and my parents who had to work things out, and the way they worked it out was the way everything was always worked out in my family. Everything is fine now.

INT: So they just sort of denied it, sweep it under the carpet.

JOAN: Accommodation. Now we just have to take care of Moishele, you know, slowly. He should eat well and sleep well and he'll come around and life will move along. Well, life really never moved along for Moishele. He, at some point, finished his high school equivalency. At one point he sort of got a job. He was just sort of like my father too. He was not a nine-to-five kind of person. Anyway. So that's another whole story that was a problem for me and a problem for my parents and a problem with my father who never really understood that this was totally-he was not capable of understanding his role in it.

Then, in later years, compounded it by-I don't know if you could blame my father directly for this one or if this was us, you know. It was, Moishe knew that he just didn't have to bring anybody home that wasn't Jewish. He had a lot of girlfriends, whatever. He had one in Venezuela. I guess she was very, very wealthy and he was interested in her. All kinds of stuff. But at that point already I was out of the daily picture of my brother and mother and father's life. For the first time in my brother's life. That was my happiest year.

INT: For the first time you are released from the role you had in the family.

JOAN: And get to take care of myself, and I had my three hundred dollars a month and I knew how much to spend for my food, and I knew where I was, and if I had extra I bought a pair of boots, and if I didn't I didn't and that was it. And if I had money I'll go home on break, and if I don't I won't go.

INT: When you got that phone call and you're going down to take care of your brother, how do you put that all together that it's you and not Mom and Dad? Why do you say to yourself, "I better not wake Mom?"

JOAN: Because I had to protect her because she is...That's always the issue. You wake up in the middle of the night and you have a nightmare and you don't go to them. They have enough problems. You handle it. Or anything else like that. Don't bother them. They have enough on their plates.

INT: How'd you get the message as a kid, that they already had enough, that you don't go to Mom with that, you don't bother her?

JOAN: How could you not get the message? We knew what they had been through.

INT: Did they tell you? How did you know? I mean, a sister taking care of your brother already. How did you know?

JOAN: We knew. I don't know. We knew. We knew. We are sensitive to family. That's what being in a family is. I remember the phone call very clearly. I remember being at the-I remember

going into Bellevue. That was like in a movie, you know. I don't remember whether my memory is that or it just makes it. For me it was a jail. It was horrendous. Absolutely horrendous.

INT: Right. I've never been in Bellevue.

JOAN: It's a jail cell. First of all, I've never been in jail. I mean, I see in the movies, but...and there was my little brother, my beautiful brother, (soft and tearful) whom we all knew was wonderful and perfect if he had been handled right.

INT: Did you feel in some way responsible?

JOAN: (loud exclamation) Ahh!

INT: So that's an understatement.

JOAN: And then you wonder. I was concerned about all the horrible things that I had done to him. I didn't know what I'd done to him. I guess I was bringing him up according to my version of bringing up. I didn't know. Nobody gave me the-nobody said no. Whatever. I don't know. And I felt insecure. But I didn't think about that. I mean, I didn't think-after the fact I thought, gee, if I could only remember. I remember when there was a-a psychiatrist wanted to-I don't have a picture of the psychiatrist at all. I don't even know if it was a male or female...Wanted to see us. I don't remember. Yes. This is also, you know, psychiatry of twenty years ago. Wanted to see the three of us, my mother, my father and myself, and Granny, and I remember thinking, "What should I do?" (Laughter)

INT: That you knew about-

JOAN: Some stuff that might be helpful.

INT: That the parents didn't because of the role-

JOAN: Well, from my perspective-I mean, I think now, not that they didn't but it would have added another dimension. I mean, I don't know what I was thinking at the time but I think that made me feel like-it made me feel like some stuff I did was really bad.

INT: Do you remember how you eventually told your parents? You go down and you're in this psychiatric ward-

JOAN: Oh, that was in the night and I had to leave him there. He had to stay there. I didn't get him out. Then I went home. I'm assuming I must have gone home. Obviously I went home. And then I called them?

INT: Do you remember worrying about telling them or how you were going to tell them or their reaction?

JOAN: Of course. Of course.

INT: What were your thoughts at that point?

JOAN: How are we going to present it? I said, “Don’t worry. Everything is under control, but Moishe is there, and everything is going to be fine, and you have to go down to sign some papers.” They had to sign some papers so that he could be released from Bellevue and then somebody in Bellevue recommended some doctor at this hospital.

INT: So you sort of go along with the family line. Everything’s okay. Everything’s okay. Just sort of reassuring.

JOAN: It’s not good, but it’s under control. It’s just how you approach things. And then that was a very hard summer for my mother and it was a very hard fall for her because don’t forget, I left, and she was still working at the time and she would go from work to the hospital. Oh, I remember. Somehow he was still in the hospital in the fall. The only reason I remember the base year is because of my trip.

INT: But you didn’t. You graduated but you didn’t go to Italy and you went to Wisconsin.

JOAN: I didn’t go on the trip. I went to Wisconsin and somehow I remember my mother had to go for, just for a short time, and then after that he was home for a short time and then-I forget the sequence but at one point it was decided that he should move out. He was going to get an apartment in the Village and he was going to get a job and he was sort of back again with some of those contacts. He had very glamorous contacts. It’s not hard to imagine. He was very handsome, very articulate, and I was sort of more and more out of the picture at that point. I think I thought more and more that he should take hold of his own life. I didn’t know what tools he had but I guess I didn’t have too many of my own and I was sort of working on mine. I remember worrying about it, but also in a more detached way, I think.

INT: Did you-this is around the time you met Joel?

JOAN: No, it was a little bit before. My whole first year I hadn’t met him. So he was looking for an apartment in the Village and he got a job as a maitre d’ in a couple of fancy places. He loved that life. He had a little bit of money. I went to the apartment he had. He had all the money and was very independent. He wasn’t at home. They seemed to be happy, my parents, and Moishe was-my father was getting his life together. I didn’t see any future in that particular life. What? A maitre d’ in a restaurant? So I figured that I would just, you know, go on doing what I was doing. This was hopefully to get a degree at the end of that particular period. I think I wrote to him. I think he wanted me out of his life too. I would imagine so. I don’t know. I don’t remember. We were cordial but not on top of each other, I guess. I guess I figured he had the two of them and the three of them had a life and they could work it out, and that’s what it remained for the rest of my father’s life, the three of them.

INT: And you were on the outside?

JOAN: No, not necessarily, but my brother was not-

INT: Oh, so he lived at home?

JOAN: My brother was part of the three. No matter how it worked out, my brother was part of the three.

INT: Cause now it's his wife and himself and your mother was close by.

JOAN: And that was not good for him. My father was just a really hard being, and as he got older he got very bitter and unhappy, and my father was a tremendous... You know, there was physical taking care of and stuff like that. I'm fifty-three, he's forty-seven. He's just beginning to get his life together. He's just beginning to figure out that he has to do something to make a living. I don't know, you know. I mean he's a wonderful, wonderful, lovely person and his wife worked and he played tennis. There's a little business down there. His life was falling apart all around him. I told his wife, "I think you should get the hell out of there." I think she should let him go live with his mother, you know. He can have the house and look, because there was never-all of a sudden, I don't know if she told you but two years ago-

INT: That they started their own business?

JOAN: It was... Two years ago, he got a job at Subway making sandwiches. I was so proud of him, and he worked like twelve hours a day taking orders from people who couldn't read or write, and that's something he should have done twenty-five years ago because by now he would be president of Subway.

INT: Did your mother tell me that they bought a franchise?

JOAN: That's a year and a half ago.

INT: Okay.

JOAN: Because, for instance, this was his internship. This is his... He's very proud of himself, as well he should be... Joel says-you see, this is where my brother's like a-I think-I may be totally wrong, is more like my mother. Joel says in a way it didn't trouble Moishe that much. In a way Moishe was okay without any money and Shelly working and he would go out and play tennis. (Loud voice, with emphasis) That was not an issue. I said, "How can that not be an issue?" But so Joel said it was not such an issue. I mean, he enjoyed that life for a while. I don't know. I'm trying to, you know-

INT: So he accepted it in-perhaps like your mother you just do it. You just go ahead and this is what he was doing and so...

JOAN: And he was happy to be in Miami and I kept saying, "Moishele," you know, every two weeks he would get some books from me. Those are the only books he's buying nowadays. Okay. But then I said, this is okay. This is okay. He doesn't have to read all the books, he's fine. Let him have-it's fine for him to go play tennis and whatever. And now he just...(soft and inaudible)

INT: Do you think you hold the sadness of that?

JOAN: Absolutely. It's the saddest thing in my life. (Tearful) And he was a year in...He worked. The kind of people that I talked to, they think that the potential that my brother had. This year I decided, this year I decided he's okay. If I live or die, he's okay. We have become good for the money, for a lot of the money for this franchise, and that's an issue between me and Joel. (Voice is choked up) I'm not so sure that Joel is convinced this is okay. There have been a couple of other schemes, none that we got involved in. I mean financially. I mean, I think this is the real thing. My brother wanted us to invest with him.

INT: Silent partner or whatever.

JOAN: I said, "Uh-uh. We're going to give you some money." And Joel said, "Well, I want this to be a loan. It's a loan and we're going to get it back." I'm very happy. But otherwise-

INT: You just wash your hands of it. It's gone. You did it.

JOAN: And I feel like I can finally do something for my brother. Having said that and seeing him on the road and with his wife and having everything that I was saying for the last year and a half and praying this enterprise and everything else, I do feel that my brother's graduated. And sad that the graduation in terms of elementary school. (Tearful) However...so that's one good thing that's happened this year. I think my mother feels that way too. But it's a long story. I mean, it would really be interesting to hear his version of it.

INT: Do you think in some way-(end of tape 2, side 1) I was asking you about if you thought-what are your thoughts about your mother's sort of-she didn't seem to be able to come in there and surround your brother, sort of direct him.

JOAN: No, she surrounded him a lot.

INT: Okay.

JOAN: I would say yes, surround a lot. Maybe surround too much.

INT: In an overprotective way?

JOAN: In the only way she knew how. In the only way probably you and I would too under the circumstances.

INT: How does she-I mean, what behaviors does she sort of show overprotectiveness on your mother's part?

JOAN: Well, from hindsight-

INT: Right. From hindsight. From your perspective.

JOAN: I think that probably for giving him everything always. He's never made accountable for things.

INT: Do you think that came out of how her childhood was disrupted?

JOAN: Of course. And my father too. It was very clear to me always that there was nothing more important as my parents' life and my life and my brother's life.

INT: Life in the most literal sense.

JOAN: Absolutely. And then also we had-there was another thing. We lived in South America in a small town. That's a whole different world. It's just totally impossible for you to understand that world. Culturally, it's completely different. It's much more easygoing. We lived in a small town. My father had chose to be there rather than in Caracas. He did not want to get back involved with that world. It was so much more a pastoral life.

INT: Do you think that came because it provided a sense of safety and security for him? If life is-if what they cared about most for their children and big cities whirl around, was this a way of staying put in this quiet little place and know he's safer?

JOAN: I think for my father it was a way of saying, "I don't want to commit to the intellectual life of this world. I just want to be a peasant." As he would say, "I'm going to be a moojie. I'm going to go back to the shtetl. I don't want any of it because I can't deal with the stupidity of the world. I can't deal with looking at the news. I cannot deal with it. It's overwhelming." My father took it all very personally, man's inability to communicate and to...so yeah. Outwardly it was we are going to be here and we are going to be protected. It's very hard to seek a person's motivations and I don't know how premeditated his motivations were. I suspect that many of them were not in the least premeditated. Certainly going to Venezuela was not premeditated.

Why did we end up in Venezuela? Because he was a friend of the Venezuelan ambassador, not because he looked in the map and said of all these countries here, this looks...He could have gone to Argentina or someplace else where there were a lot more Jews or whatever. There were no choices in those days so I think he kind of continued where there was no choices, so if there are no choices you're just going to go from day to day.

My mother...I am, you know, of all of them I'm the-I'm the strongest, you know. I made decisions. I don't remember making any decisions either. I think of myself exploding from one thing to the next also, making decisions by not making them. A lot of human beings function, but my mother, you know, thinks of me as being aggressive and more organized and more having a plan.

INT: How do you see yourself-because this is about viewpoints. How do you see yourself?

JOAN: (pause) I guess running really hard and fast (soft voice, tearful) and trying (pause) to get it done. I'm not sure what that means.

INT: You're not sure why you did it?

JOAN: No, I'm not sure. I know I've had-I know it had to do with being a good Jewish girl. There is no question in my mind. I would have liked that a little bit more defined. (Laughter)

INT: So being a professor at Swarthmore College still needs more. That's not enough? To be a good Jewish girl in Dad's way that the Jews are superior intellectually and just sort of better than...in some ways?

JOAN: Well, he actually-no, yeah, well no, but this is, no. He had very strong reasons. Jews were the ones that were a lot better then, but then most Jews were endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights and that inalienable right, the principal inalienable right is their brain, and some Jews don't use it and my father was very specific as who as Jews didn't use it and why they were assholes or whatever. Probably contributed to the demise of the Western world and all that sort of stuff, whereas others were trying to create the Westernized world and whatever, whatever. I don't know. I don't know. I wish I did. I mean I would really-it would be more pleasant and much more relaxing. I don't know what it is either. I was explaining to my students recently, the myth of, you know, that kind push a rock all the way up and then it falls down. And I think to myself, this is a very bad state of affairs. I take a great deal of pride in Daniel and Ruth. I feel their pain very directly.

INT: Their pain very directly?

JOAN: Yeah.

INT: For what? In what way?

JOAN: When they suffer, I have a physical reaction.

INT: Oh, their pain.

JOAN: Their unhappiness over something affects me viscerally.

INT: So it sounds like you're saying you've become exquisitely attuned to other people's feelings that are close to you. You knew to protect Mom when you got the call from Bellevue where she had to be protected, what your brother needed, very plugged in to Ruth and Daniel.

JOAN: Yes. It would be interesting to speak to Joel whether he feels that way, that he's been plugged into too.

INT: Actually there's a brief interview for spouses of children of survivors.

JOAN: Yeah. I think that would give interesting questions for you to ask him, if in fact I see myself as tuned in and therefore nurturing or whatever that is, do I also, am I also tuned in with sort of nurturing, helpful, supportive of him.

INT: How do you size up the word responsible, because you felt responsible at times? Came in there with sort of a role mother and obviously with your own children.

JOAN: (Tearful) I think you feel responsible because you have to say to yourself if I had been hit (crying) and like I'm here because my mother left.

INT: Here meaning alive?

JOAN: Yeah.

INT: So that your grandmother had the foresight to bring her-

JOAN: Yeah. How come? Read some of the poetry that came out of the stuff like that. And children...I live with that...

INT: You're fortunate to be a survivor. That imbues the sense of that-

JOAN: Well, that sounds very self-serving to your study and I don't really feel that. (Laughter) I'm saying that may be part of it. I don't really know. I think it's history and then it's also-you know, it's the environment and it's genetic. It's just all together. My father was who he was because of where he came from, what he did and what was going on in the world around him. So am I. So is everybody else. And what you do or make with what you have. I suppose I think in a way (long pause, tearful) that I'm very disappointed in myself. (Phone is ringing for a while-Nu, already, I'm not home! Where do you think I am? You think that I'm angry?)

INT: Someone is very persistent-

JOAN: And I don't know in what, in the same way that I know that my father died very disappointed in himself. (Tearful) That's a real sad way to die. (Long pause) I mean, he never lived up to his expectations. I don't know that he has any idea of what his expectations and that's one of the things I've learned from Joel and I'm so pleased Ruth is this way, you set goals for yourself and you-when you reach the goal that you picked, okay, you did it. So you have accomplished. (Crying) Forever. So I'm paying-I don't know what you're paying. I see that. I think my father felt that too, that he could have done more or better. There are people who would say, "Oh, you know, yesterday I mowed the lawn." Oh, that's so wonderful. (Laughter)

INT: And you would say, "Yesterday I mowed the lawn-"

JOAN: Yesterday I mowed the lawn and I cleaned the house and I cooked and I taught three classes and I graded some papers and I talked to students and I am planning this trip because I want to go to this conference, and then at the end of the day you're exhausted and there's nothing. I mean, I don't know. I don't know. I know that I'm envious. I know I am envious of people who have an idea of who they are and where they're going and why they're here. I'm not stupid. I don't think that-I know that there are lots of people who don't have it. I don't know why I have such-(Interrupts tape to answer phone)

INT: We were interrupted by the phone and we're resuming with the story of Joan leaving China.

JOAN: I remember very clearly the night that we left Shanghai, my mother, my brother and I. Because Shanghai was a port that was mined by the communists so that big ships couldn't come in, so we had to go out in a Fanpan, [small Chinese boat] which was a very flat kind of a ship, a canoe-like vessel, and we had to be very, very quiet and we were lying very low. We were

covered by a vinyl, like some sort of tarp, who knows what it was, and my mother had her hand over my mouth, one hand over my mouth and one hand over Moishe's mouth. And I remember very clearly taking her hand away. And she looked at me and she said, "You have to very quiet." And I looked at her like, I know, I'm five years old. I can handle it, or something like that. I remember that very clearly. And I remember-I don't remember how long that ride lasted, but I remember when we went into the big ship from the small ship. It was in the middle of the ocean, and I remember going up the stairs, a wooden plank with a rope. You know how you go up on a ship, but it was a very enormous-for a child of five, it was a very, very tall and long road. My mother had my brother in her arms and she had a bag on her shoulders that contained the most important things in our lives, our passports and our papers. And there was no more room on the plank. I had to go up by myself, and as you know I'm very tall and I was very tall in those days too.

INT: We're being facetious here. (Laughter)

JOAN: So the space between the plank, you know, was for an adult. It was very hard for me to climb. I remember it being so hard, and I remember looking down into the black, because it was the ocean, and I remember my mother was behind me and she said, "Don't look back." Don't look down, or whatever. And I just remember walking up. That was the night we left Shanghai. Then I remember-

INT: Do you remember being frightened, excited, numb, scared?

JOAN: Petrified, scared, numb. And having to be grownup. Having to be grownup. My mother had Moishe to worry about. I had to carry my own weight. You know, I always did. But I was quite a character, I guess. Then I remember on the boat-the next memory I have is of ice cream. The American soldier gave us ice cream, which I loved.

INT: On the boat?

JOAN: From the boat. And I remember getting a lot of extra ice cream because of my mother. (Laughter) I remember that as if it were yesterday. You know, in subsequent years when I saw pictures and my mother would say to me, "I was very pretty." She never had to tell me that. I remember. We got a lot of extra food because of my mother. I don't know what else we got. (Laughter) But we got a lot of ice cream. I remember at one point we were on the boat and we were crossing and my mother said to me, "That's the Rock of Gibraltar. Don't forget what it looks like." And then we made a very short stop in Hawaii. Honolulu. And what I wanted more than anything else was a hula skirt and somehow my mother managed to leave Moishe on the ship with some other person, probably one of the sailors, I don't know (laughter). Whatever. Somebody babysat. I remember taking a cab from the ship. Parenthetically, I have a suspicion that it was not kosher to get off the ship, to do that, but I also have the suspicion that my mother managed it. Her charm or whatever.

We took a cab from the boat to a store that was a little like Macy's. I've never seen anything like that. It was clearly a big store, big store, a beautiful big store. And there we bought a hula skirt and a thing, and I remember-I don't remember being in the store as much as in the cab going

back and then getting back on the ship. And then we were supposed to land in San Francisco. It was promised that we could get off, debark in San Francisco. I'm sure my mother told you this. She was very excited because she would be able to see her father. That was re-routed and so we went to Texas. So I remember that about Shanghai and of course to me, Ethel and the store at Shanghai.

INT: Do you remember when everybody was hiding you under this pyramid when they bombed Shanghai? Any sensations, recollections, of what-being a kid?

JOAN: I assume in this instance because, you know, after you take Psych 1 you have all the answers to everything. I'm sure that that's where my claustrophobia comes from, among other things. I also am petrified of thunder and lightening. Lots of people are petrified of thunder and lightening. You don't say, "That's because I heard bombs when I was a little kid." I don't know.

INT: Do you remember any sort of snippets of what you might have been thinking or feeling when these adults are covering over you, bombs are going off? Any sensations, do you remember?

JOAN: No. I assume that perhaps it was warm or hot, and maybe as a baby or at that point I must have been like three or two, or three or four, maybe it was in fact kind of nice. Maybe you felt kind of warm-I don't remember playing a game because you know it's not a game. You don't have to be told this is not a game, and serious as adults could be. I remember my mother being beautiful. I remember my mother getting dressed to go places. I remember my father being very skinny and smoking a lot of cigarettes. I remember Ethel's smell.

I remember about twenty years ago Joel and I were in Chinatown in New York and we happened to go into a store and I picked something up and I said, "Joel, this is delicious." And he said, "What is it?" And I said, "I don't know but this is delicious," and I described to him what it was and it was the first time in thirty years that I had seen that and it was pickled olives and things like that, that I used to obviously eat in China because I certainly did not eat them in Venezuela, and I opened the package and it was what I suspected it to be, and it was funny and we laughed about it.

I remember snippets of things. I remember being in a market with the ama. Do you know who an ama is? An ama is like a servant or the person in charge of taking care of the children. Like a governess.

INT: How do you spell that?

JOAN: A-M-A. Everybody has an ama that cared for everybody, and I used to go to the market with the ama and I remember seeing the pickled cabbage which I always used to love, and I remember always getting little snippets. She would buy me some to taste and I think she wasn't supposed to do it or something. I think I wasn't supposed to eat that kind of stuff.

And then one day-my mother used to tell the story that I was sitting on the potty. There were several different things in Shanghai. I don't know if my mother explained it. We were in a very big house at one point and then we had to move to another house and another house. There was

just a lot of change and my memories were confused as to what room is in what. I remember my father had a lot of-there were always people in the house. This is what I remember about our house. Not the little apartment, not Ethel's room but always people. There was always music. And every time there was music I would come out and dance. No matter who was there I danced. But my father would say, "Tsatsse, come and dance," and I would...and my father would forever tell that story. I was very sociable even at that stage because there was always people in the house. Perfect strangers. My father picked everybody up. People off the Burma Road. People off the-you know, some poor schmuck on the street needed a shirt, so he said, "Come home. I have a closet full of shirts." The next thing my mother would know there were no shirts in the closet. Always people in the house.

What else? I remember that. I remember my father telling-maybe my mother told you this. My father told a story. Once he came home from work in the afternoon, at an unexpected time, and this group of Chinese kids playing outside the door and everybody was talking and he turned around and he noticed that I was one of them, and he was so pleased. My Chinese was flawless. That was something that made him very proud of me evidently.

INT: That you had a gift for languages?

JOAN: I don't know about that, but I was speaking Chinese.

INT: You do have a gift for languages.

JOAN: So-I don't know. (Tearful) I just feel so sorry for my father. I don't feel that sorry for my mother. I don't know why. I think in a certain way her life was more fulfilled. You know, she had great unhappiness when she was married and great upheaval, but she made a life for herself. There were many moments of fulfillment and pleasure. I think she expected less out of life, possibly along sexual lines so that her fulfillment in her children and stuff like that. My father, I think, maybe was more like I am. I don't know what it is. Maybe not but it seems to me that he was always looking for something, and then in his later life he was a charge d'affaires for Venezuela in Israel.

INT: Which means what?

JOAN: It was a diplomatic position. Somewhat attached to the embassy, which in some ways was sort of a glorified position they created for him. Did she tell you that he was made an honorary citizen of Venezuela? It was an act of Congress. Anyway. He wrote a... You ought to get a hold of those papers. I don't really know where they are. But anyway. So they gave him this position. Once he told me he was going to an old neighborhood in Jerusalem. I think the three of them. (Soft, inaudible-something about a Jewish temple) It's one thing to... That may be my interpretation. My father may have been interested and curious. Maybe I'm attaching the need. It seemed to me it had played...

I want to sit on the beach in Florida and just watch the waves. I told you that. It was a whole... Marion says that I'm the only person she knows that feels nostalgia for the present. Isn't that lovely? She hasn't said that in a while. Either I'm improving or I'm not talking to her too much,

one or the other, but she says still and I cannot believe...it's true. It is so. It goes from the past to the future almost, and what's the future?

INT: ...is it a sense of sort of trying to hold on to that nostalgia, to help preserve?

JOAN: Well, of course. It's my father. I was thinking about this the other day because it's imminent, certainly when in the realm of soon to come when my mother will not be with us. I was thinking about that a lot and I... You know, whether my mother was strong and the situation around her made her strong enough to cope, whether, in fact, she is a less sensitive and less perceptive person, maybe, whatever.

INT: Or a combination of both.

JOAN: Yeah. Whatever the accidents of fate were in his case, I really do believe, certainly now, and my mother has a happy life. I am so happy that my mother is happy. I don't want her to leave. Maybe I'm pretending to myself, but I think that if she left tomorrow I would say, but you know, at least since my father passed away (laughter) she'd have a very nice life. That doesn't say much for him. There's another really very important issue. (Long pause) I remember also feeling liberated when my father died, and that, of course, allowed me no-an infinite amount of guilt. So-and in a way my brother-I mean, it would have been even worse for my brother.

INT: Long enough for your brother. You said that he too was liberated in some ways when your father died?

JOAN: In a very painful way and all that, you know. (End of tape 2, side 2)

INT: ...on October 31, 1996.

JOAN: I don't know exactly what a dysfunctional family is and it's something that we use, you know. I think that we use it. You throw those kind of words around, but now we are using those kind of words around, you know. The father worked for more hours than he did-oh, this is a dysfunctional family. But I mean, I guess I would think that everybody was so-that's not it. It seems to me so attuned, so protective, so scary, that it's too much already.

INT: Too much of what?

JOAN: Well, I don't know. In many ways my brother too, I mean, in his own way was protecting and caring for my parents, you know, sparing them, whatever. I don't know, in his own way. So I think the attachment, the attachment was not healthy. There was no point at which the children grew up and stood up on their own or whatever the textbooks say you should do, rebel and then come back to the fold as a more mature person and use your parents as adults, you know, whatever. (Laughter) Whatever the textbooks say. That never happened. And if you see my mother talk about my brother today, it still hasn't happened. It's fine. I'm happy for her sake that it hasn't had to change.

INT: Any guesses to why that is?

JOAN: Yeah. I mean, I think it's a very obvious thing in some way, we understand, each one of us, from the time we were displaced that all we had was the four of us, and the messages were sent to my brother and to me. And the only way that they knew how to send them and they should have been smarter, they should have both of them taken Psych 1 and they would have known what to do, but they didn't, and then as life went on and embittered them and did certain things to both of them, then those were negative ties. They were negative change in a sense. Okay, so we could have turned out to be murderers or something or thieves. It's not that we turned out that bad but we certainly are neither one of us turned out my father's dreams. And do we have to be the fulfillment of our father's dream? Do we have to-do we have to be condemned for the sins of our fathers? Do we have to revel in the success of our father's successes because our father was...

INT: So how do you answer that?

JOAN: It's an interesting question. That's not an original. I wish I had thought of it. It's not an original question. I don't know. And sometimes I'm a little bit concerned, at least the way Ruth's life has taken on little twists recently, but I think she's still very young and her interest that she got through-that she got through Brown about that Latin American Jewish stuff. That was an effort to find her type of group, but that's fine, especially when you hear what she functions right now at the university level where everybody in a sense has been to have to find their own particular mold to multi-cultural niche, but I sort of hope that eventually she'll come out of it. In a positive sense she will have gathered some information that's important to her, who she is, and then gone on. I don't think I want her to live with one foot in the past, and yet again, you know, you read in the paper and all these-all the alta-cackers are dying off in Europe, all these people that are telling their stories, so who's going to be left to tell the story? I don't know, but is it Ruth's responsibility? Is it my responsibility?

INT: To tell the story or to listen to it?

JOAN: To continue-I don't know. (Pause) To start new. I vacillate between the situations of condemning my students and condemning my colleague and people around me who don't seem to have a clue about history. How could you not? You don't live in a vacuum. This was not invented yesterday. Articles that I read-whoa, guess what? (Mock surprise) All you have to do-you can read about the Inquisition. Hitler wouldn't have been so surprising if everybody had remembered the Inquisition or something like that. So on one hand, you've got to, you know, and on the other hand, because we live here in the land of opportunity, (pause) maybe it's enough already. So Ruth should know her history. And all the time I'm always saying, "Ruth, I don't..."

Because Daniel is younger and Daniel has gotten less of an impact. Daniel does not remember my father or Joel's father. Daniel's relationship with my mother is absolutely fabulous for a perfectly normal American teenager and his grandmother. "Hey Gran, what's up? I got to leave." You know. It doesn't seem to have those other things. Last night on the phone she [her mother] says to me-my mother was saying something that I can't believe, you know, and the little lady and this and that and she said, "Tell me the story about what Abie said when he came to the hospital." That's why I worry about her.

INT: So she sometimes has one foot in the past.

JOAN: And it's okay. It is who she is. That's why she is so wonderful. And as Joel reminds me, it's important. It is not a bad thing.

INT: So what makes you worry about her?

JOAN: (Long pause) Again, it's not fair. Daniel might be very sensitive too. He's a different personality.

INT: Each child is different and unique.

JOAN: Well, I won't tell you. It doesn't take a genius to figure out. I think that with Ruth I always have the guilt about the beginning. As I got older I got to be a better mother, but at the beginning, and the stage that I was going through at the time might have in some ways affected her adversely. This again, this is straight out of Psych 1, but I think that's part of the guilt in the relationship I have. I don't know. All I know is that if I think that somebody cut Ruth, I bleed, whereas Daniel, I mean, I think I would cut off my hand for Daniel, but I'm not so sure that I would bleed. It's almost like it's healthier.

INT: So with Ruth it's much more symbiotic.

JOAN: And I don't think that's good for her or for me, but I think that she is growing up now and that this that she's going through right now is part of creating who she is, and once she reaches the stage that we are very, very different in so many wonderful ways, because she is so much stronger than I am and so much more like Joel. She's so good. I'm so happy about that. Again, she'll come out of it and the net result is going to be wonderful, great. So I really don't have to worry about it, and sometimes I worry that Daniel doesn't have enough of it. So basically, what do you do? What are you saying I should do? You're saying that you want to program your children along the lines of the program you believe in. You're saying you want your children to think for themselves and be independent. Mind you, provided they do all the right things. Which are what? What are the right things?

INT: To be educated, to be what? What are the right things that you want your children to have?

JOAN: (Very softly) I want them to know who they are.

INT: Who they are? In what sense?

JOAN: (Long pause) I want them to know who they are in a sense that, well, (pause) a basic sense. That they have to be good Jewish kids, in my father's words, because it's totally out of their control, that some things may happen by virtue of the fact that they're Jewish.

INT: So in some ways do you see them as vulnerable because you look at the past and to everything from well before the Inquisitions up to this and somehow they too are vulnerable even though-

JOAN: It is. However, on the plus side, as long as I do believe that so firmly, on the plus side, it's such a rich inheritance. (Softly and slowly) If you explore it, you always have to push your brain. You always have to know more. You always have to read more. You always have to learn.

INT: You have to use the Jewish intellect.

JOAN: Yes. (Tearful) Because you are-that same intellect is going to get you right back into the gas chamber is that same intellect that is so great! (Pause) So you're so lucky. You've got the...So, how would you feel if your daughter married a not Jewish person? (Laughter) And what happens to her Jewish intellect?

INT: Do you want to save that, because we have to talk about you as an adult.

JOAN: Oh, yeah. Didn't we already talk about me as an adult?

INT: Well, we'll use slightly different angles.

JOAN: Oh, I thought we covered all my angles already. (Laughter) There are more angles?

INT: This is the end of the taping of the interview on October 31, 1996.

INT: This is an interview with Joan Friedman on November 21, 1996. (Conversation about the workings of the recorder) We talked a lot about your parents and what their life was like and how your father was displaced because of anti-Semitism, but not as directly as your mother. Now I'd like to talk a little bit about you and find out how you as a person were affected or influenced or somehow in some way it had an impact on you, so why don't we start by talking a little bit about yourself. How do you see yourself influenced by what happened in the previous generation?

JOAN: Even I don't know how. None of this is the answer.

INT: (Conversation about tissues)

JOAN: I don't know because that's too weird to ask, because, you know, when you get to be an adult and you read so much-what about your past makes what you read click? I mean, I've always known that I was Jewish, and I've sort of always known that I was-and I lived in places where that was being different, in a way, how was life...I don't know. Can you say that my major professional interest right now in Latin American Jewish literature has something to do with my past? It obviously does. What sort of a role does it play? An enormous role, because I've learned through that that I know a great deal about the Jewish conditions since 1492, a lot of things I didn't particularly know and I've read a great deal about the Inquisition and this bitter time. I've read about the migrations of Jews throughout the world, how they got to different places, why they are who they are. In a way, they're still trying to figure that. The kinds of things that they wrote. I'm very into the second and third generation Brazilians, Venezuelan, Argentinean authors who really have a Jewish dilemma with them in addition to other dilemmas, because they're always at war. Part of the minority in the society that they lived in.

So all the issues that interest many followers today concerning in the mainstream, out of the mainstream and how does this affect you, and all the glib technology and the deconstructing of all the text and all that kind of stuff, for me it has an additional interest because if I read a text and a woman like...in Brazil so I know the background, so she has a couple of quadruple whammies, not just double-whammies. She is a woman in a society where that is definitely a minority, she's a Jew in a society of Catholics so that's a definite minority. She's a writer in a society...all sorts of issues, so I'm interested in it. A common thread. Yeah, I'm interested in how a person, a writer, can consider themselves Venezuelan and Jewish and contemporary and a woman and all those sort of things.

INT: That relates to you in your own issues about being a woman, having been born in China, grown up in Venezuela, then coming here.

JOAN: Yeah. A little bit of that.

INT: Being Jewish in a basically non-Jewish community.

JOAN: That doesn't bother me in the least. Being Jewish in a non-Jewish community is something I've always dealt with. As a matter of fact, when I was Jewish and lived in New York it was kind of weird.

INT: Because?

JOAN: Because lots of other people were just like me. I think one of the things I have learned though and that I've become very conscious of-when I was younger and some of my friends would say, "Oh, you know, tell so-and-so where you're from. You know, it's so unusual where you're from." And then for a while you think, enough already, you want to assimilate like everybody else. I spent most of my life trying to assimilate. I want to be like [name of person]. I want to be tall and thin and waspy.

INT: That was my fantasy about twenty years ago, also when I met her.

JOAN: And my fantasy sort of hasn't changed. Well, look, you can-but I don't know.

INT: She is a good prototype.

JOAN: Sharon Stone or something. (Laughter) So I think-so then I think what happened at one point is that I realized that when I talk to people, when I talk to my colleagues who I think are very intelligent and very worldly and have interesting backgrounds, I realize that in fact there are very few people I know who have as an interesting background as I have who have done what I have done with my background. I guess it comes from how I've come to terms with it, value it.

INT: So what aspects do you value? How did you come to terms with it?

JOAN: I don't know. It sounds sort of glib to say it. I mean, I'm not so sure that I've completely come to terms with it in the sense of-

INT: Well, on a continuing and moving forward-

JOAN: Right. Who the hell-which one of us in terms of whatever, whatever, but in that general sense I sort of-I guess it's like-it's a little bit being better for that difference than most. I find myself very obsessed at what I call younger American Jews, you know what I mean. I mean by that people who not take the religion lightly, because, you know, I'm not a religious person at all. I take the cultural idea. So I have, you know, I have a friend who's in a mixed marriage who says, well, you know, when her son or daughter is a certain age, the son or daughter will decide if they want to be Christian, if they want to be Jewish. It's not a choice. To me it's not a choice. We are a religion and a culture, and I feel the cultural part so strongly. (Pause) I seem to have emotional and intellectual pride that go back to the Inquisition. That's my own world. I move in it. I understand it.

INT: The Inquisition.

JOAN: Yeah. I feel it. When I read the literature of the Marranos and the hidden Jews of New Mexico, I understand the times. I don't understand why other Jews don't know that. I don't understand why many Jews are so disconnected from their history. They're connected to their religion, many of them, but not to their history. Mine is a more intellectual-I mean, I don't know, I don't mean it that way, I don't mean that at all, because clearly the Jewish scholars...I mean, the historical and cultural-that's what I'm saying.

INT: Do you feel that you sort of live in the world of the Inquisition more so than the world of Holocaust?

JOAN: Not really, because one seems to replicate the other in a different sort of way. I do know that I have-I have-I dream a great deal. My dreams are so plain to me. I don't have to go to a...

INT: Could you give me an example?

JOAN: Oh, I guess in a nutshell I suppose you could say...I mean, I dreamt...in light of so many other stories that are so horrendous, but I think there is a need, a guilt. I think my guilt really has to do with being alive. I mean, it's sort of being melodramatic, I mean, I really feel hypocritical about that a lot. I can't stop it. I can't stop it and I can't sit down, and I can never be satisfied with what I've done, and so I thought about that a lot. I think one of those things is I have a very strong sense of time that I've wasted. Very strong sense. And coming perhaps to your point, and I have very little time left to do whatever it is I'm supposed to do and I don't know what it is I'm supposed to do. I'm supposed to be a perfect mother. I'm supposed to be always-whatever my children need, I'm supposed to be the perfect housewife, I'm supposed to be the perfect professional. Why? Because I'm supposed to be. Because I'm Jewish. I mean, that's just who we are. I'm embarrassed that somebody is a Jewish person. A Jewish person doesn't have these sort of things, knowing about history and knowing about him or herself and knowing what we are and knowing where we're going and helping the world. I'm embarrassed.

Last night I was throwing away a piece of bread. I always kiss the bread before I throw it away. I never thought about this. Daniel says to me, "Ma, why do you always kiss the bread before you throw it away?" Not that I throw away bread that often but, you know...and I said, "I don't know.

Granny used to do it.” I think it must have something to do with giving-the guilt of the Jews and throwing food away. When we needed it so badly in the shtetls and we were starving and were just picking bones and the Holocaust...I don’t know. I have no idea, but it would be interesting to find out where that comes from. It is a guilt of throwing food away and that sort of thing. It’s that guilt, I was thinking last night, is that guilt related to the starving in Rwanda? No. That is not at all related to the starving in Rwanda.

INT: What you’re saying is to me it’s more in the past.

JOAN: Because we have to think of Jewish identity. It’s the past rather than the future. I don’t know how to answer the question to what I think. Did I always, in my adult life, feel that way? No. I used to always say-I remember Joel always jokes with me when we first met. He said, “You have to do something. You have to become something. You have to become something. You have to feel like a mensch. You have to have a reason.”

INT: You said that to him?

JOAN: Yeah. You have to have a view of an obituary in the New York Times when you die. And he would always laugh. And recently I said to him, you know, maybe-I don’t know. I was thinking the other day whether it’s still as important to me to have my obituary in the New York Times, and I think it also has a great deal to do with the redemption of the past for me. I feel that kind of responsibility of being my father’s daughter and therefore, what I suppose as an intelligent person I can’t accomplish whatever my father didn’t accomplish and whatever that was and I’m certainly not privy to all or, you know, young kids that may have died in the Holocaust and what could they have become, and you consider what you have become and what contributions you’ve made to human civilization and world culture and the small number that we are, what if they hadn’t gotten rid of so many of us in the Holocaust? What if they hadn’t gotten rid? What if they still weren’t getting rid of-there are so many Americans? So then it brings me down to another issue that I’m totally prejudiced about.

INT: Which is?

JOAN: Intermarriage. This is an issue that I am-I will probably be facing because of the age of my children and the possibilities of it. I have absolutely no tolerance for that. It’s throwing away culture. Why? Because I go to synagogue every Saturday? Not me. I don’t know when the last time I went to synagogue. In fact I feel guilty I don’t go to synagogue, yes, but what entitles me to be like this...and was I always like that? Not always like that. First of all, when I was younger I didn’t give a damn about it. Now as I’m older...How could you not continue in some small way to multiply? I mean, we’re having fewer children than everybody else. Look at Lani Guinier [Black lawyer]. As my father would say, that’s a waste to us. We lost that one. (Laughter)

You know this Edelman, you know. I mean what are the children? The children are wonderful human beings who grew up in a household that the mother had a great deal to do with no doubt, but the father, Mr. Edelman, being Mr. Edelman, married Mrs. Edelman to begin with because, in my opinion, he was the liberal, intelligent human being that he was, to see an intelligence in a woman who happens to be Black. He married her. That’s the purpose of his life, to be intelligent

and to share intelligent ideas, his humane ideas. That the woman happened to be Black made no difference to him. That's the Jew in him. It made him do that with her. That probably helped her in her career and then it probably created wonderful children who grew up in that household. That's my interpretation of that, not the other way around.

There was an article in the Times that I didn't save. It's a young man, I guess about a year ago, wrote a book, a Black man whose father was Jewish. And he wrote a book and it was reviewed all over the place. And then he wrote in his column in the New York Times and I read it. Very intelligent young man, fairly young man, talking about his ideas of freedom, his ideas of human rights and this and this and on and on and on and on and at the bottom, you know, the minorities, because he really thanks his father and I read his article and I said, excuse me young man. It's your father the Jew that permitted you to be this liberal, intelligent Black man that you are today. He and his wisdom that inculcated you with the value and that treated you-

INT: So the gist of the article was that the father had racially intermarried?

JOAN: Correct. And the young Black man that was writing about, you know, his ideas of humanism and his ideas...

INT: That it was the liberal Jewish father-

JOAN: Absolutely.

INT: ...who allowed him-

JOAN: Who brought him up in a certain way to see no differences between human beings. That what was important was the mind and the heart. You could almost take the article apart, I thought- (end of tape 3, side 1) The notion of fairness, equality. What's most important is a man's-a human being's brains, his actions. Not his color, not his race. All these notions that is in our views. That's where we are liberals. That's where the Jews...

INT: So you're saying you feel differently now, at this stage in life, then you did earlier about these things.

JOAN: Yes. Because I don't think when I was younger it made any difference. I mean, I don't think-my mind was on other things, I think.

INT: So why does it make a difference now? Why do these things hurt you? How does that affect your own children?

JOAN: I don't know. Why did it bother me when we went to the Wertheimer bar mitzvah that the rabbi was dressed like a priest? I walk in there and it's like the rabbi is a priest with a long black robe. Excuse me, to me that's an insult. Our quote priests don't dress that way. They never have. What is that meshugas about? Why do you want to look like a minister? And the rabbi-and he said a few things that disturbed me, amazed me, that were not Jewish. They were so ecumenical. They were so-

INT: I mean, that's Reform.

JOAN: Yeah. But that bothered me a lot. It bothered me that a lot of people look upon the synagogue as like a church. You go on Sunday and you have Sunday school and you have children learning all those things but there seems to be no feeling for the-oh, I know. I know what it really is. I know what it is. Now this happens to everybody and everywhere, and historically right now we-so many people have no direct link to the Holocaust.

INT: And therefore?

JOAN: The Holocaust doesn't get in their way. Like our children read about Vietnam and we were surely involved in Vietnam. So their Jewish values are a) either very disreligious or very ecumenical, just somewhat of a social gathering place for people with somewhat like-minded ideas, whereas because of where I come from, for me being a Jew is being a Jew not because you go to synagogue and not because you do certain things but mostly because you pass on certain traditions, and those traditions are not flippant traditions. Just because all the other kids in the neighborhood are having something when they're fifteen so you have something when you're fifteen. If your father or mother decide on a bar mitzvah and a bas mitzvah, having small ceremonies in your house with you reading from the Talmud, from the Torah, and having a few relatives and the father...and the father says to his son, "Today you are a man. These two bookshelves of books, that's yours. Today you get the books." That's what Judaism is to me. The books that I love, that I treasure, some of which I've brought, leaving some other things behind.

INT: So it's knowledge?

JOAN: (pause) It really is-it's so generational. I mean, I, when I say I expect certain things of my children, which I didn't do at their age. Certainly Ruth is much more connected because of me, I think, and whatever. But I find that Joel's sisters' children, they are very nice, they're really very nice young American Jewish kids who practice their tradition and who always come home for Passover and stuff like that. They come from a Conservative kosher home and I think now they are not kosher because they are in college, but clearly they are Jewish and they're a wonderful traditional family. I don't think that they-I know that they don't dream about-a few months ago I dreamt that...that I was a priest and they came and got me and I said, "Where are we going?" And they said, "Oh, because don't you know it's the Holocaust..." Thank G-d they don't have those nightmares. Thank G-d my children don't have the nightmares. I'm not wishing upon them. But why do I have them?

INT: Why do you have them?

JOAN: Well, you know my background so why do I have them? I was born in Shanghai and then I went to Venezuela. I mean, why do I have-it's an intellectual responsibility. It's like an acquired thing. I don't know. It breaks my heart. It breaks my heart to think of the waste and the loss. I don't know. So what? So listen to this. So in order to make up for that loss I'm pushing myself to the brink. Doing what? Oh, making sure that the stuff gets to the laundry on time. How do I, an intelligent person, figure that? That's...what am I supposed-what, what, what? I don't know.

INT: Aren't you aware that other children of survivors feel the same way, do the same things, push themselves to the same brink?

JOAN: I would imagine through some of the things I've read, yes.

INT: That it's not an anomaly.

JOAN: Yeah. From what I've read...the point again is-my grandmother would say, "So vah vuss. So what's the point?" I mean, I can understand if I were pushing myself in a certain direction. If I were a scientist and I felt that I'm going to be the one that's going to cure AIDS. That's a worthwhile contribution to society. What am I running in all directions, contributing to what? That's the thing that puzzles me. What do I think? Do you know what I'm saying?

INT: How do you think this might be related to the guilt that you talked about, the guilt of surviving, of people your age who never got to be your age because their mothers didn't go to Shanghai?

JOAN: Clearly that must be it. But my past is crooked and jagged too because I had the load of my father which was a really difficult kind of a load too, so I don't know. I don't exactly know the answer to the question. I don't want the children to have nightmares. I want them to understand a little better that not only can it happen again but it probably did happen again, many places. You know, this whole thing, the Texaco thing. It's so interesting. Everybody is very up in arms because they were talking about Afro-Americans and why the-excuse me. Let's not forget that according to the newspaper they were talking about Hanukkah too. Nobody has-

INT: That's been downplayed.

JOAN: Well, of course, because we're a minority. We're a majority in that sense. We have a majority. Look at the statistics. And for such a majority, look what we contributed today. One of the possible honorary degrees from Swarthmore College is this guy that created the human rights, you know, the International Human Rights Committee. Be surprised. Tell me what you think what culture this man comes from. Pick a wild guess who the creator for the entire universe, no man of ...you know, the human rights commission-

INT: (?)

JOAN: Oh yes, I'm sure this was an Irish-American, an Afro-American, an Italian-American. Yeah, right. Because they have not had injustice. But we have-we have to share-we have to help the world get better. We. The zero, zero, zero, zero point point zero zero zero percent of the human population. Each one of us is having two children and maybe our children not having children. I was thinking about this. I was talking to you the other day or somebody about Bess Rose and all these people, just in our small community that we know. These lovely young women, the two Schwartz girls, two lovely young women, no marriage, no babies. You don't have to take statistics. I understand that thank G-d religious Jews are having five and six and I have a cousin in Ohio who's on her fourth and I say, mazel tov. My cousin in Israel has four. Well, if I were in Israel I'd have ten just in case six drop. I understand. So I'm very, very involved in the so-called multicultural diversity issues that you and I have talked about before

and that trouble me a great deal, so that has a direct bearing on my political feelings and all that kind of stuff. So if Ruth says that she and Pete are going to get married, to get back to intermarriage, Joel and I would be extremely disappointed. Would we sit shiva the way my father sat over my cousin when she married a goy, who my father, for the rest of his life, felt guilty because he turned out to be such a very wonderful man and my father never forgot his birthday? It's like after he sat shiva for my cousin, he stood up. Anyway-

INT: So if Ruth did marry...

JOAN: Yes. Which she won't because he's Asian-American. His Asian parents will never allow it (laughter) so we have no problem.

INT: They're not any happier with it than you.

JOAN: No. They are-she, I told you, she hangs up on Ruth when Ruth calls him. Clearly this lady is not handling this very well when we're welcoming Pete to the house. No. It's scary and it would be very hurtful.

INT: Is that giving her a mixed message, "I want you to marry a Jew but I'll welcome Pete in our house?"

JOAN: No, I don't think so. I think she knows what the message in this house would be. I mean, she knows that we would not disown her, that we would never talk to her again. None of those things, that nothing could ever make me do that to a child. I remember I even said to her once, we were talking and I said, "You know, if it turned out that you were going...it would actually devastate me." They're my children. And that's how I would feel about it. Also because I'm a little bit older, I know quite a few women who are older, including that lovely Ellen Shachner that you met...Her grandchildren are very active in our synagogue. Lovely people.

INT: That the grandchildren aren't Jewish?

JOAN: That influencing me as well and all that kind of stuff. I don't know. I had one brother only, as you know, and he's married to a Jewish woman but they have no children. They can't have children. So that's it. I'm my mother and my father's line as it were. On Joel's line there's fifteen very lovely children, each having two to three children apiece, so the Friedmans are well represented, but the Ladars are nowhere.

INT: What do you remember about the desire to have kids, the meaning, as it was, to you?

JOAN: I didn't want to have any kids.

INT: What?

JOAN: I didn't want to have any kids.

INT: Right. I remember-

JOAN: I did not want to bring any children into this world.

INT: Because?

JOAN: Well, when I was young it was because of my involvement with the anti-nuclear movement in New York and things like that, and it was the Vietnam War, and I think now I realize all along that it really was as a Jew. Why bring another person to suffer? I never, never-my mother once in fact said to me, “Why do you think it is so terrible? You know, why do you think...when a baby comes into this world, there’s someone to love.” I don’t know.

INT: But you look brave.

JOAN: Evidently. Evidently. I mean, I have-I also have nightmares about, quote, the Holocaust happening. It’s sort of like the Hollywood version of the Holocaust. “Good morning, America. Today is the Holocaust.” Where are the kids? You know, one is over here doing this. Rush, rush, rush. Get the kids because it’s a Holocaust. (Laughter)

INT: So something in you was very vulnerable and that impacted on the decision?

JOAN: I don’t know about vulnerable. I figured-well, vulnerable I guess, but not vulnerable to my kids. I guess actually in charge. I’m not going to do this. Enough of them dying, but to bring more in, whether it was because of the nuclear devastation that we were so afraid of in the fifties and sixties or whether it was going even a step further, so-

INT: So did you and Joel talk about that in the earlier years of your marriage?

JOAN: No, actually we didn’t talk about it too much because in the early years Joel was-we were very young anyway and we figured, you know, we were just going to, you know, quote, establish ourselves or whatever, so Joel is a very lovely man but he was not really, you know, one of those young men who said, “I can’t wait till we have this kid and we’ll put the booties on.” He didn’t have that, that much of a relationship with the kids. He was very nice but he’s not the cootchy-cootchy kind. And he’s really gotten a lot closer to them when they became bigger, so he’s more like that. So it was never a question of him feeling that he was not fulfilled by not having children or things like that. He has a very good sense of himself, and that he’s a good human being and his parents, his father, brought him up to be a proper member of society, a contributing member of society, and he didn’t have to fulfill himself with children or something like that.

And the years went by and we were busy concentrating on Joel’s professional advances and moving to many places and that’s it. So we just continued to be sort of-like many young people still are doing, like Beth’s daughters and stuff. You know, you just go from one job to another. We were in New York. We lived three years in New York where we always went to the theater and out to eat. Whatever, some day. And then someday was whoops. You know, hello, I’m thirty. Maybe this is the time. Well, what do you think? It’s weird. You know, I’m thirty. All that sort of stuff.

INT: So how did you come to decide or did it just sort of happen?

JOAN: I think it really just sort of happened. We sort of at one point decided well, if it happens, it happens.

INT: But you consciously stopped using birth control.

JOAN: Yes. Sure. And then when Ruth was born it was-I mean, I totally felt-I felt I'm equal to the past, to put it very mildly. So you mentioned last week and you said, "Do you think this was part of the post-partum depression?" The post-partum depression lasted about three years. Yeah. Something like that. Then I decided that for her sake I was going to take her to Trinity so she should be with other kids. I was not working at the time. Something, not because I needed it, so I would take her to Trinity in the morning.

INT: That was the nursery, Trinity nursery school?

JOAN: Yeah. No, that was day care. This is before nursery school, because she was-before...

INT: ... nursery school.

JOAN: It was before, because she didn't do nursery school. She just did for the two years of Trinity and went directly to kindergarten. I would carry her all the way and deposit her there. Totally guilt ridden. And then drop her off. You know how kids are-sometimes they cry, sometimes they don't cry. She'd cry and I say-well, this is it. Sometimes she'd be by the window. You know how kids will say they're so happy to be with their buddies, and I cried all the way back home. So then I decided that I had to find things to do.

INT: What were you thinking or feeling when you left her and some days she was happy and some days she was crying?

JOAN: I don't know. I don't know. A bad mother, I guess. How could you do this? I don't know really. I suppose that at the time I had a job, even if I was teaching one course or something. That would have made a whole difference. There was just a lot of stress going in my...first from my move. There was Ruth, then there was me. So there was a lot of stress going on at the time and very far from what it is today. But mostly I said to Joel, "Don't leave me alone with her. I don't know if I can take care of her."

INT: You thought it was a big responsibility and you were scared or because you had-was imbued with some leaning of another generation of Jews?

JOAN: All of the above perhaps. And if I think the first one turned out to be a female, which of course is what I am in my family...People saw us together, dark eyes and dark hair, she looks just like you. And with short hair it's the same face. It's a hundred percent Friedman. There's no question about it. Emotionally she has a little bit mixture but physically it's just from them. They walk the same way. They speak the same way. They smile the same way. Ridiculous. I mean I think that's really very helpful to me. I guess I was-I think I still am concerned about carrying my genes. I'm still waiting for the neurotic, temperamental, unstable element, which seems to be okay so far. He [Daniel] seems to be just an average teenager. He has a lot of good friends.

I'm...Maybe the pernicious part of the genes will skip a generation. Physically, he looks much more like my father.

INT: Well, he looks much more like you.

JOAN: When my mother...He has a lot of the two of us. He is much more stable...

INT: So you went through this long waiting period. I think ten years. How many years between the two babies?

JOAN: Five.

INT: So how did you come to that decision?

JOAN: Well, I guess we must have felt-I felt that we had perfection to there was no sense in having another kid because no other kid could be as perfect. The old clock was ticking, so we pretty much decided at that point that again, that we'll try it. If yes, yes, if no, no. It was a little bit not quite as easy, not quite as fast as Ruth was. I mean, just about approaching Joel's brother, who is a fertility specialist, so it was just ask Jack to give us a reference in Pennsylvania or somebody to maybe start with, whatever, and I remember my father was the person who recommended and the form came. We looked at the size of his house and said, "Oh my G-d." And we were just sort of looking for the form and sort of thinking of...then I found out I was pregnant. Then on both occasions we had amniocentesis because in those days, especially with Ruth, and they didn't do the amniocentesis until third, fourth month.

INT: It wasn't that usual.

JOAN: You know, it was on both sides of the families. Something called [name of disease]. I don't know exactly what it is. It's a bone degeneracy sort of thing, and it turns out that Joel's father's in-laws side of the family, in other words, Joel's aunt's husband, had carried it so that Joel's aunt had a child, Ira. He died young, and it was one of those horrible kind of illness, so Joel's sisters...It turned out that you know what? That both Joel and I are carriers. That's not unusual in Eastern European Jews. You know, he's from over there and I'm from over there, so that was really lucky. We had to go through a lot of stuff from early on and my not telling my parents that I was pregnant because G-d forbid, you know.

INT: Did you have a philosophy about bringing up your kids about where you came from, your past, both of you and Joel living very intellectual, cultural lives? Do you have certain goals that you want for your kids, a vision that influenced how you brought them up?

JOAN: I don't know. I don't know that we have specific philosophies but I assume our lifestyle is something that-I mean, you know, it's true we take those things for granted. I told you my father used to. I don't know if that's for all of us, the schooling...

INT: It's not an option. (Laughter) It's like walking and breathing.

JOAN: Obviously there is an attitude, but I don't know what our philosophy is.

INT: Do you think sometimes of difficulty balancing your needs, Joan as an adult person and the stuff that you come with and their needs?

JOAN: Well, of course, but that's not necessarily connected to my background. The part of that that is connected to my background it would, I think, kind of seeing other women handle that. What do you want to do? You want to go to the pool. When was the last time you went? About four weeks ago. But what do you put off? Well, first I have to clean the bathroom. It's more important to have a clean bathroom than to feel well and go to the pool. I think that's a women's thing. It's just a little bit of both. When I was younger it was always...and I was torn between what I wanted and what I thought I could do. It never entered our minds that when we left Wisconsin, at that time I was close to my dissertation. Joel graduated and got a job in Indianapolis. In those days nobody said, "Well, I'll stay here and finish up." Because that wasn't just me, although I have met several women who said this was just about the time they did separate from the graduate student husband.

INT: When was it? Joel graduated when?

JOAN: We got married in '67. We remember because it was during the Israeli war. Otherwise he probably would have gone in. My father almost didn't come to the wedding because he was glued to the television set. June 11. It was-

INT: Okay. It was June 11.

JOAN: Yeah, we weren't sure that my father was actually going to make it. I immediately enrolled after we got married. [Goes on for a few sentences] continue the role so I felt very guilty about that, about Joel and law school. He was going to be the one to pay the rent and the food. (End of tape 3, side 2)

INT: ...traditional lives?

JOAN: That's a question I don't think has anything really to do.

INT: Except that perhaps it was more influenced by what you were saying earlier, be the best mother, be the best wife, be the best teacher. "I don't have enough time."

JOAN: Yeah, but a lot of women...Again, that's another one of those women things, I think, you know that we all-

INT: That's a very interesting question. You know, how much is it a women's thing and how much is it child of survivors being very aware that many were lost, and does that intercept in a way that heightens it? I don't know the answer but I think that's an interesting question that we look at, you know, as research we look at. Is it a gender thing? Do you become fearful for the children in terms of what can happen to them and were some of the dreams related to that?

JOAN: I think this is really manifested in...At some point it was and at some point it wasn't. That's always a little bit harder to pinpoint. I mean, I know that when the kids are sick I lose it more than Joel does. Thank G-d our kids have never been seriously sick but, you know...

INT: You think you lose it more than your contemporaries who have similar situations? Do you lose it more than Ann or Sharon or any of these contemporaries?

JOAN: Maybe I do. As I said, it's really...we've been, thank G-d, very fortunate by not having any serious illness or any chronic thing, but maybe yeah, but I do magnify the other ones too much I think.

INT: In terms of your mother?

JOAN: Joel would say I magnify most things anyway.

INT: So it's in a range of being Joan.

JOAN: Yeah. So what does that mean, it's interesting, as a child of a survivor? I mean, obviously I have the time to think of it, as do others, and I'd be very interested to hear what you get from Ruth and Daniel. There was a thing about the bread last night. I started to say something. They said, "Okay, I know, Ma. Don't go through this thing again, you know." So did that happen a lot when I was a kid? I don't know. Did my mother say things like that or did my mother, you know...Mostly what they did was try to be so brave and didn't want to talk about such things that happened. Don't burden the children with some of these things, that kind of thing.

INT: That's what your parents did. Your mother in particular wasn't going to talk about those people left behind, some of the relatives that disappeared.

JOAN: Yeah. I just sort of find out about that, you know...and stuff like that, so it clearly wasn't because they were-my mother wasn't running around saying, "Eat your bread because the children out in Germany are starving."

INT: So how did you get the pieces from your mother? What was...Did she have friends, family, that were all left behind in Germany?

JOAN: I don't know. It was like-I do know that it was always very-we were just the four of us. We were always just the four of us, and certainly, I can remember growing up with these humongous families, you know, and it was the four of us. And I have a very specific feeling about that. We were only four. So I had to take care of Moshe because he was my younger brother. Mostly it was just a sense...a sense.

INT: Could you put it in words? (Pause)

JOAN: I don't know. I want to say different. Isolation.

INT: Isolation.

JOAN: Both my parents were really very young, and my mother-well, you've spoken to my mother so you know her ability to put things behind her, and she had to deal with what she had to deal with at the time, which was a load, I mean a whole different culture. And my father as an

adult was very, in many ways, he was emotionally not well. From my point of view he was...Today we would put him in a program and he would do wonderful things. (Laughter) But anyway, you know, so things went up and down all the time and, you know, he went from being a fairly important person in the Big Apple to being a nobody and trying to feed the family and all that, so neither one of them was in any position to...And they came from a generation that my mother referred to very often, where the children were seen but not heard, but the children were there. We don't do something special because these children, particularly the older ones, five years and older, we don't have to explain things to her. This is it. We love her, she's G-d's gift, and she understands and that's the truth. She's a nice Jewish girl.

INT: So it sits there.

JOAN: It's like when you ask my mother how did she cope. So I made it up. So I went along. They were making it up as they went along. I made my own up as I went along. I had a lot of making up to do at five so I don't know that the principal thing that was on my mind is where my cousins and uncles and aunts were, so I just remember-I remember always thinking just the four of us. I mean, I knew that my grandmother was alive and...I don't remember ever talking about why killed. There was just-as a child, we all know as children that there are certain things we cannot ask...at least in the past generation (laughter). We felt that there were limits. Who told us this? We sensed it. I mean, nothing the child could do. When they had a problem, they could go to parents, not go to parents, about questions about sexuality or-there are certain things...I do know so clearly that different things bothered me at night or if I had a problem I never, never would go to my parents. Why? They had enough problems. That was it. I can see myself lying in bed thinking of things...whatever, and thinking, you know, I'd go out and knock on the door and thinking, you know, they have enough problems and they're busy with a lot of stuff. So as a nice Jewish girl, I could sense there were a lot of things.

INT: So you don't ask. You don't make waves. You don't upset these people.

JOAN: Absolutely.

INT: You knew they had enough going on.

JOAN: Absolutely. So how do I describe those feelings about the four of us and what kind of reactions were the not knowing about the disappearance of other people because I knew about them. There were some horrible things over there. Whatever. For whatever reasons I wasn't told, but I wasn't going to ask.

INT: So when do you think you began to learn facts? As you got older did Mom started to tell you?

JOAN: As I got older, and I still don't know half of it. Two days ago I asked and I got some stuff on the...because I said to her, "Well, do you remember the addresses of the places we lived in Shanghai?" She said, "There was an interesting thing in the New York Times about there's a new book out about the Jews in Shanghai that a friend of mine got a hold of before...there was a conference on the Holocaust...and reading the write-up that he brought me, it said blah, blah, blah, that the Jews of Hunque..." I said to my mother, "Mom, what does Hunque mean?" "Oh

yeah,” she said, “that was the ghetto. That’s where we all lived. I mean, it was not a ghetto, but it was where all the German Jews lived.” “Oh.” I mean, I didn’t know the name. So every so often something comes up, I write down a name or where did we live in. Sometimes my mother doesn’t remember, and come to think of it, and I really should put down our address because I almost can’t remember now either. I mean, Joel and I have lived in about eight places. We didn’t think about it even in times of peace, so I don’t know lots of stuff. Things come up and life goes on and-

INT: How did you let your children know or communicated to your children about the reason that you have lived so many places and...and your multiculturalism which clearly showed, you know, within five minutes of meeting you? How did you let your kids know about-somehow related to Jewish history?

JOAN: I don’t know. I remember telling Ruth. I don’t know if I’ve told Daniel yet. Daniel. (Calls Daniel) Daniel. Good morning, my sweetness, my baby. Look at my baby. Say hello. Look at my little teensy, weensy baby. (Tape shuts) The only thing that I’m going to give the kids when I die is my birth certificate. Did I ever show you my birth certificate?

INT: No.

JOAN: Because my birth certificate says Shanghai Jewish Hospital.

INT: Shanghai Jewish Hospital.

JOAN: Nationality-Stateless. Because they go to the mother. My mother was stateless.

INT: Because she had left Germany and was not a citizen yet.

JOAN: What more inheritance can you give a person? That’s it. That’s me.

INT: That’s a pretty powerful message, Joan. We knew that message.

INT: Do you remember how Ruth reacted to that?

JOAN: No, I don’t remember. I don’t have too many-I have just a few treasures. I’ll show you sometimes. I have a picture-do you want to see it now?

INT: Yeah.

JOAN: I can bring it right down.

INT: Okay, great.

JOAN: March 1950. March 13, 1950, she was inoculated to leave Shanghai. Look at what my mother looked like.

INT: Oh, wow. Pretty woman.

JOAN: Gorgeous?

INT: Can I Xerox this?

JOAN: Yeah. You're a good Jew. These are the...(Showing pictures) national inoculation of Venezuela consulate, Shanghai quarantine service. Look at this...

INT: Oh, what a cute baby.

JOAN: At age seven.

INT: So you were seven when you left Shanghai?

JOAN: I don't think I was seven. My mother says five because I was born in '43-

INT: And this was '50.

JOAN: Gee, I've been lying all these years. I've been saying I left Shanghai when I was five. (Laughter) Look at this. This is Moishe.

INT: Oh.

JOAN: Wasn't he ugly? Gee, I have to show her that picture. We've had this argument before. Here you go. Here's my birth certificate. This is the original here. I have to do something about this thing. It's falling apart. I don't know. What do you do with these things? Actually, look at the original.

INT: So February 20, 1943, Joan Esther, female. Hospital. Mother was twenty-one when she had you. Nationality-stateless.

JOAN: They got my number and everything.

INT: Certified to be a true copy of the...Joan Esther Ladar and the...by the Shanghai Ashkenazi Jewish Communal Association. That's incredible. So there was an association of Ashkenazi Jews in Shanghai.

JOAN: Mm-hm. Do you think this will come out-

INT: Yes, it does.

JOAN: Actually, I really have to see it. My mother put, you know how in the olden days-

INT: Right. They put scotch tape on it.

JOAN: I don't really know what to do. I must take it to the library and ask them how you process it.

INT: There may be some way to preserve it.

JOAN: Yeah, I should. I have my father's too.

INT: So this is when you were leaving on the boat?

JOAN: Mm-hm.

INT: From Shanghai.

JOAN: Mm-hm. And here we got another stamp, the Concourse, in San Francisco. They stamped it again. (Looking through pictures)

INT: I'll take yours and your mother's and I'll Xerox. We have a Xerox in the house if it comes out on that. (Discuss some documents or pictures) That she filled in?

JOAN: I think so. This is my mother's handwriting. Yup.

INT: Yeah, cause these look the same. The Ladars are the same.

JOAN: Yup. That's my mother's handwriting. This is-not so much that...in print but this is exactly what it looked like when she...

INT: Yeah. Nationality or province-stateless.

JOAN: And I have my father's someplace. I don't have any stuff from Germany.

INT: Do you think your mother didn't take anything or she just discarded it along her many roads?

JOAN: I think she discarded it along the many roads. My grandmother Erna had a lot of stuff and it's probably sitting in a box because, you know, my mother and her brother had a falling out in New York.

INT: Oh, I didn't know.

JOAN: Oh yes. It was over-take a guess.

INT: I don't know.

JOAN: Money.

INT: Money.

JOAN: So he ended up, I think, with whatever my grandmother had, the boxes. My mother-at one point my mother was thinking of suing him. So she didn't do that and she just walked away from it, and then my uncle passed away, so I think there are boxes of things that I have to go look at one of these days and there must be some stuff.

INT: So some of this has not yet been seen.

JOAN: What, this stuff?

INT: Yeah, some of this.

JOAN: Not necessarily... [Goes on a few sentences]. I said, oh, that was my purpose in life I just remembered. Thank you. Thank you so much. I'm setting myself up...

INT: Isn't that your job?

JOAN: That's my job. It's my job to make them happy. (Referring to her kids)

INT: See, I tell my kids that part of my job is to nag them. (Rambling conversation)

JOAN: My mother once told me when she used to fight with my Uncle Werner. My mother looks exactly like, very much, like her father.

INT: When she used to fight with who?

JOAN: Her brother. Uncle Werner. My mother looks exactly like-looks very much like her father, and Werner looks very much like my grandmother and a young woman, Wendy McKenna, who's the actress. I said to him the actress is beautiful, beautiful. She looks exactly like my grandmother Erna. Anyway, so my mother used to tell her brother when they fought that he didn't look like his father or something...and they picked him up in the street corner, whoever it was that abandoned him on the street corner...

INT: (?)

JOAN: She was mean to him. She would do things, you know, anyway, you get the whole pie or something and then somebody would say, "Who ate up the whole pie?" And she'd say, "Werner." It was so cruel.

INT: So when you look back at this time, back at your life, back at your mother's life and history, what do you see as successes in her life?

JOAN: Oh, myself?

INT: Yes, yourself.

JOAN: Oh, I see it so unfairly. I basically see that if I haven't-this is established. It's very...because, as I said, I told you, I live in the past a lot in the sense that I think if not this, then...and that I think is generational. I mean, I think...I think, especially when I'm...college, professional college, maybe if I haven't had this shitload to deal with in those years, I could be more together professionally. I am directly...My entire psychic mood. I think all those factors, be it environmental background and the genetic background, which I believe in very strongly. (The rest of paragraph is murmured on the tape and is difficult to understand)

INT: Yes, I agree with you.

JOAN: And it's just awful. But I think that-I think we really are-we are from where we are. So desirous intellectually of being part of that history that they convert and then they follow the precepts. I know that if you cut here it comes out Jewish. That I always know.

INT: I think a very strong sense of Jewishness.

JOAN: Yeah. In the American context it's very hard for me and for lots of reasons, because my parents weren't really practicing and I didn't practice-I always felt awkward in the synagogue. (The rest of the paragraph is inaudible)

INT: Say that again.

JOAN: Well, Melissa [Interviewer's daughter] wouldn't-were you bat mitzvahed?

INT: No.

JOAN: Is this an issue for Melissa?

INT: A little bit. But my ignorance is a little bit of an issue to her.

JOAN: Your ignorance, but it is not a question of did you purposely, did your parents say you can be bat mitzvahed if you want to-

INT: No. There was no option. I was not given the choice.

JOAN: Absolutely. Absolutely. That's what I'm saying. So this is something that Ruth understands. It's not part of the deal at all. So how I feel she...for me, thinking that part of my- (end of tape 4, side 1)

INT: Ruth might have wanted an option?

JOAN: There wasn't any choice because of my parents' troubles, probably all those problems that they had da, da, da, so she sees that as part of my package, I think.

INT: So that she is close to you in some way?

JOAN: No, so that to the extent that she heard from me that, I would imagine, that was related to her as a survivor of a survivor.

INT: Okay.

JOAN: As opposed to someone who either had the choice and then did it or the other kids weren't doing it. I think that for Ruth that's part of academia, which clearly it is, I mean, in a sense. It's not a conscious decision but it's interesting to note and I explained it to her, that even at that time there were children in Venezuela that were getting bar and bat mitzvahed. In Caracas, not where we lived, cause it was a larger community, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, so it was not just a question of I was in Venezuela and therefore I was not bat mitzvahed. You've heard, first of all, in the fifties that it wasn't done, that's true, and secondly certainly not where

we were. To her, it's part of the association of a thing, those things that I haven't been able to have because of the journey that I had to take. Whatever. It would be interesting to see what she says, because I can't think of other things that, you know-

INT: When I first asked the question about how you can see your own successes and failures...

JOAN: The kids, the kids. However, there would not be successes had it not been for Joel.

INT: Explain.

JOAN: Well, they would not be what they are today, which is pretty terrific, if not for Joel's input as well, and I would not have been-they're not my successes. They're a shared success.

INT: They're a shared success, but-

JOAN: And no. No big but. A very big but. I mean, I by myself would not have been able to produce that. I don't mean just in the physical sense.

INT: But then you as a team, that means that you and Joel as a team were able to function in this special way as parents and successfully. Do you see that as a reflection on yourself?

JOAN: Yeah. I mean, clearly that's the answer...success...children, but I'm-the jury is still out. I mean, that's how I guess I feel about it. That's why I...I'm still-it's sort of healing, still ongoing, so when you ask what I think my successes and failures, I just think of accomplishments.

INT: What about the lives of the students? I'm sure over the years you touched many students' lives. So how do you see that?

JOAN: Maybe I do touch a lot of people's lives and so does Joel, what does that have to do with-everybody touches people's lives.

INT: Not always in a good way.

JOAN: I'm sure there are a handful of students out there who can answer that question for you too (laughter) and say, "That woman, no way. No way. Spare me that woman." I don't really see it that way. I don't-I don't know. I would like to...like sometimes we're sitting in the garden, although I'm much better and better, we're in the garden and says, you know...I'm sitting now. (Laughter) And I keep saying, "I'll be right there." He says, "Now." And over the years I've-I'm thinking, I mean, it's not an original idea, it's Joel's head. He sits there and Joel sits back and says, "Ah, look at our garden, looks so great." That's everything. Last summer we were complimenting me.

INT: On getting better at enjoying?

JOAN: Look at the tree. Look at-and even of saying the summer was really very important. We're saying-at 4:00 I said, "Love, I'm tired. Let's quit." And he looks up and he says, "Okay."

INT: Do you feel you're entitled to the enjoyment of the beauty and of your garden and of your life, of your home and family?

JOAN: (pause) I'm still trying to earn it. (Pause) That's why I have to keep earning it, whether it's cleaning or cooking or making sure the refrigerator is full. I have to keep earning it, that's all. (Voice shaking)

INT: Earning the entitlement to enjoy something?

JOAN: Whatever, yeah. (Soft, slow voice) Yeah. I mean, I don't know how some people get up in the morning, and some people, you know, like they don't-they get up in the morning and they make a cup of coffee and they just sit there with a book or if they make a...it's okay, you know. You don't have to do something. You can be. I don't know what that means. How could you just be? I know lots of people that are.

INT: What do you think prevents you from just being?

JOAN: I don't know. I wake up in the morning...and then I do everything...and from Thursday because on Friday they're doing for Saturday...I couldn't do anything. I couldn't get up and do something, you know. I'll do the laundry while I'm grading papers, and while I'm grading papers I'll start the dinner. Dinner has to be cooked every day. I know. Dinner was cooked last night and there's nothing for dinner today. It was not cooked for tonight. Tonight is something else. And I can't get up. I mean, I can't. (Laughter) This is why we're here.

INT: Right. To relax.

JOAN: The first few minutes...Then I realized and I looked at you and the mike. I'm really laughing. It's really okay. And then this is really interesting too. I'm just thinking like-and then my second thing I have to come with Joel. I really have to get Joel out of the office. Already I'm in the middle. Joseph is on there every Sunday. As soon as I get back...I'm going to talk him into it and...I consider that a waste of time. You understand that? I know, I know what a waste of time those crazy hours are. I don't have to...So there are twenty-five thousand things to do in a day...and I do the twenty-five thousand and usually very well. I don't say this very often but every so often I say, hm, okay? And then at the end of the day we stop and say, "Well, how was your day?" I say, "Well, you know, I still have this to do and this to do and this and this."

INT: Is it never good enough? Complete enough?

JOAN: Absolutely. And then I work on it at night too.

INT: Do you really think those standards-

JOAN: Absolutely clear. It's exhausting. I mean I like to...This last one that I gave...that didn't work at all cause that-I mean, I got it because...and then it was more about...but I don't know. I was exhausted last time after the-when I talked to you.

INT: I'm sure you'll be exhausted today.

JOAN: Probably. But I think that mostly I was exhausted because after you left I kept going, which is not unusual for me either. That has to do with where I'm from and I don't know. That is. It's a combination of where I'm from, but...My father used to do it. My mother doesn't do that. My mother has never done it. That's why she looks the way she looks. (Laughter)

INT: Wonderful, right?

JOAN: Since I've known my mother, my mother sleeps like a baby...I think that we could adapt to our environment and certainly in this day and age, you know, with medication we can correct certain genetic chemical deficiencies. By and large, I just think that that's...If I had a choice I'd rather be...If I had-if I had a choice of picking to be me or somebody else, I would pick somebody else. (Long pause) There's got to be an easier way to make a living. (Laughter) The sadness, the sadness, the waste of potential, waste of years. (Tearful) Life turns out, and I always felt bad for my mother because-I told you the other day one of the saddest things that happened that-I think that...very happy with her children and her health is great and she's not in pain or anything like that. One of the best things that happened to her was getting rid of my father. If that had happened a little bit earlier that would have been good but-

INT: That he...

JOAN: With my father. He died a bitter and sad man. I'm not going to die that way-I know that. He always felt and he was right that life is completely...really raw deal. You know, life dealt my mother a pretty raw deal too but-not that you don't care about this but I still believe this. My mother is a person genetically equipped to handle it. She has a-I am so curious about this, I can't tell you. I'm not a miracle person. I am so serious about this. I've never been more serious in my life. My mother managed to do what Prozac would have done for my father. I can't-I don't give her credit for that. I don't think people are entitled to credit for that. (Crying)

INT: For genetic predispositions?

JOAN: Right. And just a sadness for my father that he didn't have, so that he could, at some point-

INT: Do you think less of people because of their genetic disposition?

JOAN: I think that the people like my mother are lucky, and if I had a choice I would be like that, and I would have liked my father to have had some of that. I somehow feel-not because historically, as I said, my mother...because historically, you know, he came from a poor little, a very little...from a shtetl. But he never came out of it in a way. He was brilliant. He could have...anyway. So then history took over too, to remind him, I think, and I feel that that was me, or my father and me. I think very often about having been able to break the...I have an understanding as I understand it, because...

INT: You can...

JOAN: I can.

INT: (?)

JOAN: (Crying) There was always just a lot of pain. I don't think you can right it. It isn't something I should carry as a burden. I should have knowledge about it. I think I will always carry it as a pain, and I think that in a way-I think, I don't know, I kind of need that pain and that's sort of a pain that connects me and that I'm connected to his past in pain. I'm supposed to have...so that I need to remember the pain. And I'm very good at reminding myself. (Laughter)

INT: There's a very Jewish way of being.

JOAN: Yes.

INT: The history of shared suffering and pain.

JOAN: Yes. But it makes sense when you think about how I can read a text of what happened during the Inquisition and feel so attuned to it, and I don't feel, you know, and I could understand the causes of World War I and the causes and the results of the Industrial Revolution and some of the movements of mankind, that I can feel the Inquisition. I mean, that's life, cause I've made it my own. But as to how that transfers to the next generation would be interesting to find out. What they just sense neurotic and loss of control, kind of a manic-depressive thing, and do they think that there's something more historical, or in fact they might rationalize in all of it and then again, how do you put one foot in front of the other if you're going to rationalize?

INT: (?)

JOAN: Mm-hm.

INT: In what respect? Would you say much of the...

JOAN: That's the difference between me and Joel.

INT: And that's why...

JOAN: Absolutely. If I hadn't married, if I hadn't had children...more of an analytic situation...

INT: How would it...

JOAN: (pause) It would be more of an academic and intellectual exercise and it would be less emotional, because I wouldn't be thinking in terms of the children and things like that. I would have also created for myself a stronger persona by now, in the last twenty years. A stronger wall, how I function-not be happier but to function better.

INT: So a husband and children somehow keep you real and in touch...

JOAN: And weaker.

INT: (?)

JOAN: I know where-I know one strength that I do have, and I've noticed it sort of lately in life. I am a wonderful public relations person. It's probably what I should have done for a living, because I don't know, it just seems to come natural, and when I'm in a room talking to people, I get all these people together and then they're all talking and then they're following up and then they're emailing each other and I don't know, and so I did all the contacting. It's very interesting. I really think I could have made a bundle of money out of that and enjoyed it. It's like-it's like a party girl, I guess. Party girl. Whatever, you know. And like that also allows me, cause I know that that's true, it allows me to do what I like to do, which is to just hit the surface. Hit the surface. Don't go below.

INT: That allows you also to overcome it.

JOAN: Absolutely. Absolutely.

INT: Cause when you're on-

JOAN: Oh, man. Oh, of course. I know. My father was exactly like that. Exactly like that. I remember sitting and listening to my father, these people around him. There were always people in our house. And he'd be talking about the most stupidest, most boring subject and everybody would sit and listen. He also very often took the position of a devil's advocate, which he loved doing. Instead of just saying, you know, in the mid seventies that he was going to vote for George Wallace, because he was the only person you could possibly vote for in this country, and man, and then getting these discussions going and standing his ground and proving his ground. It was fascinating to see that. You know, the public persona. I used to always say, I wish I had been my father's friend and not my father's daughter. His public persona was wonderful.

I think I'm better than that in terms of the kids. I certainly hope so, although I do think, I mean, it's a lot harder to have me for a mother than somebody else. I mean, you got to figure that out. It doesn't take a genius. So these two guys, they have that load and it would be interesting to see how they deal, and in that regard I always feel strong because...The way he comes across I'm sure that the children see the balance, but that's okay. Being the balance is his [Joel's] tradition. Where I stand on this because I'm always...so I think the problem has figured out, you know, what the bullshit and what the other stuff is, and I'm sure...Sure it's a bigger burden than others. It has to be. I mean, not because you're talking all the time about the Holocaust or stuff like that, but just-I'm the only person I know that hasn't gone to the Holocaust Museum yet. (end of tape 4, side 2)

So who knows, you know. I don't know. I have a cousin who lives in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. She's the daughter of my father's sister. She's the one that married a non-Jewish person. She has, I don't know, a million children and she's a grandmother or a great grandma. She went through some of the same stuff. Some of it was different. Some of it was the same, because her mother was my father's sister and had the same baggage. In those days, they used to call it a nervous breakdown. She had a couple of nervous breakdowns, then she was okay. Now she seems to be all right. When I saw her when my aunt passed away...She had, this woman who died had six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. It's interesting. She was a very nice, good human being, but this is not a problem that...craziest mother...She told me that she had

some boxes of pictures, and those are really important pictures to me because those would be some pictures of when my father and those guys were younger and I don't have any of them. (Crying) It's a long way...In Baptist Church...Who the hell is he to sit shiva over this woman who as an adult has made a decision to marry this man? I remember saying that. I almost understand it today.

INT: And it was her funeral, no, her daughter was married out to a Baptist.

JOAN: Right.

INT: So that at her funeral...

JOAN: Yes. I don't know whether he was a Baptist or...a really nice family man, loving and caring. Well, that's not true. But anyway, I had absolutely no respect for him at all. (This conversation is about a man who married a non-Jewish woman.) I just could not tolerate that woman. I mean, aside from that, it's like, you know...For this you have to marry somebody that wasn't Jewish? What kind of big deal did you get? I mean, you didn't want the Jewish American Princess. What about-excuse me. There were still other options other than this. For this you had to break your mother's heart? (Laughter) That kind of a thing. That's my reaction to Sharon. I mean, I could not tolerate that woman.

So aside from everything else, and then he was, you know, been around shopping with Nathan at one point and then they decided that Nathan didn't want to have his bar mitzvah or whatever. And I said to her once-I asked her, because I saw her at our synagogue once...and then I saw her once so I said, "How are you?" "Oh, you know," she said, "You know, Nathan decided he didn't want to date." I said, "What kind of kid in his right mind is going to say..." So she looked at me like-she asked, and Nathan...I mean, I just...of deal with any of these. To me, I kind of...

INT: Because he married a non-Jew?

JOAN: Well, yes. And he married such a non-feeling, not intelligent, not perceptive, not...you know. I cannot accept that. What if he married a non-Jew and she converted? I said to Joel, "Whose fault is that? That's your brother's fault...and I respect him less because of that." And he said, "It is my opinion..." In doing that they have severed their ties with the past as it were and accepted the history. How could it be true when it was Joel's brothers belong to a Reform synagogue and all four boys were bar mitzvah? I said, "Who..." They're Jewish. They're American Jews. What is your problem? How can you go to a bar mitzvah? There was a guy standing there who looked like a priest. Excuse me. You want to be Christian, be a Christian. Why do we have to look like them? Put a nice cross on the back, have an organ play. Give me a break already! Don't go to synagogue. Don't go to synagogue. So that's another issue. That's another issue.

INT: Why don't we wrap up for today?

JOAN: Yeah, is this wrap up forever?

INT: No. A little bit more. Just a little bit more.

JOAN: Why? What more?

INT: Just some more stuff.

JOAN: So why don't we do the more today?

INT: You want to do the more today?

JOAN: Yes.

INT: You want to keep going?

JOAN: Yes. Let's do the more today.

INT: All right. (Tape shuts) This is March 11, 1997, and this is a continuation of an interview with Joan Friedman, which last section was back in November. Time got away from us, but we're going to continue and probably wrap it up. We really are starting. When you think back on your experiences and the journey your life has taken, what do you think enabled you to adapt to a wide variety of circumstances that really were changing every few years in your life for a while? What do you think made that possible?

JOAN: (Laughter) That's not such a good question because I don't think it was possible. I don't think it was a success.

INT: In what ways? You lived in Venezuela. You got through college here.

JOAN: Yeah, but I don't consider it-well, I guess I don't consider them successful completions. (Laughter) You know, just-the question is what do you think enabled you? Nothing, because I don't consider that that was-(phone rings, tape shuts) I mean, I know that when I first-after Ruth was born I had therapy. I saw a psychiatrist. I don't know if it's therapy or counseling or whatever. And I think I learned something. Well, I didn't really learn anything but one of the things I kind of remember him telling me, and then first of all, then he said, you know, that I should be on some anti-depressant and stuff, and this and that, because he felt that there was I suppose a genetic predisposition. Maybe that was...whatever. And then when he explained a little bit about me, he said it was-he found-I mean, he must have said a lot of stuff to me. Well, actually not so much...but I think in the course of the two or three years that I saw him on and off, he must have said a lot of things to me. I don't remember any of them, but I do remember him saying, because that was so flattering to me, that he was absolutely amazed that I had been able to get through my Masters degree and actually accomplish what I had accomplished by that point, because he considers that I had quite a few handicaps and that I had managed to somehow deal in that world and come out somewhat normal, and so that's the answer to your question.

How did I deal? I guess it's like my mother would say. I dealt. I don't know. I don't know. But it all comes out later. It all comes out-it comes out in thought processes that never stop. It just-I'm equally-the past is almost with me right now. I remember vividly-I mean, lots of people remember but things, you know, that are-

INT: Like what sort of things do you remember really vividly from the past?

JOAN: Well, that's kind of hard. I guess I shouldn't have been so quick in saying that.

INT: Or in what way is the past always with you?

JOAN: Well, I hear my father's voice a lot. I hear myself talking when I was younger and the way I used to think. Sometimes it's almost like a double life in a very strange kind of way. I dream very intensely and in very great detail and sometimes there's very little difference between-I mean, it's like even while I'm dreaming I'll say, "Ahh, you're dreaming." Okay. You know, whatever. And then I remember that vividly the next day and so I sort of incorporate it to the baggage, you know, of this memory thing. I don't know.

INT: Are the dreams related to the journey, the Holocaust?

JOAN: Many times.

INT: In terms of having to move, parents-your mother to China, from China to Venezuela, from Venezuela to Manhattan.

JOAN: Many times. Many times. There are a couple that are...and they're wonderful dreams. Well, other people probably have these too but I am this age, you know. I'm this age with Ruth and Daniel or whatever but I'm dealing with my father on issues when I was a little girl or something like that. I just thought that those are so charming. (Tape shuts for phone) It's like-I think...asked me this once. I've been very depressed many times in my life, but I don't ever truly believe that I ever was suicidal. It was never an issue. I mean, it was like-I don't know what happens and what the process is that gets you from depression to even considering suicide or whatever. Some people might say that I've done things to myself that are almost suicidal. I mean, I drink. There are periods where I've drunk a lot and stuff like that. I cannot answer that question because I'm so disappointed in myself. How can I answer the question?

INT: So that your own disappointment in yourself in some way locks or clouds the ability to see that in some ways you've adapted to several cultures?

JOAN: Correct. Absolutely.

INT: Because in New York City and Hunter College is a whole different culture than Swarthmore College.

JOAN: Oh yes. And when I went to Hunter College I was eighteen years old and I had just come from a very small town in Venezuela.

INT: How did you make that transition?

JOAN: I intellectually understand that, but I still hold it against myself that I did not succeed. I mean, I didn't do better.

INT: According to whose standards?

JOAN: Mine and my father's, I suppose. (Laughter) I don't want to go back, the Talmud, I don't know. (Laughter) I don't know. I don't have an answer. That's why I can't answer. My mother said to me when you-when you asked her the question she said, "Oh, you know what? You got up in the morning, you put one foot..." And you have to, you know. I suppose the crisis in my life really came after Ruth was born. Obviously, cause then it was-as my mother said, "Well, you have to put one foot in front of the other because you got to feed the kids, you got to..." All of a sudden I had to put one foot in front of the other in a weird sort of way and it was really very hard.

INT: Aside from what was going on biologically, because women get post-partum depressions. It's hormonal. It's still...but if you'd look at another aspect of that, do you think in some way that having a child brought forth things that linked you to the generations past and to future generations in a different way?

JOAN: Well, possibly, and therein perhaps was the crux, that in order to tie a past and a present, you have to have a link. I mean, a past and a future, you have to have a link, and I was very certain that this link was a deficient link, so what kind of a connection is this? In every possible way, I was a deficient link.

INT: You were the deficient link?

JOAN: Naturally. Therefore, look how much harm I am going to do on Ruth. Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. It's really sad. I think about this sometimes and I guess I've thought about this more recently. There were many happy moments with Ruth as a baby, but in my memory there seem to be more concerned moments, guilty moments, worrisome moments. What am I going to...how am I going to not damage this child? All this sort of thing. I sometimes look at pictures and I see myself smiling in the pictures and I see Ruth, she's actually adorable, so I know there were very many moments, many, many happy moments, but when I see young mothers with children, I think to myself, I'm not-I'm not so sure how happy Ruth's life was, because a child must have sensed, you know, the tension, the concerns. Is this all right? Is it perfect? Oh, you have to have, you know...Aside from what all other mothers do, you know, you haven't had your apple today, I mean, I had the other stuff so to me sometimes it's heavy. Like I see it and I think that it was a little easier with Daniel. I don't know.

INT: Do you think some of that is linked to your particular life story and your mother's life story, being caught up in the war and the emigrating?

JOAN: I don't see how it could not have been. But you know, it's a different generation. Well, we're still part of the generation and nobody said, "Well, you think dear," you know, these awful things were happening all around the world. I remember the Suez Canal situation, for instance, cause I remember vividly reading Life Magazine and seeing the big pictures and stuff like that, but I don't remember anybody talking in front of me about it. I know that my parents were extremely concerned. There was a little blue box that was always in our house that was the money to send to Israel for the trees or whatever they send, and my father, you know, my father

was practically the founder of CARE or whatever those things are. My aunt and uncle and all those people in Israel, they received packages constantly. That was...I don't remember being there and hearing about it, but it was there. I mean, it was there. So there must-I mean, my father and my mother must have. Whether they spent hours and hours discussing it or not or just sort of, gee, you know, the Suez Canal, but I don't remember hearing it from them. My memory is seeing it in Life Magazine.

So I think there was always this absolute concern about protecting me in the sense of-it was so horrible we don't have to talk about it. Not that it didn't happen or anything but, you know, don't bother the children. Auntie so and so, oh, she passed away. It was very sad. She passed away. Whatever. That kind of stuff. So I don't know how much I knew. I still don't know how much I know. I just always intuit it. I've learned more as I got older about the actual history. I'm interested because of the Swiss bank situation. I'm looking into my grandmother's family and I just got a piece of information that my grandmother's mother died in Theresienstadt, and there's proof of that. Well, whatever. Everybody died. That's what you heard, you know. Who, where, what. So that was what I grew up with.

I mean, my father, you know, would rant and rave about the damn Arabs or whoever, but there was nothing, you know, nothing that linked me necessarily directly, except that everything linked me. Their entire way of being, their entire thought processes, everything. I mean, I was in Venezuela. I knew more about Israel...Israel, Israel. All this sort of stuff. As to how much went back to specifically the Holocaust, specifically this, everything went back to it. My father's entire life revolved...I mean, he never forgave Germany. This was part of-I grew up with this. We don't buy any German product in this house ever. If there's anything here that's German that I don't know-I mean, it's because I don't know about it. These kind of...so it's an integral part, but as to specifically, I don't know. I don't know if I can answer the question.

INT: That's okay. Many children of survivors or child survivors say the same thing. It's always there. I could intuit it. It has always been there. But how did it get there I'm not really sure. It's just there.

JOAN: And also because you're asking the question of a person who's fifty-two years of age now and have had a lot of time to think. I also do a great deal of reading on the Holocaust and stuff like that, so a lot of it at this point is a learned memory too, where I can assume my family being in certain situations. I told you the story that-or actually my mother told you this. This is the one story that was with me throughout childhood. I don't know when it was told to me, but this one I never forgot and that was that Uncle so-and-so was the family dentist, and Granny, my mother's mother called up to make an appointment for my mother to see the dentist. She called one day and there was another voice on the other side of the phone and said, "No, sorry, Dr. so-and-so doesn't live here." My grandmother said, "What do you mean Dr. so-and-so doesn't live there? I mean, he's lived there for the last thirty years." "No, there's nobody here by that name," and they hung up. And that was it. And there was story that on the surface it was sort of clean. There was no bloody stories. It made an incredible impression on me. I guess then, you know, then we all read of Anne Frank. I mean, I saw at that time it all sort of fit it, so it was never specifically told.

Then at some point later in my life, I forget, but this was quite a bit later, about my mother's cousin Manfred, who was the only child of my mother's mother's brother, and he was an only child and he was coming home from school one day and he never came home. That's-I don't remember when I heard that story, but you must remember that I spent twelve years of my life in a Catholic school, where, you know, we were told that the Jews had killed Christ. (Laughter) I mean, a hodge-podge of...and when I came home, if I asked any questions, which I didn't, because we didn't used to ask questions and we certainly weren't told anything, my father used to say, "Okay, now you have-what's important in life is to be a mensch." Okay, so the three, four year, ten, twelve, fifteen-year-old person goes out and says, "I know. I know it's important to life to be a mensch." Ah, thank you so much. (Laughter)

So you ask me about what helps you get through things? I don't know. But there is a strength. There is a strength that I have that I know Joel doesn't have, that I know my children don't have. It's my weakness and my strength.

INT: In what ways? In what ways? I think that-

JOAN: I can't explain that. It's having (pause)...I don't know how to explain it. One thing comes to mind. Maybe I told you this before already. When Joel and I, in 1972 we were traveling in Europe, mostly in Italy, and we took the train. We decided at the very last moment to visit a friend in Copenhagen, so of course the train had to go through Germany. I mean, that was the only-we wouldn't allow it any other way, and also, we did this an overnight journey, but that's how we did most of our journeys because we were very poor and we slept on the train, Joel and I. Then we got to our destination. So we're fast asleep and I have this-I think it's a memory. See, I don't-I know it's a memory. Joel can corroborate this but it's a fact, cause he was there. We were fast asleep. At some point the train stops and people get on the train and they're clicking their heels and they're doing Achtung, Achtung, Achtung, and they want to see your passport. I went into a fit.

It's like that scene with Woody Allen. No, I don't have any problem with authority. (Laughter) Do you know? That's it. We just looked at each other and it would be interesting to ask Joel. I don't remember it. I don't remember crying. I just remember really hyperventilating, and I can remember that. Why? Because to me it sounded like so many other things that I had heard and read and seen. It was me. It was part of my life. It hadn't actually happened to me, but it was me. In movies, in novels, in books, in stories. I had heard the clicking, clicking, clicking, clicking. And then it happened to me. There was nothing unusual about that.

INT: So for a moment you got thrown back to another time, another place.

JOAN: And it fit in. It fit in. No problem. As I said, it would be interesting to ask Joel. He would say, "Oh, that is awful," and we chat a little bit and then he went back to sleep. I think my reaction was, that's awful. That's the way it is when you're in Germany. Hello. Wake up world. I'm not sure. I'm making a little bit of fun out of it right now, but I always have that sense of I got one foot there and one foot here. I don't have any historical distance in a sense. You see, the kids-which is horrible. I mean, the kids, and Daniel said, you know, "So-and-so has a television set and so-and-so has a computer in his own room," and so on and so on. Excuse me. Do you

know that in the shtetl there was no food? Give me a break. What does that have to do with this kid who's fifteen years old in 1997? To me? What do you mean? I understand that. You know, in the shtetls there was no food. They used to just burn a cigarette.

INT: So that time sort of collapses for you?

JOAN: Uch, the whole thing.

INT: It's all one, rather than being discreet?

JOAN: Oh yeah. And I understand it perfectly.

INT: How do you understand that? How do you make sense of that?

JOAN: Out of my feeling or out of the fact?

INT: The fact that time collapses. It's not compartmentalized.

JOAN: I don't know. In a way I'm really happy that my children are going to have that. Joel sleeps a lot better because he doesn't have that. On the other hand, that's my strength too. It's like saying, you know, it's like saying, my children, at some point, may have to question their loyalties. Are they Americans? Are they Jews? Are they whatever? I don't have any problem. I know who I am in that sense.

INT: Who are you?

JOAN: I'm the one that's going to go in the chambers when they open the chambers. There's no problem. (Tape shuts for phone)

INT: Resuming back to where we were, wherever that may have been. Let's see. You were talking a little bit about adaptation and you were talking in some ways that how the journey your life has taken has both given you weakness and strength. How do you think that-when you have a world view, do you think that has made you more optimistic, more pessimistic, more hopeful because you've seen people can do and adjust even though it may be hard, that they don't, or do you think that it's taken away from something in some way? Do you understand what I'm asking?

JOAN: Mm-hm. Well, let's see. I think impatient is a good word. It's made me more impatient with the world. I understand some of my father's impatience too when he used to scream and yell at the newscasters. What, again, we...Didn't you already learn? (Imitates her father's voice). You know, it's the same impatience that I feel also, you know, when I say to Joel, excuse-(end of tape 5, side 1)

INT: ...about Ruth's insecurity, your impatience.

JOAN: Yeah. My impatience with saying, you know, again already. We discussed this already. How many more times do I have to discuss-how many times do I have to tell her how wonderful

she is and how much I love her? So I think it's a certain amount of impatience, I think, with the world. But it just always really still is-I suppose most human beings spend their lives wanting to fit in. Fit in. Whatever it is you're fitting in with. If you're a hermit, you want to fit into the... (laughter) I don't know. And I just never feel I fit in anywhere. It was very hard for me to be here in Swarthmore at first. I don't play tennis, I don't...whatever. I mean, I just didn't know-until I went back to teaching, I mean, I just-it's like I don't know where I fit. I think that's just the answer to the question. When I'm in Venezuela I feel like I fit there and I miss things here and when I'm over here I miss over there. I say to Joel, you know, "I can live there." I'm not so sure I can. Oh, that's just...I have bad reentry just about every time I come back from Venezuela. It just evokes a whole mess of stuff.

INT: Like what kind of stuff?

JOAN: Okay. Pessimism. I think that's the other word you brought up. I have a view of the world, I think, and just getting over it, and I'm very proud to admit this, and in fact I said this to Joel when we were in Santa Fe. Maybe the hormones have something to do with this (laughter). I certainly hope they do. It's a confluence of stars. I mean, everything in life is always a confluence of stars. It's the hormones plus the this plus the that plus the fact that we were actually looking at the stars in Santa Fe. I always saw the world as-my world, my place in the world, as just one of missed opportunities. Failure. Missed opportunities. Whatever. Those kind of pessimistic negative feelings.

I was talking to the editor of my book when I was in-I went to Albuquerque to meet her and we were talking and we were sitting there and I was thinking, G-d, you know, if I had done this twenty years ago, look how much, you know, and I was conscious of that going through my mind as we were talking, and I'm so proud of myself because I didn't let myself get into that. I said to myself, I'm really happy I did it now. Hello. (Laughter) You know, I know what the Psyche 1 textbooks say, but I think-but mostly in my life...

You were saying, before you asked what kinds of things I think about when I think about, you know, when my memory is mixed with my past life and my present life. That's one of it. It's missed opportunities. I should have done this. I should have done that. How could I have done this? Constantly. Constantly. And in my case it has to do always-most of the time, I'd say, ninety percent of the time with academic accomplishment and world accomplishment, you know, what the outside world sees as accomplishment, not as what I see as accomplishment. No, I don't know the difference. I judge myself by the way others judge me.

INT: Do you think that sometimes that inhibits your sense of joy or happiness?

JOAN: Definitely. And I probably would eliminate sometime from your question and say all the time. That's where that living in the two worlds also always comes in. I mean, I can't have a good enough time. I can, but then right away I think-it's almost like the-I guess it's like, you know, the folksy Jewish saying, you know, you shouldn't get too many blessings because then the opposite of blessings, the damnation or whatever, is right behind it. I really had a lot of good luck this week. Shh. Don't talk about it, it'll give you the evil eye. Yes. I am conscious of good things when they happen to me and I don't take them for granted.

INT: What do you do with them when good things happen?

JOAN: I mean, it sounds really silly but I guess I thank G-d first of all, and lately, in my old age, I'm trying to train myself to remember. (Laughter) Hello. Next time you're in this and this, remember this minute because you're really happy now. Remember, remember, remember.

INT: So you're trying to savor in some ways the good things and hold onto them?

JOAN: I'm trying to use them. I'm trying to make them work for me so that the next time I'm not feeling very well I can say, but yeah, you know all the bad things you have? Yeah, but do you remember how good it was on Tuesday morning when-I don't know, you went out in the garden and the primroses were up or something. Actually, it's really interesting. I think I'm much more of a pessimist than I think-I mean, I am more of a pessimist than I think I am. I think I see the sad things, the sad part of a good situation right away, or I assume I know it and I can try and articulate in my mind what the possible evil effect of this is going to be. I don't think my mother was that way. I don't see that so much as a German trait. I see that more as a Russian trait maybe, and more superstitious.

My mother came from a much more cultured, in that sense. I don't really think of her as-I can't imagine anything that she may have said or done that would have ever given the feeling of the evil eye, except my whole existence, the pessimism of it all. And yet my mother, as you know, is a very optimistic person, so I think genetically that comes from my father. My father, I think-I don't know when in his life it started but at the time that I knew him when I was a young adult, an adult, I think he felt if anything can go wrong it will, and I think basically I think that too. I think I try-I pretend not to believe that and I pretend to myself that I don't believe that, but I think I probably do. As you're asking the question and you use the word pessimist, I think that colleagues who know me in certain aspects of my professional life would be absolutely amazed for me to use the word pessimist in any way connected to me, and I don't really think of myself that way but I think I am. I think I try not to think, you know what I mean?

INT: Mm-hm. You're saying sometimes the outside image or persona doesn't let on that the-

JOAN: Oh, you're damn right. (Laughter) That was the answer to the-when I spoke to Abrahams. Dr. Abrahams.

INT: Was that the psychiatrist years ago?

JOAN: Yeah. And I said to him, "It's just, you know, it's easy to be depressed." That's easy. I've done that all these years. I know what to do when I'm depressed. I know exactly what to do when I'm depressed too. Depress myself more or do whatever, but it's when you're not depressed that that's when, you know, excuse me, it fell, it fell, hello, what do I do now? And I said, "To reveal myself?" So I think, you know, we all have private and public persona but some of us just have spent thirty-five years building it up because we have to build it up. It's a whole shell. When you have kids and stuff like that and some people can kiss you through it. It's terrible to think of it. I would rather not think of myself as a pessimist. I think I probably am.

INT: What about in terms of being trusting or suspicious? How does that all fit in with this piece for you?

JOAN: (pause) In what sense trusting and suspicious? Professionally or emotionally?

INT: In the way you function in the world in terms of when you're on that train with Joel and the German soldiers came on to look at passports-

JOAN: I accepted that. That was perfectly-it upset me very much but my psyche accepted it.

INT: That it will be okay. That this isn't going to be a reenactment.

JOAN: No. No, no, no. That that's part of life. It's not a reenactment. That still goes on. I mean, I was right then to not trust them and I'm right now, and I continue to be right. That sort of feeling, so I guess that's where it comes into your question. Yeah, because I trust my instincts and I was right then. I knew the Germans were bad. I've always known the Germans are bad. See...that kind of stuff.

INT: So with that kind of thinking, do you think you're more suspicious of people and things or do you feel some things you can trust but other things or sort of feel a little more hesitant, a little more wary of-

JOAN: I'm wary of everything. I don't-in a trust way? I mean, you know, if the car makes a sound that's it. I lost respect. The car's going to break down. That's it.

INT: Okay.

JOAN: The water's tip-tip-tip (dripping sound). We need a new sink because...so in terms of trusting or not trusting on that general scale that you're describing, I'd say that I trust very few things. Very few things.

INT: And that something small you tend to magnify that it's going to...the drip in the sink is going to end up being a flood on your kitchen floor.

JOAN: Sometimes. Yeah, sometimes.

INT: Or am I putting words into your mouth?

JOAN: No. Whether it's big or not, you know, if the car doesn't work that's pretty bad. That the car is going to blow up is irrelevant. You know, to me it's like hello, I worry a lot. When the kids were little I worried tremendously about snow. Something was going to happen to the kids and I wouldn't be able to get out of the house. I wouldn't get out of the driveway cause of the snow and that kind of impediment that's...so it's not trustful. How do I do this, you know? Certainly I can't trust myself to have any qualified...But circumstances around me I can't control. Yeah, I think that's a good way to put it. I think I've always-I've never really thought that I could control circumstances around me. I sort of adapted to the circumstances. Maybe that's a good way to put it.

INT: I think we've covered a lot. Is there anything you want to add, having been through this process, especially we had a long break there before today? Thoughts you've had as you look back on some of this, if you think about what you said or some of the things that came up? Anything you want to add or summarize?

JOAN: Well, I know that the-I don't know if it was the first or second but they were very hard on me after we finished. They weren't hard on me while I was talking to you, but it was-in fact, I think it exacerbated a lot of family stuff. Ruth came home and again, it was my feeling of my G-d, you have so much. How could you be so...

INT: Towards Ruth?

JOAN: Yeah.

INT: My G-d, you, Ruth, have so much.

JOAN: Yeah, that sort of a feeling. I mean, I didn't say that or I probably said it in different ways. And that's okay. Parents can say, "Come on, you know, you're being..." But after talking to you, several times I had this very clear picture of myself as a little girl. (Tearful, in soft voice) Pretty sad. So incredibly sad. It saddened me so much to think of-I guess it was talking to you that reminded me of that and then Ruth's-what appeared to me such unreasonable demands, which I'm sure were not unreasonable but I thought to myself, you know, she's always had so much. I'm not just good-people who loved her and listen and ask, you know, and I thought-I was wondering what I would have been like had I had, you know, and it saddens me sometimes to think that she's young and she's going to mature and now with Daniel. I do feel really strongly that I've spent so much time nurturing her and her feelings and trying to give her strength and I may have neglected Daniel a little bit. I don't know. But I can't-I just was curious to think, you know, had I sort of been a regular little girl, what would I have been like?

INT: When you think about the image of that sad little girl and you say if I were a regular little girl, what do you see yourself? What's that image like? What are you trying to say?

JOAN: I don't really know. For me it's so very hard. I mean, I think of the children that were taken away from their parents. I think of (voice shows emotion) a lot of stuff that has nothing to do with reality, certainly not my reality today. Certainly not my children's reality, and it shouldn't bear on my daily behavior. You know, I don't think it does, but every so often-I'm sure there are other parents who say, wherever they fall in the economic strata, okay, so Joel has three pairs of shoes, you have two and that's fine. But when I say it, it's like-I always have to-you know, I just think that they're very lucky. My children are very lucky.

INT: Because you were unlucky?

JOAN: Yeah. You know, they have their shitload of stuff and they will and excuse me, you don't have to have survived the Holocaust, whatever, but it just sort of amazes me, all the attention that they've had and the devotion, you know, daily, weekly, hourly, to their every need and whim and desire. I don't know. They were children but I just think about having-just imagine those little, little kids that were separated from their parents. I mean, I was not one of

them. In some ways I think how lucky I was. I had very strong feelings about the whole notion of the so-called Jewish princess as they call it here. I guess I resent, I just resent it so. See, that's not-that's not Jewish to me. You see, Jewish is-I still have one foot in the old world and my Jewish is not in this world. I guess that's the other difference. That's the other difference.

INT: Tell me. That's interesting. Tell me what your Jewish is.

JOAN: Well, my Jewish isn't Emily. You know that. It isn't the orthodoxy. My Jewish is-Jesus Christ, you know, you figure you survived the pogroms, you survived...Emily's father told us. You were there. What was it? By the age of twenty-four he had survived, whatever, twenty-four pogroms. What kind of incredible...whatever. Starvation. They ate so little. In the shtetls, in Poland, especially right before the Germans came, I mean, they starved them. They just deprived them of means to feed themselves, and yet they sent these two, three little guys, you know, would sit in the yeshiva and read the...so we went here, we went there, we went all over the place and we survived. That's first of all what Jewish is.

INT: Jewish is survival.

JOAN: Mm-hm. It's to survive. Now it's certainly to survive with dignity and honor. My mother would tell me this story about, you know, after surviving everything she survived, when she got to Venezuela, at the airport or whatever, they said, you know, religion. They have to put in religion because Venezuela is ninety-nine percent Catholic. It certainly was then. And so I don't know for what reason but somebody said, "Oh, just put Catholic. It's like easy. It just crosses you faster." Something like that. And my mother said to me, "Can you just imagine? Everything that we've just been through and now we were going to come to Venezuela (laughter) for the palm trees and the sunshine and yeah, right, just put down Catholic."

My mother's not a hero or heroine. I mean, she is in a different way, but...yeah, I just am very tied to the past. I'm tied to the history of the Jews, to the concept of what a Jew is and the more I read about, you know, all the places in the world that we ended up for a combination of reasons and what we did when we got there and how we survived...I guess it's a matter of great pride to me too, and I don't particularly like it to be (pause)-I worry at what impression certain people have with Jews by meeting certain kinds of Jews, and they like to say, you know, they're not all like that. I feel that way about people in general. I hate when I'm in Venezuela and people say, "Oh, Americans are this or this," and I say, "Oh, there are so many different kinds of Americans," so that's also an intellectual issue with me but...

I was reading something recently. It was very interesting and I think you and I also talked about it, about the difference for the generation that created Israel and that created the kibbutz and worked there and the feelings and the philosophy that went through them, and the fourth and fifth generation that's now born and has to pay all these taxes and, you know, there are welfare situations and there are also this and there's this and that, this and that, and they don't have the same attachment, you know. It's understandable, but to me Israel is the people coming in on the boat and landing there. Is that real? It's actually not real. It has nothing to do with what's going on today, and it's certainly, in a way I guess it really should be more my mother's perspective

than mine, you see, where it isn't. I mean, my mother's been to Israel and she has no problem. To me it's still like the struggle hasn't stopped.

I guess that's it. That's what it is, I think. We can't have everybody know that we're very rich and that we're so smart that they can just, you know, they can come and chop our heads off and get rid of us so quickly or that we are all easily identifiable because we have fancy rings or have fancy cars or fancy...because you know what? Among other things, my mother's entire family had that. She was telling me-I think I told you this, a wonderful story about a piano that was in her house. I forgot now. She told me the name of it, and I hadn't heard of it, and then for some unknown reason I was reading a novel and it turns out that those were the pianos. I mean, Steinway was like dreck in comparison to that. I think the lifestyle was very, very, very wonderful and they were Germans, excuse me. What's to...so I have this very definite feeling, you know, about when they call us, I'm not going to be able to get away with it. I'm there.

INT: What's they call us?

JOAN: Well, when they have to separate the Jews from the others.

INT: In the future.

JOAN: Yeah, right. And they always have to do that. I mean, all you have to do is look around the world today, the rise of anti-Semitism everywhere and-

INT: So that something, you believe, will happen again, because history-

JOAN: Well, I believe it absolutely can happen. I absolutely believe it can happen anywhere, including here in the United States. There's no question in my mind about it. That it probably will not happen, so forth and so on, but in all these-you know, and then just pick up the paper and I hear all these crazies and the percentage of...and they all feed my imagination. So, yeah. You see, so we become more prosperous and then we become the doctors to the kings and queens of Spain, then we become, because we manage our money well, we have a little extra money so we can lend money to certain people. We become money lenders. We become this. We send our kids to school. We are doctors and lawyers. Hell, you know, when things don't go well for somebody, whose fault could it possibly be?

In Croros (?), a small town in Venezuela, the first pharmacies were set up by Jews, the Kippelberns. The first doctors. All these women that came practically from the shtetl, from Romania, wherever they were, they came-I know particularly the history of one family where they just, you know, she taught-she went out to the little towns and taught each and every household to wash their hands and to use alcohol and all this kind of stuff. So that was very nice and great and whatever. But then, when things got tough at one point, the economy was really, really bad and the situation wasn't good and it was very easy for the parish priest to say, you know, "The problem is from the Jews because look at all the money they have and look at what they've been doing." Well, of course they've been working twenty-four hours since they got off the boat but that's never the issue. "Ah, it's the Jews. That's why we're having this problem. We'll get rid of them." It's not a-it's not impossible. See, now that happened in the 1800's in

Venezuela. To me, it's like...That's right. I understand that. I don't have any problem with it.
(Laughter)

INT: That's again with the past and the present all woven together.

JOAN: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. What does it have to do with my immediate reality? Absolutely nothing. Now I also have to adapt into my Holocaust history the history of the Inquisition. Oh thank you, I don't have enough. But in fact I have, because I've read a great amount on the Inquisition and the literature of the Inquisition and yeah, that's again, the Jew as a scapegoat. Terrific. Hello. And it feeds me.

INT: So what you're saying now is that the Jew has been the scapegoat for thousands of years.

JOAN: Yeah.

INT: And what you said before was also that your kind of Jewish was connected to survival. That's one of the things you said.

JOAN: Mm-hm.

INT: Do you think those two connect?

JOAN: I heard a story once. I forget where. Maybe I read it. I think this was back in the Southwest. I must have read it-yeah, all this literature that I read about the Jews in the Southwest, the Conversos and the Marranos and there was a man speaking to a priest and they were standing outside the church. It's beautiful. There are some beautiful plants, you know, there are irises, and I forget the story but the priest explains, you know, the lilies are here, you know, the French that have come and these beautiful, this is from the Spaniards. And he talks about all the people that have come and the Christians and the Protestants and the whatever, and then he's done with all his garden and the man says to the priest, "I notice, Father, that you didn't say anything about the cactus." And so the Father stepped on the cactus and sort of just squished it all up and he said, "You see that. Tomorrow that cactus will be just fine and that's the Jew."

INT: That's sort of-I mean, as I listen to you say that, that sounds optimistic.

JOAN: Well, listen, how can it not be optimistic when you think that in the world, together with all this other meshugasera, there's going to be an Elliot and a Melissa and a Daniel and a Ruth? Somehow, yes. That's part of tomorrow. Yes. And lots of other things. You know, Emily's children, and lots of other-Thank goodness the Orthodox are having lots of babies. (Laughter) Because I tell you, if I had to do it over again, that's one of the things I would do. I honestly would. My cousin in Israel just had her fifth child. I'm terrible. I don't write. I don't even send a gift for the child. I don't even remember the name of the child, but boy, am I excited about that. They sure need it out there. So what is this whole Messianic, you know, if I really felt that way I would have had six, seven children, yes. Anyway...

INT: That's an interesting-

JOAN: But it's not not Jewish, you see. It's not not Jewish in the old sense of Jewish.

INT: Because there's the blend of your pessimism and sort of catastrophic thinking and yet a spirit of rejuvenation and continuation.

JOAN: Well, it's the sweet with the sour. Always.

INT: I was going to say bittersweet.

JOAN: What is that joke? This is in the book that I just translated. It was so lovely. When you lose a leg you thank G-d you didn't lose both legs. When you lose an arm you thank G-d you didn't lose both arms. Whatever. And it just keeps saying things-(end of tape 5, side 2) I guess I know Joel feels this too. That this age, this long Jewish tradition of honor and truthfulness and all those big yucky words that, you know, they really weigh heavy on me, and that I don't know. To wrap up? To wrap up what? So the main title of this research project is-

INT: Oh, you're asking me? Transcending Trauma.

JOAN: Mm-hm. Transcending Trauma. Well, I did not transcend any trauma because I didn't actually suffer any trauma. What trauma did I suffer?

INT: Not in a sense of being in a concentration camp but in the sense of because of who you were. Your parents were displaced in this world.

JOAN: You know what? A lot of people-that happened to a lot of people. Just think of the history of the Armenians. I mean, it's just-it's happened to lots of people and the result of that is what's happening in the former Soviet Union as we speak, so I think sometimes, in reading the paper and seeing what's happening in this country today, I think it's almost like-you know, it's almost like-you know, you have an ingrown toenail, you got to go and see a specialist on the ingrown toenail. I mean, people don't have-what was the word they use? Spine. That was a good word. I mean, come off it already. Just cut out the sh-- and just, you know, whatever. Mind you, I do too. Oh, I feel so sorry for myself all the time. I feel so sorry for myself. Yeah, that's another thing that didn't come up or maybe it came up but in a subtle way cause I don't remember you bringing it up, but I feel very sorry for myself very often. When I have this-

INT: Because?

JOAN: I always think because of what I could have been or what I could have done or how I could have made the world better, whatever. I don't know what. I don't know what. So when they write my obituary in the New York Times they'll say all my big accomplishments. Why is that so important I have no idea, but in a way it has to say, "Jewish." That's the first thing it has to say in the obituary. That's what it has to say. And it isn't like, hello, ha, ha, ha, I survived.

I have a-did I tell you about this, the man I met in Venezuela that just had a grandchild. He and his family left Russia when he was young. Sorry, Germany, so he really grew up in Venezuela and he's in his probably seventies. His oldest son-they've been married for a long time but just had a baby, and his wife said to me, "Joan, I want to tell you something really so sad. He loves

this granddaughter. He and I were sitting and talking and he says to me something in the equivalent in English to 'eat your heart out Hitler. Here's my granddaughter.' But he didn't say it, 'ha.'" He's been so depressed and since-the granddaughter is now five years old and they've just come back to live in Venezuela. Since he's gotten to know the granddaughter what has this been doing? She said he's been so extraordinarily depressed. He thinks about himself as a little boy, about his family, how what a sad-and in fact she said to me, "If you know anybody that can help me or give me some advice or give me some books to read, because Hyman has just been so depressed since the granddaughter came back." I mean, it's so sad. She is coping quite well.

Anyway, so it's a little bit that, you know. In one hand you say, "Hitler, I beat you to it." But we've said that before. We said that to the Inquisition. I don't know. And what does that have to do with me? What do I have to single-handedly, you know, increase the Jewish population of the universe, and are all Jews wonderful? No. And all this kind of stuff. I don't know. It's not my burden. I don't really-you know.

INT: And yet it's an integral part of who you are.

JOAN: Yeah, it is. I just really can't shed it. I can't shed it. I can't shed it. You know, I think I'm getting better. I think I-and I know that the kids-I mean, I just-I know the kids sense all this stuff so, you know, I'm thinking oh yeah, we gave them so much, yeah. We gave them so much. We gave them also a lot. I gave them a lot that they didn't bargain for. So it's not really so fair to say, you know, that Daniel should be better adjusted and this and this and this and this because transcending, well, they have to transcend me. Of course, all children have to transcend their parents. Let's not give me such a big burden, thank you very much.

INT: Thank you, Joan. Thank you.

JOAN: Thank you very much.

INT: (laughter) Thank you.

JOAN: You know, and some are better than others and whatever so let's...but maybe sort of this extra dosage of guilt or that kind of junk, you know, that-I don't know. So transcending...transcending means to me something positive that you jump, you go, you get over the hump. You transcend your measles so the next week you're over measles and your skin is fine or whatever that is. I haven't transcended. Ah, that's, I guess it. I haven't transcended. I'm in the process. I'm a little bit better than I used to be because some people never transcend. That's another issue you have to deal with. Not all issues or problems are solved.

INT: Absolutely. Absolutely.

JOAN: I think that's where a lot of people who I consider too weak don't learn, because if you go to the specialist every time you have an ingrown toenail, when do you learn to deal?

INT: But that's part of coping and adaptation, would you say, is learning to deal.

JOAN: Yeah.

INT: That not everything is transcended. Some things always exist and somehow you cope and you adapt and you deal and you do and you move on.

JOAN: But every single human being does that. Every.

INT: But some better than others.

JOAN: Okay. And who's defining the better?

INT: To be debated academically.

JOAN: You see. So-

INT: It's a continuum. It really is.

JOAN: Yes, absolutely. But, you know, better is what? I understand what you mean by better. What do I mean by better? I don't know. My obituary in the New York Times. I mean, I'm going to really-after I'm dead I'm going to really care? I don't know. And I don't know who started this whole notion, so by whose standards, and I read plenty of very, very exotic obituaries. You know, two thousand books and discovered this and discovered-and I close the page and I say, so what. Right? And my father would say, "Well, the bottom line was, was that person a mensch?" By whose definition, hello? So by whose definition accomplished or transcended or done? And the only time you're done or you're finished transcending is when they put the dirt over the tallis or whatever they put on top of you, and I don't mean the very religious ones with the tallis. They wrap up in the tallis?

INT: Shrouds, I think.

JOAN: It's not a tallis?

INT: No, I think it's just a plain white cotton-

JOAN: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. So-

INT: So-

JOAN: Do you want to ask me anything else?

INT: No. I want to thank you. I know at times it's been difficult and I realize that afterwards, very often, I was aware that you thought about things, but I thank you for sharing it with me and for contributing to the project.

JOAN: You understand that I did this for very selfish reasons.

INT: I understand that perfectly well. I have no illusions about that. (Laughter) I have absolutely no illusions.

JOAN: When I found out about Emily's mother, this will be really the only record.

INT: So we have to thank Emily-

JOAN: Emily's, yes.

INT: And Emily's father for talking about his memories also when he was sitting shiva.

JOAN: That's right. So thank you very much for allowing me to have this. Actually, I'm very, very anxious to see my mother's and to see Ruth's.

INT: I'm sure you are. Ruth's has not been typed yet.

JOAN: Although I have a better idea of Ruth's than I do of my mother's, interestingly enough, cause Ruth is a writer so she's written other pieces, and she's given me some, and Joel and I have seen some of the pieces, so I have a-I understand her sensitivity, whereas I don't my mother's at all, so it will be very interesting.

INT: Yes. Let me shut this off. (End of tape)