

INTERVIEW WITH ROMAN LUFTGLAS

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INTERVIEW WITH ROMAN LUFTGLAS

INT: November 13, and would you please say your name into the mike and the date?

ROMAN: My name is Roman Luftglas and today is November 13th, '94.

INT: '94. Why don't we begin with if you could tell us your date of birth, your place of birth, your marital status, some of the things you and I have talked about already but if you could repeat it for me?

ROMAN: Okay, I was manufactured March 26, 1925 in a town called Strakova; this is between Katovitz and Krakow. It's more or less in Salesia.

INT: And today you live in West Hartford.

ROMAN: I've lived in West Hartford for the past twenty some years with my family.

INT: You're married.

ROMAN: Yes, I am married. I have a wife of 41 years which is kind of unusual now a day. I had three children, all of them are married. I have grandchildren. They all live nearby which I think is a fantastic thing.

INT: Yes. Could you tell us for the record the name of your family members?

ROMAN: Sharon, who is no longer with us, Freida, who is right nearby and Elaine.

INT: How old is Freida?

ROMAN: Freida, oh gosh, she's probably 30. I would have to recall my wife, I don't remember exactly what. They are like three years apart from each other and the youngest one, I think, is 32 years old.

INT: And your grandchildren?

ROMAN: I have Sharon; Sharon left two grandchildren, two children; Hillary and Richard. Freida has three kids; Ethan, Jessica and Sharon. And Elaine has Alissa and Stephanie.

INT: And you've been living here in West Hartford since when?

ROMAN: About since 1970, before then I used to live in South Windsor, before then I used to live in Hartford.

INT: Oh, is that right?

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: And that's, you came to Hartford from?

ROMAN: I came to Hartford from the army as we're going backwards, and I came to the army from South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina to be specific and I came to South Carolina from Europe.

INT: We have the route and we're going to come back to some of the details about...

ROMAN: Certainly.

INT: But let's fill in some other details about your own work status and if you could tell to us a bit about your line, the work that you do and how long you've been doing it.

ROMAN: Presently or for the last 39 years I owned a store. Right now at this moment I am retired. My wife is the chief executive officer, she's the big boss and I am nothing so she is the boss of a nothing. I had a photographic store. Without plugging, it's called the Camera Bar, and I consider it rather successful, and I enjoy it immensely and I'm still trying, it keeps me active.

INT: You still work there?

ROMAN: I come in sometimes, yes. I am officially retired but I just, I just go over there and do whatever.

INT: Yes, and you had told me before that in terms of your education before the war in the way in which you were able to continue it after the war was mainly through one year of high school before the war?

ROMAN: Well, it was six years of grade school.

INT: Is that a Polish grade school?

ROMAN: This was Polish grade school. One year of gymnasium and obviously I have had umpteen years of cheder which was kind of an important thing. I had quite a few years of violin as a matter of fact I played in our little local symphony.

INT: Here?

ROMAN: No, not here in Europe. This all came to a hold in 1939. But I lived between 1925 and '39 there was quite a bit of water coming down the river. So, and then after the war I picked up a considerable, a considerable amount of specialized education from ORT in Munich which I thought was a wonderful thing and it helped me steer myself all through my life.

INT: Right, right. What about your wife? Was she born in America?

ROMAN: My wife is an American girl. She was born in New Haven. She lived pretty much most of her life in Hartford.

INT: And what kind of work did she do or?

ROMAN: She used to work for the insurance company in some capacity over there, how it goes where they figure out the premiums or such things, you know. And she worked there for quite a while then finally she got busy taking care of the children and she always did it.

INT: And her schooling here in America?

ROMAN: Her schooling was high school.

INT: Through high school.

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: And your children, and we know them, you told us about your grandchildren, what kind of work do your daughters do?

ROMAN: One of them was a nurse.

INT: That was Sharon.

ROMAN: Sharon was a nurse. As a matter of fact her specialty toward the end before she got very sick. She used to be the specialist to give needles to neonatals which is a very highly specialized thing believe it or not because you have to have a special knack on it. She was very dedicated to her job. Freida is an occupational therapist. Presently she is self-employed and she is reasonably successful. And Elaine has a child care center for, believe it or not, religious kind of Hasidic people.

INT: Really? Where does she do that?

ROMAN: It's right here. It's about a mile away from home, from here.

INT: Interesting, so what is your own religious affiliation? Do you belong to a synagogue?

ROMAN: I belong, oh yes; I do belong to a synagogue. I belong to the Emmanuel and this is it. I am a, and I tried, I was born of course Orthodox because this was the only flavor you had in Europe. I went through a series that I just disagreed with everything that I learned because everything was counter whatever I learned. Then I decided that, you know, you have to believe in something and I was kind of a no person for a while.

Then when I lived in South Windsor the only flavor we had over there was a reform, but it was kind of a reform that I would consider a lazy conservative. And then here I just belonged to conservative movement.

INT: And that's Emmanuel.

ROMAN: That's right.

INT: Are there other organizations that you belong to?

ROMAN: Except for a couple, well I belong to the Veterans of, Jewish Veterans of Foreign Wars. I belong to the 45th thunderbird division that I served with. Generally, I try to stay away from any political organization because I abhor these things on the basis of my previous experiences. You live longer by being not so well known.

INT: What do you mean?

ROMAN: You don't want to associate, I have seen too many instances in my life that somebody digs out, oh, you used to belong to this organization or that organization, and you deserve to be hung. This way if I don't belong to nowhere, out of sight out of mind, which is kind of an obsession of mine but never the less, it is.

INT: And that's kind of a lesson for you from your war experiences.

ROMAN: Oh yes, absolutely, absolutely.

INT: What about for your children, do you think they uphold that same philosophy, do you think?

ROMAN: I have found that you as a parent, assuming that you give the right advice and it's proven out by the children because you are constantly out proven out, they follow it. If you give them a split wrong situation, obviously they have reason not to follow. I must have done something by accident or otherwise right that they do follow our advice to a great extent, let's put it this way.

INT: As far as Holocaust related activities or organizations do you belong to any of those?

ROMAN: Yes, I am remotely, you know they sent, they sent some information from Washington for money or such things or you lose background. This was the extent. I never did any kind of official recordings of my past or such things to them or for that reason to anybody in this case.

INT: Are there any organizations of survivors?

ROMAN: We had, you see we had an organization; it was a loose organization of people from my own town which was a handful.

INT: Here in Hartford?

ROMAN: No, it was in New York. And what we tried to do is every year we have had a Hazkarah [memory] time so that everybody got in New York and then every other year they used to come to my home like here because for New Yorkers this is called the country. You see however after our problem that we had with Sharon, my wife really was not up to it and we just dropped it. And somehow everybody is growing older, most of the people moved out to Florida and the thing kind of fell apart so here we are.

INT: But you did used to go down to New York for those meetings.

ROMAN: Oh yes, absolutely, yes. As a matter we had our rabbi from our hometown over there for quite a while.

INT: He survived?

ROMAN: He survived, they spirited him out someplace through Romania to, I think to Israel and then he came in here so that I met him and since then he passed on.

INT: What about locally in here in Hartford, are there any groups of survivors that you see?

ROMAN: Yes, they have those things but I am not overly active and that when we have the yearly Yom Hashoah or such obviously I attend but generally I kind, I kind of am, prefer to be busy with my meshugina [crazy] things.

INT: Let's talk a bit about your family and your life before the war as you said from those years before 1939. Your place of birth you've mentioned to me.

ROMAN: Well, generally over there in Poland the way it was at least referring to me the furthest that I was away once on vacation to my (.....) which was probably about thirty kilometers away. It was for me like the end of the world. Generally I spent most of my time in Strakova. I had obviously a father and a mother.

INT: What were their names?

ROMAN: My father was Elias, my mother was Anna, and my brother was Henry. And we were, my father used to be a sheet metal mechanic in the Portland Cement Strakova. It used to be one of the largest cement factories if that makes any difference. He worked over there for many years 'til they finally, he was the only Jew in the place. During the war when the Germans came in he lost his job which was a tremendous blow to him. My brother was three years younger than I was and our parents used to try to tell us periodically, they'd say, "You know, we will try to help you as much as we can to learn

so that you don't wind up to be black laborers," which was a point of reference to coal miners. So I learned in school I had to do pretty good. I had to learn in cheder, we had a very strict rabbi. This was my mother's supervision to make sure. Every Saturday night I had to go to fahares of the parsha of the week to my grandfather and it better be good.

INT: He lived near?

ROMAN: Well, everybody was relatively near. He used to be in the synagogue, the Baal Tefila and I had to stay right with him. So I had to kind of help along and my grandfather was proud of me for that reason. And I did go to school. I learned violin. I had to practice. They kept you busy with homework that you, you know you had to be busy around home with routine things because the house was not my house or my parents' house it was our home and everybody had to pitch in. And this is what; this is what it was going. My parents were very strict and now in retrospect I can say that I'm glad.

INT: But when it was happening you weren't? When you think about the way that they, you mean they were so strict, you mean the way they disciplined?

ROMAN: Well, let's put it this way they were very disciplinarian and also if I beat up my brother and there used to be situations, you know, my brother used to schlep along. I didn't want him to schlep along, so he came crying so my mother gave me a licking. So I figured to myself I really didn't do nothing to him and I got such a licking next time I give him a "gutta zetz [good hit]", at least I got my money's worth. And this is...this is the way you do it. But basically I ask, I consider myself out if necessity I was a reasonably well behaved person.

INT: You studied violin pretty seriously. You said you played in the symphony and you liked that.

ROMAN: Oh yes, oh yeah.

INT: And you still like music.

ROMAN: No, let's put it this way, music is my thing because there's a variety of the music can make me feel good or make me feel terrible depression music I can't stand, there is much music that keeps me perked up. There's a variety of, that total spectrum. As a matter, when I was in the army in Louisiana, in Louisiana I thought that I will never hear any regular music because over there Friday night was the Grand Ole Opry. And if you play something else you are really playing with your life. Believe it or not it grows on you, and you like it, and I do have blue grass music you know and I love it too.

INT: That's part of the repertoire.

ROMAN: That's right.

INT: When you say that your grandfather was nearby, was he in the same town?

ROMAN: Well, we used to have Strakova.

INT: Strakova.

ROMAN: And old Strakova, they used to live in the old Strakova which was more or less like a, it was five kilometers away from, from the place. And this was occupied primarily by non-Jews. There were probably about three Jewish families living in that old Strakova.

INT: But you said also where you lived wasn't such a...

ROMAN: Where I used to live between non-Jews, although we used to live relatively very close to the synagogue but I did have there most of my friends were not Jewish.

INT: That's interesting.

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: And your brother was younger than you.

ROMAN: My brother, Henry, was younger, two years younger. He was born in 1928.

INT: Were there others in the extended families that were around? Aunts, uncles?

ROMAN: Well, we used to have; I had my grandmother and my grandfather, naturally.

INT: On you're, from your mother's side.

ROMAN: From my mother's side because my father's people, believe it or not I never met because they were living in Krakow and for me to go to Krakow was like going to space. It's far away. So I had my aunts.

INT: Also from your mother's side.

ROMAN: From my mother's side, yeah.

INT: It was really your mother's...

ROMAN: That's right, yeah.

INT: ...side of the family. And your father's work you mentioned was...

ROMAN: My father was a sheet metal mechanic and a roofer.

INT: And a roofer.

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: But he didn't work for himself, he worked for...

ROMAN: No, no, he worked for the, he worked in the factory in this particular department knows when they had to do, as a matter of periodically he even had to do some work like roofing for the church or such things. But this was like a donation from the factory to them. My father was working for them.

INT: This Cheder that you attended, let's say was that close to where you lived?

ROMAN: Yes.

INT: Was there a shul or shteibel there?

ROMAN: You have to remember that the whole town really was not so big. It was probably about 500 souls as far as Jewish people are concerned. We had, we had probably about three or four different cheders. My mother wanted to make sure that I have somebody that is really good. It was Rabbi Bunner with a red beard and he was very strict. And he was, he was teaching obviously in a way that it's, a considerable amount of it still stuck with me so he must have done something right.

INT: When you said that when the war broke out and your father was dismissed from his work that that was a tremendous blow to him.

ROMAN: Oh yes, oh yes, this is, you know, now I can realize situations what it means because at times it used to be a situation where I used to think my father has it so easy, all he has to do is go to work, I have to go to school, you know it's a big deal. But now I can recognize the situation with the responsibility of a married man who takes his work seriously and you know a guy that worked over there for ten, fifteen years and all of a sudden to wind up to be a no person. It was a horrible thing for him. But later on he was working for a sheet metal people here and you know he tried to, you try your best. You tried your best.

INT: How did you as a child know that this was so hard for him? What do you remember from that?

ROMAN: Well, I'll tell you something, that the situation is that unlike currently that people try to keep secrets from their children, the children were, although I was not involved in the decision making but I was very much aware of what was going on. And let's say even during the war when things were very difficult I used to go to the railroad station, steal coal or such things. I didn't consider it anything wrong, it was just a matter of survival, and this is it. My mother used to go trade off her stockings, her silk stockings or things for grain when things got really, when it came from push to shove. So you see

how your parents are working so hard to keep things together and you get to appreciate things like this and we were a family, were allowed, you know in retrospect you get so smart you can see what it was. And frankly I don't think that most of the people don't do that much differently than they learned at home if they were fortunate to learn.

INT: And what is it that you learned that you decided to do with your family?

ROMAN: I learned first of all that whatever my parents said they meant it. There was no, no split down, do what I tell you not what I do. Second things, whatever they told me it came out. It took me sometimes fifty years to recognize that they were right. As a matter, one of my so called good friends double crossed me once and I thought that it's the end of the world. And my father came from work and my mother says to him, "Talk with your older guy," you know the reference; you know he is very much down on his chaps because he got double crossed. So he took me in between his legs and you know he listened to me, he listened to me. Finally he says to me, "Roman, it's really not so bad because those are really not such friends. If you, when you grow up have three good friends including a wife when you get married you will be fortunate." At that time obviously I wouldn't dare to say that he was full of hot air but that's what I thought, you know, I wouldn't say anything. But many years later I found out that he was pretty much right on the money, you see so those are things.

There's a whole bunch of situations that whatever they said. You know my parents didn't shovel at me how wonderful are you are, how smart you are. You do it because it's necessary to do the best. I remember when I was accepted to the gymnasium, I had to go to another town because the gymnasium was in (...) And I did, I forgot my money, and I didn't eat nothing, and we had a half a day was written exams and then there were the spoken exams we had, we were fed to the professor across the green table. And since I was the only Jew in this particular class I must have done something right because they told me then that I am accepted. So, when I came home my parents were waiting for me at the railroad station and I came home and they said, "Well Roman, how did you do?" I said, "Guess what? They told me that I am accepted." My father patted me on the head and he said how proud he was. And believe it or not when those things happen very, not too frequently you really appreciate it. Sometimes you get a little bit emotional about this kind of silly things.

INT: No, those are important things. You did make them proud.

ROMAN: Oh yeah. There were many times, there are many times that I even mentioned to Goldie, my wife, how wonderful it would have been if they would be here now because my father used to say to me, "You know, if you don't listen to your father and mother you will listen to a stranger's strap. You will wind up to be a criminal someplace if you don't behave, if you are not a good person." I think I'm now kind of a semi-decent human being. I survived it anyhow.

INT: Well, I have no doubt they'd be proud of you.

ROMAN: Well, but be it that as it may that's the way it is.

INT: Do you think about them a lot?

ROMAN: Yeah. You can't help it because in daily life what you see and what you do always goes for points of reference, you just can't help it, that's the way it is. I don't live by the book, I live by experience and so far my experience has served me really well.

INT: It really has.

ROMAN: Yep and it works.

INT: And you have proof of that because you know...

ROMAN: Oh yes, oh yes. You see even when I tell my children I usually tell them, I say, "Look here, there's a tremendous amount of things that I don't know. There are certain things that I learned on my own hide. I don't want you to discover the wheel, the wheel was here already. I want you to concentrate on the other things." And there were many times that I told them something of not really great importance that it will not work out or something like this and you know they came out, "Oh Daddy, you don't understand." So I didn't put any pressure on them because generally I leave myself, if I have to exert real pressure which I fortunately never had to I made sure that I had enough power to do it. But I didn't have to. There were certain instances that they did it and it didn't work out the way we talked. And they say, "You know Daddy, I should have listened." I said, "Well, so you will know next time. If you make the same mistake twice, then you're stupid. For the time being you just learned." See, but I am fortunate in that I talk with my wife quite frequently about the situation that it's amazing how much you learned even though it was relatively a short time. If you took your things seriously, if all parties took it seriously, how much you learn and how much has stuck with you, it really is amazing.

INT: And you did. You really seem to.

ROMAN: I took it seriously. I took it seriously, for at times I took it seriously because I had to because I knew that for example when it came to the parsha of the week. Now the parsha of the week you learned in Hebrew and you translated it into Yiddish. Vayedabar Adonai and G-d spoke and G-d said. And I had to do it for my grandfather and my grandfather was serious. And I made damned sure that I learned. And later on you know there are a lot of things that you consider kind of semi-important or not important and you really never know how important things get to be.

INT: So that kind of, do you mean that in this case here the skill of really putting your mind to something and learning it or how did that then translate for you later?

ROMAN: I think that you see, in other words, anything that I learned from my parents you see to a great extent I think we were not rich people we were just average people,

where daily life was just a daily situation ongoing. So unlike some people if they were too well to do they didn't have any time for the kids or if they were too poor they were not sufficiently exposed to a lot of things. Somehow by accident I fell into a situation that, plus I had, thank G-d I had the ability to analyze it and to stop once in a while to see where am I going? This is kind of a very important thing, you see. Because you can very easily get yourself derailed.

INT: Sure and you think even as a young person you had the opportunity to think about life in that way?

ROMAN: Well, you think about life consistently because as a matter of even when we were being separated from my parents I saw an SS man grabbing a baby, a little baby maybe three months old. He tore the thing apart and threw it at her. Now, as a fifteen year old kid as such I figured to myself right there and then I figured now if I'm sucking wind, you know I broke a few windows in a synagogue with my slingshot, I went to the church yard to steal apples, G-d saw it and probably I am entitled to something coming. Obviously, nobody believed that things would be so terrible. What could have possibly a little child like this, what could it have done so terrible that it deserves such a miserable end? And for the longest time, for the longest time I decided that my religion would be to try to be reasonably decent, and that's it because everything else I just, it just did not add up at all. Then after the war I had a situation where I was enlightened about things that you have to believe in something and frankly I came to the conclusion, you know, that when push comes to shove you have to hold onto something, you cannot talk about with your best friends, with nobody.

INT: That was an interesting story. You told me that on the phone that it was actually...

ROMAN: Well, this was in South Carolina, yeah, in South Carolina.

INT: Tell me that story again.

ROMAN: You know in South Carolina it's a very peculiar place because first of all there are the people are not very warm, you have to really, they have to get to know you. Now they have a situation that somebody has to be on somebody's shit list, pardon my English. If it's not a nigger it's a Jew, if it's not a Jew it's a Catholic, if it's not a Catholic it's a Yankee. I was a foreigner. I guess they didn't have a card on me yet. So I was kind of a no person. Of all the people I got myself befriended with a young Catholic priest over there and we were talking religion. Now you can talk religion with almost anybody assuming that neither party gets too belligerent about things because perfection is a relative thing. So I told him my idea and I heard from some people say, you know G-d will do this and G-d will do this and somehow it didn't stick with me at all. But this guy says to me, "You know, Roman, the difference between you and let's just say a cow is that we assume that a cow doesn't have ability to logic and you supposedly as a person do. There are times in your life that you have to refer to the religion as a crutch. You cannot talk out certain things with your closest friends." At that time I said to him, "You know, Father, you are one of the first guys that makes kind of sense to me because it does

make sense." And obviously later on after I got married I had to bring up my kids. I figured to myself the only way I can do it is to do whatever I know the best. You never can try to pretend because if you are fake it shows through you and even little kids won't buy it. And p.s., my children, I won't say that they are orthodox but they go to synagogue every Friday. I don't have to prod them. They make sure that their children know Yiddishkite, not just because they went to Sunday school but because they see how the mother lights candles and I consider this thing an accomplishment. And my wife makes sure that she can, she lights candles every Friday and for a person that supposedly did not believe in anything you sometimes wonder.

INT: Well did that happen then?

ROMAN: It just got, I'll tell you something. I personally think that what older you get the more conservative you get and it makes sense to you that contrary to that B.S. that they feed you right now how everything that we did for so many thousand years.

They have no proof of what they say that it's correct. However, I can prove out to you that my thing works and this is the way. You know you come, we compare how wide, does this compare this thing to that and you will see how wide it is. You see but if you don't have that point of comparison that's when you are in more trouble than a pregnant nun is.

INT: What was it that you saw at home? What was it that you saw at home about Yiddishkeit and about life?

ROMAN: It was mostly about life because my parents were not religious per say. My father went to the synagogue on high holidays. He made sure, he says, "I don't have any time because I have to work." He was working between Pols, only he had to work on Saturdays there too. As a matter of fact he had to sneak in home behind the buildings just to come in. I recognized this thing but he says, "I will make sure as a matter of fact when I got Bar Mitzvahed he made sure that every morning when I get up the shul was probably about not even a block away from us. I had to go every morning to put on tefillin I had to do it. And he told me, he says, "I don't have any time to do this because I'm too busy trying to make a living for the family but you will do it." And you found enough time to do it and it was just simply initially it was an obligation just like when I do now my walking. Initially it was kind of an obligation, now I feel guilty if I don't do it.

INT: And what about what you saw at home, so your mother would?

ROMAN: My mother, I tell you most of the religious part, you know like my grandfather used to when they bought the meat they used to kasher it and they used to do things and...

INT: That's your grandparents.

ROMAN: That's my grandparents which were living close by. This I got it because with my parents you see I kind of am fortunate that my grandchildren live close by because I learn that the parents are too busy to try to keep old aunts together. They really don't have any time and the grandparents are actually the ones that give some satchel into your brain. And I was fortunate that I got it and I think that maybe my grandkids are fortunate too. Who knows whether it will prove itself out or...

INT: Yeah, but it's interesting that you've given them the opportunity that you didn't.

ROMAN: I was hoping. I was always hoping that I should have a close family because this is, that's all I got.

INT: You were successful with that.

ROMAN: Well yes, I think. Yes, I was successful. Yes, I was successful. I also had to recognize one very important thing, however, that you cannot have it your way. When my oldest daughter got married the rabbi said something, you know there are sometimes things people say something that sticks in your brain and you just cannot eradicate it. My son in law is a Ph.D. in chemistry and nuclear science or something over there and my daughter, it was my daughter, Sharon, and he, the rabbi when he was marrying them he says, "Since you are a chemist I simply will tell you one thing, in arithmetic, one plus one equals two. In chemistry one plus one equals one. A whole brand new one and you'll have to consider those things and those things are." You know, it's kind of a little guiding light that this is a whole brand new situation.

INT: A whole brand new situation.

ROMAN: That's right and you have to allow for it. Yes they have inputs you know, when people say married life is a 50/50 proposition they are so wet that they need their diapers changed? Because sometimes it swings one way and sometimes it swings the other way. If you average it out that it is someplace in the middle you're fortunate.

INT: What would a typical day have been like for you, a day before the war? What would a typical day have been like for Roman Luftglas? Were you called Roman?

ROMAN: Roman, yeah, Roman.

INT: Was that a Yiddish name? Romek?

ROMAN: Romek.

INT: And you were Avrume?

ROMAN: Avrume Yitzhock.

INT: Avrume Yitzhock.

ROMAN: That's right. Avrume Yitzhock HaCohen. Well, I'll tell you before the war I had to get up at 6:00. I had to start up the fire in the oven. I had to go to shul. On the way from shul I had to stop by at the bakery and get some fresh rolls or bread, eat breakfast, go to school. On the way to school there was a man, this was later like in the almost in the sixth grade. There was a man who later on I found out he was the only mail, Jewish mail carrier in Poland. He used to live in our route and he was very, very sick. So my mother used to say, "On the way to school," which was just on the way, "don't forget to stop at Rob to say a Posick Tehilim." So, then you come back from school, you grab something to eat, you do some homework, you sometimes play a little bit. You managed to get, to find enough time to get into trouble anyhow because for 3:00 you had to go to cheder, from 3:00 to 5:00.

INT: Everyday?

ROMAN: Every day except two days a week I had at 2:00 right from, right came home, grabbed something to eat and I went to the teacher for lessons you see.

INT: Violin lessons.

ROMAN: So I had to go for violin lessons. I had to make sure that I got this, this was rules. As a matter of fact from this experience I learned something too. You know you always learn, you know. If anything would be so easy everybody would be a genius. My parents obviously were smart enough to know that initially when it's dry, you know there's just plain dry, you know you do the etudes or whatever the heck it is over there, it's dry. You probably would drop it. It comes hell or high water you have to practice. Once you get there's a certain hump. Once you get over this thing all of a sudden it's a pleasure and they obviously knew it and my Sharon insisted she wanted to learn piano. Well I said, "Okay, why don't we just make it like in the middle deal, I buy an organ. This way I can play. I can play with it too." And I told her, I said, "I will buy it but you have to promise me." This girl goes right back on the basics. "You will practice every day a minimum of a half an hour, assuming that you promise and I'll keep you to it." Yes, she will. She did. Would you believe that I think she was... I think twelve years old or thirteen years old she had six pupils. She was teaching. I had to, for the piano I had to, for the organ I had to get a special set of those extended keys because she was too short. So I know that it works and you know if you don't, initially you have to take the person and put their nose against the grindstone because this is the only way that you will learn. Later on you have enough smarts you will do it yourself. And it works, honestly. So this was, so this was it and then, well, I still had enough time to get periodically into trouble with situations, whatever the heck it was.

INT: Your friends were Jewish friends, non-Jewish friends?

ROMAN: Jewish and non-Jewish. As a matter of fact I'll tell you a little thing, okay. It's a situation, you know, anti-Semitism in our town was rampant.

INT: You knew that as a little boy.

ROMAN: Did I know it. That's when I learned that I was glad that I was not Abraham but I was Roman. And kids use to, kids used to beat me up because I never was a tall person. I didn't grow up to be a tall person at all. I came home to my mother crying. She says, "I don't understand. Everything happens to you. I walk on the street nobody beats me up. Everything happens to you." Well there's really nothing that I can say but I came up with an idea. During the summertime we did not use coal because first of all it's expensive and second thing it's hot. But we used denatured alcohol on that kind of stove, alcohol stove to cook on it because it was cooler, and it was just more practical. My mother sent me out to the hardware store to get a liter bottle full of alcohol to buy it because that's where we used to buy it. I came up with a bright idea and it works. I zeroed in on the bully, on the chief bully that used to control the bunch. I waited for him behind his house and I jumped him. I learned how to play; you know I learned how to fight just the dirty way. My objective was to bring it close to point. I jumped him from behind. I made sure that I don't hurt him so that I should kill him, but I beat the wholly hell out of him and I explained to him that next time if you touch me I'm going to kill you. I didn't mean it but you know bluffing is the name of the game. It got to be a situation that I used to bring the Jewish kids from one side of the town to the other side without anybody bothering us. It was like I, a little one man mafia. It worked. It worked and this, this was a situation that this was just one vignette of a thing because as a matter of fact even while I was living in this house my youngest daughter was being antagonized by crank calls and you know some girl was calling her just really lousy. My wife called up the police, the police says we have to get a recording and the recording and oh my G-d. Sure enough one evening, one night at 1:00 we were watching television and suddenly the telephone rings. I picked up the phone, sure enough this is the girl, so since I have the, you know three years my accent got so screwed up that some people even accused me that I'm a Puerto Rican. So I picked it up, I said, "Listen, as you possibly can tell from my accent I'm a Puerto Rican. You bother my daughter one more time I will find you. I'll kill you." Now you don't even realize how horrible this thing sounds. She clicked off. She never again called. So you see you survive to a great extent by bluff with the understanding that if push comes to shove you have to be able to stick it out.

INT: So you learned that, you have to learn that to...

ROMAN: Oh yes, you learn those things. You learn those things. You learn that at least and I'll tell you something else, I had other situations in my place. I came back from vacation, you know and I have a situation where my manager tells me, "Roman, we have a problem. Somebody stole my pen out of my drawer. I had five dollars, they stole it. Out of the register they stole twenty dollars." I said, "Do you suspect anybody?" He says to me, "Well, I think that Ron Robinson who works in the warehouse, he hits the bottle. I probably think that he stole it." So I said to him, "Well, let me just think about it." I went back to the store and I had a bright idea. My store is in the bank, and I am friendly with those people and the chief security officer who was an ex-FBI man, an Irishman, I called him up and I said, "Michael McNamara." I said, "Michael, I need some assistance from you. I have," then I told him the situation, "and if I need somebody for interviewing

for bluff I would like you to be the one." He says, "Why do you think that the guy is the one?" I said, "Because he drinks." He says, "Roman, you got the wrong man." I said, "How can you say such a thing? You don't even know." He says, "Roman, let me tell you something. Out of my experience a drunk, an alcoholic will not steal, he will steal but he will not steal from the place that this is his last livelihood." I said, "But Michael, if push comes to shove will you help me?" He says, "Yes, I will." The following morning at 8:30 I came over there to my place. I take everybody in the warehouse and I don't talk at nobody in particular. I talk over their heads. I said, "Gentlemen for your own information we have a thief among us. Out of the goodness of my heart I propose the following: if the person, whoever it is does not show up tomorrow to work I will forgive and forget. Assuming that the person does come in to work I have a guy on this case, I cranked him up that he is the G-d's given thing to this society. He will interview. He will find out who it is. At that time I'm not going to throw the book at you, I'm going to throw the whole damn library at you. That's it." And I just walked away. By the end of the day I found out and I almost ran to the synagogue to thank G-d that I didn't do what I was planning to do. We had a brand new guy in the computer room, he never showed up to work. So you see, all of a sudden I thought to myself, my G-d if I would have, because if I accuse you and you're the wrong person, first of all I have to live with it. Second thing you can think to yourself since he thinks that I'm a thief I might as well be one. So you don't have to go be a rocket scientist but if you make it flow here it is.

INT: You had told me before about the story that you had been double crossed by friends and you went to your parents to talk about it. Is that another example of anti-Semitism or that was a Jewish school?

ROMAN: No, this was just, no. This was the same kid that I told you when I went back to Poland he kicked me out. This was my best buddy, Bogedon.

INT: Tell me about that. No, tell me about that. I want to hear. When did you go back?

ROMAN: Well, after the war my parents always told us that in case if we should get split up, they thought that we are going to go someplace for labor and there we will work hard and then we probably will come home. Now, during the war the way the situation was the place that we were living, you lived in one place for 552 years, you don't move around all over creation. So we had a neighbor, a non-Jewish lady, Mrs. Zimmer. So when we found out that we have to leave and leave most of the stuff behind to go to a ghetto to a certain area that Jews only.

INT: In your town?

ROMAN: In our town. It was in the little town, you see. My mother goes to Mrs. Zimmer then she says to her, "Listen, we have some things that she considered of value. Would you hide it out for us and if we come back we got something to start up with?" And the understanding that if something, if you need for bread something just sell it. If you won't ask her she would do it anyhow. And this was it. Now, to us my mother said if we should get separated, first of all try to come home. If you can't we had an uncle

who was an artist in Tel Aviv and she drilled into us that remember, Herman Cohen, Street Ten. This is right off Dizengoff. That's where they used to live. Get in touch with him so that we got a point of reference. Well, after the war I decided to go back to Poland. Now traveling through the Russian military, there were no trains there was no nothing. This was a big schlep. P.S. I came into the place it must have been like almost in the afternoon and I come to my house over there to Mrs. Zimmer. I was, to tell you I was not much to look at, believe me. I came in over there. I said, "Hi, Mrs. Zimmer. Remember me? My name is Roman?" She looks at me; she says to her son, he managed to grow. I didn't have any time to grow. I was too busy surviving. She says "Throw this Jew out of here." The kid picked me up, kicked me in my pants, threw me the hell out. I figured to myself if my best friend treated me like this will happen with anybody else. In the meantime it got to be like almost 3:00 in the afternoon. I know that I just have to go someplace. I had a bright idea. I went to the police station and I told them who I am. Can I sleep in the jail at least? So they had benches over there so I slept. I found out the following morning that there were two Jewish kids in a place which was probably about two kilometers away from my hometown. Two Jewish kids came in, two Jewish kids got killed. So I picked myself up and schlep through Prague and I went to Munich. In Munich down the line I had myself a good job with AJDC. I had a real good job. I was treated like an American officer, okay. And I had a very good job. Somehow, so I was working there and then later on I was fortunate to come to the United States. I got drafted in Japan already. I get a letter that tracked me all over hell. It was written to me to Munich and then it was forwarded, and forwarded and forwarded from Mrs. Zimmer. Mrs. Zimmer says in the letter that she is sick, she has arteriosclerosis, she has all kinds of chaserai, Tzurus over there, whatever the heck it is. If, plus her son broke down. She would like to send him to a school for how do you call this?

INT: Like a technical school?

ROMAN: No, no, no, a school that they have like to learn about woods and things like this.

INT: A forest.

ROMAN: A forester. Yeah, she wants to send him to the Forester School. If I had anything that I don't need would I be kind enough to send it to her. Well I got so darn angry I actually cried. My initial idea was I'm going to go to the PX, I'm going to buy a couple pounds of chocolate, I'm going to go to Sabora, this is the big city, buy some arsenic, lace it and send it to her. But over the years I also found out it's a practical thing for me. If I have to do something that is extremely unusual I sleep on it. And in the morning if I feel the same way, well hell, let's do it. The following morning I get up and I decided let her fall on somebody else's hands. I took the letter, tore it up, throw it in the latrine and this was it. This is the chutzpa of the worst caliber because if I would have been in her position I would much rather prefer that she considers me dead, she considers herself dead. I would never come up under any conditions. But this is the story.

INT: Ah, my breath is taken away from a story like that.

ROMAN: You see but those are situations that by comparison now I sneaked away. I took my life in my hands, obviously. While I was in the camp, you know during lunchtime you stay in one area while the Germans eat and then you go right back to load lorries. I sneaked away, I saw maybe like a half a mile away there was a farmhouse. I sneaked away, I decide I don't have anything to lose, you know. I went to the farmhouse. I didn't intend to run away because I knew damn well that you cannot run away. There was no such a thing. I went over there. There was an older lady, well an older lady; she was probably about maybe 45 by my standards. And she had a young daughter which was probably maybe fifteen years old or something. I came into her and I said. "Do you have something to eat? I am hungry." She sat me down in the kitchen on the floor and she gave me two big like they were kreizel, you know big bowls of dough with a prune or with a something in it. This was the first time that I ate so that I actually felt how it doesn't feel to be hungry. I did it once only because you know sometimes if, you see.

After the war I actually was hoping that I can find those people because they risked their lives. They tried their best. And you see you cannot hate people per se because you see I have had a situation again like I was working in a place over there as a lathe operator. And a lady, a German lady that was working in the corner there as a welder, she walked by for the break like 9:00. And you know you have the lathe and in front of it you got a big barrel for the spinoffs to fall in. She walked by and every time she walked by a crumbled up brown bag just fell in by accident. I opened it; there was a piece of bread. I took the bread and I went to the bathroom and my big problem which I learned is that if you do something repetitive somebody will notice you. Obviously somebody noticed me and they shoved me and they cut me, even the bread and they knew that this was not the bread from the camp. They took me to the barracks over there to the police in the factory. First of all they beat me up, second thing they squeezed my finger between the door and I came to a conclusion that if I squeal on her she will be in the same place that I am. If I don't squeal I'm going to get it anyhow no matter what happens I'm going to get it. So I just didn't remember where it came from and I didn't say anything. I passed out. Finally they kicked me, they throw me the heck out and this was it. Speaking of opportunities and things, you see I happened to have a tendency to heal very fast. What happened, the damn thing it healed over but it was inflamed inside and it got to be really big.

INT: Your finger.

ROMAN: Yep. So you know you don't go to the sick bay because this is a very unhealthy place to go. We have had a guy by the name Haas. He had one year of medical school so he was our doctor. So I showed it to him, he looks at this thing, he says, "We have to cut it open." And somehow under lousy circumstances your resistance is so much better that's absolutely unbelievable because he took a razor blade, he just put it over a match. He opened it, he took some of our, you know the pajama stuff, stuffed it so that the stuff has a tendency to grow from inside and the only time when it's very cold it bothers me but...

INT: Otherwise.

ROMAN: little things, little things make a difference. You see just little things, it's absolutely amazing. You see so there's a vignettes. I told you of the situation about the pig?

INT: No, tell me, tell me.

ROMAN: We came to a place from one camp to another. We came to a place called Grossamni, this is opportunities, you know. We came to a place Grossamni and the Shtern back fuhrer over there after he looked at us we were just a remnant of the people that were still from my home town. He said "Who from you G-d forsaken pigs knows anything about a pig?" I stepped forward. And he says, he shows me that they had a pig, a scroungy little animal that didn't want to eat. I'm such an expert on pigs you know. So if you are very observant you can contract a tremendous amount of conclusions, you know common sense. So he left me with the pig and I noticed that the pig besides being very filthy, she had big bugs behind her ears and I knew that lice gave me a hard time. So I figured to myself why not? I requested a bucket with a scrubbing brush and I, the damn thing was screaming something awful. It wound up being nice pink and gray. And believe it or not she acquired an appetite. The advantage was that she was getting the leftovers from the Germans which was real good food and I was her partner for a few months. I could have eaten a little bit, you know a little bit, stuff on my bones. In actually, I think in November they made it with a head shorter, you know she had to go for Christmas. But in the meantime you know there's an old saying, before a fat guy gets skinny, a skinny one has a chance to croak. I had just a few extra miles.

INT: It seems you've had those opportunities and you took the chance.

ROMAN: You take a chance. You take a chance.

INT: And you kind of made it for a few more.

ROMAN: I, for example you see there are certain situations that you have to be observant. I have noticed when I was working and loading Lorries like everybody else I have noticed that the Germans, if you, let's say if you are not strong, when you shovel, when you push the shovel. People who are pushing it with their stomach didn't have any strength, or whatever. The Germans, you know just like you show a bull a red shmata [rag] he gets upset. A German, when he sees or the Germans that we had over there when he saw you pushing a shovel with your stomach he did not say that you did not have the strength, you are a lazy pig. What I tried to do is when I came in and I knew I am in a place to work. With the last of my strength I tried to pretend like I'm doing it with gusto. The guy picks you up, he tells you, "Oh, you're a good worker. You're going to go lubricate the Lorries or something like this.

INT: And that's a gift for a few more months.

ROMAN: That is, well, in the meantime you're going to have, you see even carrying, even carrying railroad tracks I was the shortest guy in the bunch and they used to take from the shortest to the tallest no matter how short it was I had to carry that a little bit like this. All those little things and I hear you say how did you survive? I don't know. It just, there are certain things that happened and all of a sudden you are here.

INT: Well, you know you've told me about the story before about cleaning the...

ROMAN: Oh, cleaning the pot.

INT: And I don't know, it makes me wonder how did that idea come to you?

ROMAN: You know how it came to me? The idea came to me, now this is the situation with the wash pan.

INT: The wash pan and the German said to you.

ROMAN: The German says to me, "Wash it out." I was sometimes and I watch. I used to see those things shined so I thought to myself this would be pretty good looking because I thought otherwise they wouldn't do it in the watches. And I just thought then you know it doesn't take much and aluminum just to polish things and nice and neatly. It clicked. It clicked and let me tell you something if you end up a few breaks between misery you don't take many of them because between dying and living there is such a fine line that you just crossed the fine line and all of a sudden you are now in a different territory.

INT: But you took great initiative, it seems, to me.

ROMAN: Would you like to know something? I do things the same way, now this. I am fortunate that you see I am fortunate, as a matter of fact my daughter, the occupational therapist. In occupational therapy a keen eye, or for that reason anything in life in your business, whatever you do, a keen eye comes to conclusions if you watch things. And you can come to a fantastic amount of good conclusions. We were talking about things. I say you know when you're looking at the youngster you are trying to find rather than looking about all the bad things that the kid is just falling apart, there is something about it and you pick this thing up and try to work on it. And would you like to know something? It works. And I used to tell, I tell my people. I say, "The key to survival is to try and be different." In retail I never, I never marched to somebody else's drum because if I screwed up at least I can blame myself. If I followed you, and you're a dodo and I fall into the hole it suits me right because I just followed you.

INT: So something about taking a risk?

ROMAN: No, something, something I call it to find an advantage. There's always in every situation.

Like for example in the army. I was in a rifle company. I did not like to be in a rifle company because I am not so heroically inclined. How do you get out of it? I don't know. But in the meantime we were going in the initial situation you learn how to take apart the rifle and put it together. It was a rainy day in Louisiana, they showed us already the little coral snake, and how you should be afraid of it and all that stuff. Our lieutenant comes in to show V.D. movies because it was raining outside so might as well do things. To my good luck the projector conked out. I go to the lieutenant, I say, "Would you like me to fix it up?" He says, "You know anything about it?" I said, "This used to be my bread and butter." Ironically, he says, "Would you like to run the darn thing?" "Yes, I do." P.S. he decided that maybe I would be much better in the headquarters company rather than in the rifle company. Plus we had a situation even in Louisiana in order to get out on pass, this was in the army now, you have to be nicely trimmed and everything otherwise you don't pass and you cannot go to town. So since I was getting, you know as a private I was getting every bit of \$75 a month. I came up with a bright idea; I bought myself a pair of hand clippers, a scissors and a comb. And I put the guys in the latrine, backwards, and I was cutting hair, fifty cents a head. First of all this, I did it primarily for just some extra income.

I just went recently just before Rosh Hashanah, a telephone comes in to Goldie, "I am a buddy of Roman's. We have a reunion in Portland, Oregon. My name is Carpenter." So Goldie gets periodically all kinds of creepy calls. She says, "How do you remember Roman? You know it's 42 years." This is since 1952. He says, "Oh, I remember Roman, he used to cut our hair." She knew for sure that it was the guy. But you see I had to, I had to go on, you know, even career, on the front lines. I had to go once on guard duty at night, you know like from 2:00 to 4:00 which is a lousy time because they start to wake you up at 12:00 and then when you come home it's already 6:00, you killed the whole night. And on top of everything there were things happening and I really didn't like it. About two, three days before the captain asked me, he says, "You know, if you cut the guys hair I will take you off of guard duty." Well, I used to have a little dog and I sneaked it in from Japan, believe it or not, a little dog, I named it stinky. He ran away. He somehow ran around someplace, he tripped off some mines that we had on the perimeter. I got scared out of my pants. It turned out to be a false alarm but I went, the following day I went to the captain. I said, "Captain, does the offer still stand?" He says, "Yes." And sure enough I was cutting hair and I was cutting the Major's hair in the headquarters in the CP, in the command post and in comes the Colonel Regimental Commander. He comes around, he looks around, and he says, "Doing a good job, soldier. I think I can use one." So I fixed him up. He says, "Don't you trim around the ear with a razor?" I say, "No." "Why not?" I say, "I don't have one." I figure to myself this is it. He takes, sends his driver to the regiment headquarters. I find out, I didn't know about it, they have a kit, a barber kit. He brought it in for me. I'm supposed to use a straight razor on him. Now I never used one. If he would have only known how scared I was he probably would have run the heck out of the place. I tried to remember, visualize how my father, my father used to shave with a straight razor, how he held it. And you know this was just like riding a bicycle, once you do it, once you do the thing the first time without cutting somebody's ear off the rest of it is going. So first of all I figure to myself, well damn it I might as well, do you know whistle while you work? I

did it, did it I didn't cut his ears off. He didn't know that I didn't know but in the meantime I made a career out of it.

INT: You sure did. So tell me Roman, how, how did you have the faith to believe that you could do it?

ROMAN: Would you like to know something? There is, first of all if you are sufficiently innovative in a variety of situations. First of all I am good with my hands; thank G-d for that much. I do believe I have had situations, you know my wife breaks something, and I'll fix it up. I work on my cars, I work on the cameras. You, if, you'd be amazed. First of all if you like what you're doing and second thing is if you sufficiently nimble and if you have the aptitude, I guess. I don't know whatever the heck it is, it takes something to be able, and you know if you are firm about it you'd be amazed how you can, you believe in it.

INT: It's an attitude, it's an attitude.

ROMAN: Yeah, I think that it makes a tremendous amount of difference. In other words if you can sit down and you can feel sorry for yourself and you can rust to a heap of nothing or you just pick yourself up by your shoe laces, you ain't got no choice. You know when they say there is no choice believe me there is a difference in it. It makes it.

INT: Well, you've made that choice. You've made that choice. I don't mean to say I'm sure you're a man who has moments and times that are...

ROMAN: Yes, there are and I have my life right here to prove it but basically you are trying so hard. You know I have found that under certain circumstances there are things that you are capable to do that you know when people say oh, if this would happen I would do this. You really never know what you can do. I took my daughter from the hospital, she was so very, very sick. She, the last time I took her home she wanted to come home. It was her birthday. She, I would think that if anybody would heave up in my car I probably would go crazy. I don't know what happened, you know, because her liver was already going and everything else. On the highway I tried to drive as careful, as slow as possible. She got the heaves. She was so terribly sick. You somehow simply just do what's necessary and you're doing it cold like you are detached from yourself. Later on I got so scared out of my pants that I couldn't stand on my feet straight. But in the meantime when the things have to be done somehow you just got that strength and you do it. And then you wonder, geez, I'm so smart. No, you're not so smart you just simply get off your duff or do whatever the heck it is and it just has to be done.

INT: And in that time afterwards when you were able to reflect on it and wonder how you did it right, I mean you did it when you had to do it and then later you said you felt the fear, then you let it kind of sink in. What happened?

ROMAN: Then later on you get, you just fall apart. You just simply fall apart. But you just, you just have to, then you come up with the excuses. You say well, I have to go on

and we have to, you know you have a whole bunch of excuses that you manufacture. We have to be parents for the rest of the children and all that b.s which is kind of okay but it really is not okay. You are trying to hold up to whatever the heck it is. The fact is that during a certain point if you are capable to freeze on it and do something. I tell you something, I used to have in the store, you know right now with things the way they are I had some mace in certain spots. A few years back I come to the store early in the morning because I'm supposed to go on a service call to combustion Engineering. So the night light is on in the store, I come in, pick up my things, I hear somebody is coming in. It was my manager from Foratech. So I said, "Well, Dennis, you pick up your things, you're supposed to go across the river with me." And he picks up and thinks we are walking out of the store. Halfway through the store I said, "Dennis, while you going to your other place, why don't you just take some stuff." I go to the office and I pick up my things. Now it must have been probably about fifteen seconds. He took the stuff and we're walking out. Did you ever have a feeling that there's something not right? Well, I take a look. There was a black man behind the counter. He already figured out how to open the doors and he had his buckets loaded with a bunch of cameras, and I have collectibles, special kind of stuff. He probably didn't know; even know what the heck it is. Now if somebody will tell you what would you do? First of all you cannot say excuse me I have some mace because the mace is always where you shouldn't have it. I put this guy right against the wall. I said, "What the hell are you doing here?" And I searched him and I took his cameras and he says, "But man I did it the first time." And I figure to myself you know the rest. If I call the police, first of all they'd take the stuff as evidence; I probably will never see it. So I just told him, I said, "I want you to get the hell out of here or I'll cut your black heart out." And he just like disappeared to nowhere and everything was fine. Then it was, I was not scared at that time. And then Dennis proceeded and I proceeded. Did you ever get so scared.... I was on the highway to combustion I didn't know where I was. My mind was completely out. I had to go to the next exit to reorient myself. What I tried to bring up to you is that under certain stressful situations if you have the ability to act, yes, that I don't think that you're a hero. I don't think that this is a line of horse manure all the whole thing. It simply means that there are times that you act and then later on after it happened you, it's perfectly all right, and you fall apart. I did fall apart. I was ready to collapse on myself. But in the meantime if you are capable to do the right thing, you know to assess a situation and do something. I, whatever the heck it is I always managed to recognize the situation and possibly that this is what helped, you see.

INT: Yeah, yeah.

ROMAN: Possibly this is what helped. You know sometimes you think to yourself, you know, smart is a relative thing. Opportunistic is a relative thing because you never know what you can do 'til you are at the situation, and you have to do it, and there are times you have a choice to do the right thing, you have a choice to do the wrong thing, you have a choice to collapse and do nothing.

INT: Yes, yes, there's a lot to think about there. I have an idea. Maybe we should stop now. I have a feeling we've done a lot here. To me it feels that way.

ROMAN: That's the way it is.

INT: I'd like to come back.

ROMAN: Would you like me to offer you a drink maybe of something?

INT: Thank you very much; I would love to take you up on it sometime.

ROMAN: How about just something cold to wet your whistle? Say yes.

INT: Okay. I'll say yes.

INT: This is the continuation of an interview with Mr. Roman Luftglas and it's July 11th. We were talking before about the outbreak of the war. You don't have to repeat all that you said but you were describing that there was a kind of readiness because there was anti-Semitism in Poland.

ROMAN: That's right, so then when we got to the point that they took us out from our homes and they put us into a ghetto. Now in the ghetto things obviously got progressively much worse because although we were having, you know, rations and everything else, things got very bad. At that point we were living in one house where in the larger room was my family which consists of my father, my mother, my brother, myself, my aunts and my grandmother. And in the other room which was the kitchen was living another family and they were sleeping like on the stove. So cooking was done outside.

INT: Right. Where was your grandfather?

ROMAN: My grandfather passed on.

INT: He had by then.

ROMAN: My grandfather passed on in '36. So let me just see. Oh, since things got very bad my mother, you know you could not get out of the place but she knew her way around. She used to take like her silk stockings, and she used to take pillow cases, and sheets, and she used to sneak out of the ghetto and finagle with the farmer's daughter or whoever it is so that she gave her this thing and she got a bag of grain. Now she schlept the grain home. We used to have; you know one of those mills how you use for coffee. We'd grind this thing down with saccharine, you cooked it up and it was, and you were full. So this was, this was the way we survived and it was, we were kind of schlepping along 'til June, 1941 when they threw us out of the place and they sent us to Auschwitz.

INT: Right. So what, how was your family responding to this situation do you think? What were people's moods like?

ROMAN: Well, you see there is, you know, looking in retrospect now you see people here would look at things entirely different with the experience for you to pick yourself up and go to California or someplace is just like nothing. For me the furthest away that I went was maybe fifteen or twenty kilometers. This was an earth shaking development. You see people used to live in one place for ages. They were very happy over there and they didn't need anything from anywhere so nobody even had an idea. There were a handful of people who had an idea to pick up and run away, you see. But most of the people were there like sheep because they really didn't know what to expect. So this is the way it was and what happened is that you tried like for example there were instances where I still was at home, I used to go to the stockyard, you know, where the trains come. I used to steal coal and I used to schlep it home. I used to do things, the good thing about my doings whatever I finagled was I used to do things solo so that in case if I, somehow by yourself if you get into trouble you can get much easier out of trouble rather than having a much schlepinish with you. So we were, I was helping my parents. Obviously my brother was too young so he was doing whatever it was necessary around the home. My father was working in that place over there to make whatever they were making for the Germans and this is the way it was going. And we were expecting that when they throw us out from there, when they took us out by train that things probably will get that they will ship us someplace to work.

INT: Right, that was the expectation and that's what your family believed.

ROMAN: That's right. That's how come that nobody dared to make any resistances because there's, you know there is just nothing you can do about it so you just roll with the punches.

INT: Right, so at what point would you say your family became aware of just how threatening the situation was?

ROMAN: When we got to Auschwitz.

INT: When you got. Now did you go as a family? Were you able to go as a family?

ROMAN: Yeah, we went as a family all the way down 'til they separated us. And in this case my brother, my mother and my father went one way, which we didn't know where and they put me another way. And as a matter I did not stay in Auschwitz for any great length of time because they shipped me out to Shtikshokover which was one of the camps. That's how come I never had; I never had to have numbers engraved.

INT: So that was the last time that you saw...

ROMAN: This was the last time I saw them, this was it.

INT: Do you remember any last moments?

ROMAN: I remember just, the only thing that I remember is that I wanted to go with my parents and the guy with a whip pulled me and pushed me over here and this was just it. And you know what happens, it's kind of similar like if you go to Kennedy Airport, once you get into the habit you kind of get dehumanized. You all of a sudden are rolling, you just roll. You don't put any resistance on you just go with it, that's it. And you just, then you just were so busy you, frankly would you believe that you really didn't have enough time to think what happened because you were so busy actually surviving from moment to moment.

INT: Yes, well just the chaos. And you've said about these words that your mother told you to remember the uncle who lived in Palestine.

ROMAN: Yes, in case, this is in case if we should get separated. In case if we should get separated she said, "You will try to come home, first of all. If you can't come home, if we get someplace far away you know just get thrown to the four winds, try to get in touch with our uncle." And in this particular case she drilled it into us, they live in Tel Aviv and in this case it was Palestine.

INT: Right, so what would you say that message was? First you come home; you come back to where you started.

ROMAN: First of all it means that if we get separated this will be, we have to have a point where we can get together, you see.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: Possibly they could get, they could have got, and nobody knew where you were going to go. You see the big thing was about the situation that it was so unexpected that you really did not know, well, under normal conditions looking in retrospect if you would have never known you would never expect.

INT: Of course.

ROMAN: You see unless I knew that we never did anything really radically wrong and my father knew that he was all his life he was working and my mother was a regular mother so we really didn't do nothing wrong. We were, didn't look too orthodox so that they should pull you up for the beard or peyos. He was just a regular guy. So all of a sudden a situation like this happened so.

INT: Right. Do you know what happened to your family? You never found out?

ROMAN: No. We are assuming that they went to the furnace because you never heard from them again. You never, and I'll tell you something, after the war when I was working for the AJDC, one of the most shocking situations I had and I don't remember if I told you about it. But we used to have like big black boards that they'd say, "Roman Luftglas, looking for, Anna Luftglas for Elias Luftglas for Henry Luftglas," they had

things. So a guy looks and a woman looks. She looks at the guy, this is her son and she dropped dead right there.

INT: Oh G-d.

ROMAN: So you see that was our situation. You know after the war, at least as far as I'm concerned it was, you know as far as looking at things and finding things it was such chaos you, on the one hand you had to make sure that you are tracking yourself so that you just don't fall into some kind of a pitfall. On the other hand you would like to, you never gave up. As a matter of even now a days when I look at some, at some pieces of film I try to see maybe I could find my brother. Maybe I could find somebody. And then you also have to be careful because you know under the, you know among people they are the best and the worst. After the war I was doing relatively well and there were instances a guy comes into you he says what's your name? I could swear or for that reason the guy knows you that you are doing pretty well. He knows all about you. He says, "I'm your long lost cousin." So you know you have to be able, you get to be a cynic, it's a difficult thing to say because on the one hand you try to be a mensch, on the other hand you're learning the geneivasha shtick that they are available so you have to kind of protect yourself and yet you still have to be a human being.

INT: Right. And how do you do that? How does that all kind of come together?

ROMAN: Well, I'll tell you, over the years in the camp even I learned that if I get too much external pressure from a variety of places I pull back to myself and I mind my business only 'til things get cleared up. I just make sure that you know my skin is closer to my body than my t-shirt. I just mine my business 'til everything gets a little bit cleared up then you start to stick your nose out and see what's going on. This is the way it worked for me.

INT: Was that kind of a strategy, I don't mean that you knew it was a strategy, but was that a way in which you went through certain events during the war?

ROMAN: Well, I learned, well originally I really did not go through it because you know you're learning, you're learning everything, you're learning. We used to have let's say work and some of those places, they used to chase you out, let's just say at 2:00 at night and they'd take every tenth or every ninth person for the machine gun wrench. So you know everybody is lined up and they count out, out. So they used to pick a guy from my right or they used to pick a guy from my left and it used to tear me apart to pieces. And I knew that it's not doing me any good because I'm getting torn to pieces. And you know sometimes you're coming up with ideas, how can I cope with this thing?

INT: Right.

ROMAN: So I adopted a situation, you see, because you could not be friends with nobody because to be friends with you it means that ten minutes later you'd be a dead bird and then I just have another problem to worry about because regardless how bad

things are you still were a friend. So what I decided on my own I figured to myself when they pick a guy from my right or from my left my automatic reaction was phew, I'm glad it wasn't me, that's it. And this is, you know it's kind of a self-protective mechanism, I would say.

INT: Right, right.

ROMAN: But I coped with it this way that this is the only way because you cannot worry about the whole world. As a matter of fact even with our children when they were growing up, you know when they were going, let's say like sixteen, seventeen they want to turn the world upside down. I said, "Remember one thing, everything starts up with you. First of all you have to be good to yourself, then you have to be good to everybody closest to you, then you spread it further and further. You cannot start being good to the whole world while you are jerk." So this is kind of the same situation.

INT: So in a way to kind of protect yourself as you had to do from that you might develop some closeness with that person on the right or the left of you.

ROMAN: It don't make no, you really you don't make any closeness. You don't make any closeness because there is no such a thing. What you are doing is you are tracking; you are too busy surviving in order to. Yes, you talk with guys, yes, if I could, let's put a saying when I was stealing something and I had enough I shared with the people. But you know closeness like we are real good friends where we could do something for each other you just, you are very reluctant to do those things, you see, because you just cannot do that.

INT: Were you basically acting on your own then during all that time? I mean once you were separated from your parents was it you by yourself or was there some, was there ever any other people?

ROMAN: We were, to start with, we were a group from my hometown. You see there was a group from my hometown. As a matter of fact we were probably about maybe fifty, sixty that we got thrown into the camp.

INT: Right, those of you...you mean who were sent into one place?

ROMAN: We were sent to the camp.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: You see this does, those are the ones that were left to survive to be, not to survive, to go to work, you see.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: So originally we worked in Schtikshokover which was an awful place, absolutely horrible.

INT: What kind of a place was it?

ROMAN: This was, now you know what carbide is?

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: Carbide is a material that is made out of delimit. If you heat it to extremes it melts and then when you, then they break it down and what happens is on carbide if you drop water it makes a gas, a settling gas, okay, which is in the olden days remember to, you don't remember. In the ancient days they used to have the lanterns with it inside.

INT: Yeah, yeah.

ROMAN: those, you see. Carbide lamps, okay. So they used to make carbide. Now in my opinion this was one of the most terrible places because after a while I actually, this was one of the few times that I wanted to die already because my job was to sweep. You see they take the carbide after it has, you know through breakers, it goes through breakers and they put it into drums that the drum is probably as long as from here to the next house across the street. Big tremendous tanks with big steel balls in it and you had like six of them side by side in a big tremendous hall, and this stuff was pulverized and they using this thing later on for fertilizer. They used this for fertilizer. Now my job was to sweep that hall. It was so dusty that if you had right over there a 200 watt bulb it looked like a glow. Now we used to have overalls like from here, around here, you used to have a little mask over your face and it was very hot in there. You had two problems; you see when carbide touches moisture it dissolves and it burns like hell, okay. So what do you do? You take it off so you are covered with blood. The Germans used to have every fifteen minutes a break and they used to go someplace else, have some milk or something, whatever the heck it was. The place was so bad that in this place we used to get a piece of kielbasa after work with a piece of butter, you see. So we were there for a while. From there they shipped us out to Grossamni. This is the place where I told you that the pig.

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: This was with the pig.

INT: Where you washed the pig.

ROMAN: Well, I washed the pig and I took care of him, you see. Now here it comes again a situation, I always, I figured it out. You see if you observe things you can come to a tremendous amount of conclusions and you can figure out people pretty well. I have discovered that if you work with gusto, you know you have that, a German will see you and will push you out and put you into a lighter job. If you are trying to push, like for

example the Germans couldn't stand if you push a shovel with your stomach. You are supposed to push it, you know like you are working. In that camp was a situation where they took me out from there because when they watched me I worked really hard with the less strength but I worked really hard. They put me out and they put me to work where you also clean and a repair place where you clean this place. It was a heck of a lot better. It was easier. I had a chance to survive. Now this was a place that they used to bring tanks like from Africa. They'd paint them for and they'd ship them out to Russia. They'd paint them white because they used to be like sand color. So we worked during the day. We come back and you had an enclosure that you walk around over there. A SA, they were not SS they were SA, a different kind of characters. The SA says to, calls me over and through the gate gives me an aluminum shisel, you know a wash basket. They had hard water so it had a ring. He says, "Clean it out and bring it back to me." Did you ever do something that you don't know how come but you just do it and all of a sudden it backfires on you? I took the darn thing, cleaned it out. I went behind the latrine; the latrine had a bunch of sand against itself. Since it was aluminum I polished it up with sand and then I don't know what the hell got into me. I polished in little circles, you know like in a watch and I gave it back to him. About an hour later everybody had to fall out. The Shterban fuhrer comes out with the shisel. Who did it? Well I came out, I did it, I figured to myself my goodness, and it turned out that he liked it. I had to go, I was held back, and this was like for at least two months. I was held back, while I was there. I was held back, they told me, "You don't have to stay," the Jewish part of a guy to give me clean clothes and I am supposed to shine the shoes and polish all the shisels for the SS.

INT: They liked the job you did.

ROMAN: You know and they say luck is made. Obviously you have to be in the right place in the right time and you have to be able to recognize it. There were some instances that I happened to have recognized the situation through a screwed up idea I came up with thinking it was okay. So this was another place like this.

INT: Let me ask you, what makes you, because it's probably still true today, both then and today such an observer because then you are an observer. You look, you pay attention.

ROMAN: I tell you, I always was curious.

INT: As a kid even?

ROMAN: As a kid I was always curious. As a matter of fact, I was just telling Goldie. I said, "You know Gold, I just remember one thing. My mother had a little watch, you know, that she used to wear on Yontiv. I found it. And when she went away someplace I took it apart and I put it together and it never worked again." She never knew who did it and I never told her that and since then it went all to pot anyhow. But curiosity, I guess curiosity and I am very interested in mechanical things. My dream use to be a mechanical engineer. So I'm not a mechanical engineer but I do camera repair and I do situations, nowadays I have had things, as a matter of fact my daughter is an occupational

therapist, I designed. She says, she comes into me she says, "Daddy, I have a person that would like to write but he does not have the grip to hold a pencil. Could we do something?" I made her, I designed it and I made a little gadget with little, tiny little wheels with a grip that holds the pencil and with Velcro that you tighten it up right here so that all he had to do is do like this and do it. So she says to me, "It was a great thing. It was a hit. I have just recently a lady, a young woman who had a stroke and her right side is not working well but she loves photography. She would like to still take pictures and do something." I set up a camera for her so that she can operate the whole camera with the left hand. And I was releasing, focusing, doing everything else. So you see situations like this are curious and I'm not afraid to try. You see I'm not afraid to try.

INT: That's right, you're not afraid to try and you make things happen in some ways or at least you're going to try.

ROMAN: But you see this I will say, well this is the way it is like there are lots of people who have good ideas, they are probably a hell of a lot smarter but they don't put it into action, you see. So it works but you have to give yourself a chance and above all you always have to be observant. And you know even now a days if I have people coming to the store have very, I have very fine cliental, I'm very proud of them. The Yankees with blue noses and all those other things but if I, a person comes into me with dark glasses I will ask them to take them off. I can't stand it because when I talk to you your mouth can lie but your face does not lie and I have just, I have extreme obsession about the situation. As a matter of fact I deal to a great extent in collectible cameras. Now this is a very specialized field and the Japanese found out about it and they used to come to visit me. Now they travel like nuns in threesome. One of them is the maiven a real maiven you can see when a person picks something up that he knows. The other one is the negotiator and the third one sits quietly with a satchel with about \$100,000 dollars in the little chachka over there. And after they finish them, they pay and that's it. It bothered me I knew about it. I read someplace about it but it bothered me, when you talk to a Japanese person when you negotiate you see now when I speak with you you look at me and I look at you and it's just. He drops his eyes and he doesn't talk. And I know that you have to get across the situation so we set the deal. Everything was fine but we didn't finish it and I knew that he needed my stuff because you cannot find it just anywhere. So I knew that I am in a safe position. So I took him in my office, I said, "Let me just ask you something. When I talk to my children and they don't look into my eyes there are two possibilities, or they hide something from me or they lying. Why don't you look into my eyes?" He didn't answer. I said, "Look, I feel extremely insecure when a person doesn't look at me. In America we do it this way. I don't know how you guys do it in Japan." Well, he still comes around to see me anyhow and everything is fine. He is trying like hell, this is, I guess this is the...

INT: It must be a cultural thing.

ROMAN: Their style.

INT: A way of respect or...

ROMAN: Their style very what it is, but those are situations that I don't hesitate, obviously I'm not out to hurt people but if you want to do something you do it.

INT: Now that's the doing and that's clearly served you very well, that in coordination with luck as you have said and opportunities. As far as you can remember what do you think you did with the feelings, you know, the sadness, the fear, the terror, the, as this was, where did those go?

ROMAN: This is a package all by itself. I'll give you some tea. Ice tea.

INT: What are you going to do? Okay.

ROMAN: I see you have a dry throat.

INT: Thank you very much. That's very good. Thank you.

ROMAN: I don't know if I should offer you something else. Whatever you want.

INT: No, no, this is perfect. This is perfect, thank you. Thank you very much. You make a lechaim. Or as my two and a half year old says, "Leheimen."

ROMAN: Lehaim, tzum gezunt. I'll tell you something. There was a lot of time, you see I don't have no problems when I'm very busy. But when it gets, I just told you before when I have free time I recognize, I feel it in my bones that it can be a total disaster for me. Many years ago I must have been married maybe a year. I got a cold, so my wife was working for the insurance company and I had to stay in bed. It was a nice day, she was at work. All of a sudden I had that horrible feeling, you know, you think. I had that horrible feeling like you know like I couldn't breathe; you know it was like choke, like choking me up. I got very nervous about it. I called up the doctor and then there are days the doctor did come around to see me yet.

INT: Right, a house call.

ROMAN: The doctor came around and he gave me some horse pills of some kind and what I needed is the ability to talk it out. You see you can keep things in you up to a certain point then it will explode.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: So what I do is obviously I talk it out with Goldie which is a wonderful thing, it's a fantastic thing. If I find somebody that is trustworthy, not necessarily trustworthy but is worthy to talk to not just to flap your mouth you can talk it out a little bit. And what it does, this is a problem for me.

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: This is a perpetual problem that I recognize but I have to, I don't fight it but I learned to keep it in check.

INT: Right, and one of the ways you cope...

ROMAN: And one of the ways I cope is I keep myself very busy with situations that I'm interested in.

INT: Right. But you don't seem to be denying that the feelings are there, you know, you don't do that.

ROMAN: Without any questions, without any questions. I'll tell you something, maybe I told you the last time but when my daughter was very, very sick they figured that by giving her a hysterectomy this will kind of eliminate the estrogen if I remember correctly which will slow down the cancer. So she had the thing and I was chicken to go to see her. I was just cowardly. Goldie insisted, she says, "Roman, you have to go see Sharon." So I say, "All right, I'll go." And with my mazel I came over there, this was the second day of whatever after the surgery where she could go take a shower. I came in over there and she wasn't there. Like a real chicken hearted guy that I am, I wrote her a nice little note and I was walking away. I figured I didn't have to do what I did because I told them that I had to take Zenox just to keep me, you know, so that I can talk to her because I was breaking up. As I was walking from her room all of a sudden somehow the whole damn thing hit me. You know like that antidepressant and that whole damn thing just like it converged on me. I felt like I'm going completely crazy. To my, and I started to cry. To my good fortune my medicine man, Dr. Gorin is walking, he says, "Roman, what seems to be the problem? Come on with me." He must have spotted it much faster. They have doctors in Hartford hospital have quiet rooms, you know where they can sit down over there and talk with themselves, whatever the heck it is it's a quiet room. He took me to the quiet room and we talked and we talked and we talked. And well, here I am. Now do you see there are situations, let's just put it this way as we said originally your luggage that you acquire, you never can get rid of it, you just have to learn how to manage it and carry it otherwise you will buckle under and that's it. So this is the only way that I do it.

INT: So you do talk.

ROMAN: Oh yes, oh yes. But you see talking about like, like that you got a licking or this is not the, you see when you see things, when you think about people, when you think about situations that happen, this is the thing that gets to you. And my Father used to say, If you don't listen to your father or your mother you will listen later on to a stranger's whip. And if you don't learn to be a mensch you are going to be a black laborer. Now a black laborer in our place means to go work in the coal mines cause we didn't have no black people. You will be a schvartza arbiter. So sometimes, this used to, this comes not that it use to but it still comes across to me and I think to myself and I used to tell Goldie, I said, "Yeah, Gold you know if my father and mother would see that I really made a mensch out of myself despite myself they would be so proud of it.

INT: And those are, you think about those things.

ROMAN: Oh yeah, you can't help it. It just recently I went with Goldie, where the hell was it? Someplace, I don't know, we went to BJ's or someplace. There was a girl but she looked, you know that somebody has, somebody always has a likeness of somebody else?

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: This girl, the way she was combed, she had auburn hair, she looked just like my brother with the freckles and the whole damn thing. I said to Goldie, "Goldie, look, she looks just like Henry." So it gives you a shtuch. But you know you just, you just live with it, that's it.

INT: You live with it.

ROMAN: you really don't have any other choice because the alternatives, no matter which alternatives you take they stick.

INT: What would be the alternatives? What would they be?

ROMAN: I don't even know.

INT: You don't even know.

ROMAN: I don't even know like you just go crazy. You just go crazy; you go to the nut house maybe, who knows. I have white, little white pills that if I get too depressed and periodically between the weather and between some things that happening periodically you go through, you know you just, you just feel horrible. So I take one of those pills and it just, you know because fortunately to a great extent when I'm miserable I just like to be left like a dog by myself. You see the problem is that working with my people because I feel miserable I just cannot whip out at anybody and just start screaming. So you see it is kind of a situation where you have to, you have to keep to yourself in check and the fact it always comes back at me the fact that, that fact that I had a tough life, it's not your fault and it's tough cookies. Well, that's the way it is. You were handed over things; there were people that had it worse. There were people that had it better but in the meantime you deal with the thing at hand.

INT: Right. And you know talking about what the alternatives would be but it seems you made certain choices, as much as one makes choices you said no, not this one, I'm not going to go this route, I'm going to go this route.

ROMAN: Well, you see choices. As I showed you on that little thing, in Germany I knew one thing, I will not live in Germany. I lived a king's life in Germany after the war, no problem. And I distinguished between good people and bad people, no matter where so I'm trying to negotiate my way around so that I will not say I hate this woman, I don't

hate that woman, whatever the heck it is. In Germany I decided that I have to go someplace.

INT: You have to leave Germany.

ROMAN: I have to leave Germany. Where do you go? So obviously my dream was to go to the United States but it's a big deal as I said backer for us and who do you have? Who do I have to prove for me? You see so I figured to myself you see heroic I was not because I was tired because I figured I would go to the United States. If I can't make it to the United States maybe I go to Canada, maybe I go to Cuba, and maybe I go to Paraguay. That's the last thing I was thinking to go to Australia. Israel I could have gone, but to Palestine I left on the far away burner. It was just so far away you have to use a binocular, I had enough. I wanted simply to settle down. I was tired, you see. I was tired. So as I was working for the AJDC I worked myself up. First of all I was in the film unit showing movies in DP camps which was a fine job. Then all of a sudden I worked myself in as a dispatcher in the motor pool. Can you imagine you are looking at a person that I came in as a dispatcher? I had to answer the phone. I never in my life answered the phone.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: You know it's almost funny but it's really not funny. There's that moment that when you pick it up, you see.

INT: Right. If you've never done it how do you do it?

ROMAN: So I did it. Then all of a sudden they needed desperately, I was considered to be a reliable person. It was necessary for them for a driver to take the director of the AJDC back to WW Schwartz. He was the big knocker of the European AJDC. I had to take him from Munich to Frankfort. I didn't speak English, he spoke Yiddish. So he says, "Nu arran, vous es de teen mit ze. So I told him what I was hoping for. And you know again a lucky situation, a break. The guy put in a good word for me. I had a chance. All I need is just a chance to stick my foot in the door. He did it for me and all of a sudden I had a situation that I had a sponsor in the community of Colombia, South Carolina, west of the Mississippi.

INT: So he had a part in that.

ROMAN: But you see there are situations that you don't necessarily break down the walls, break down the, you know like crying, you have to help me because there is such a thing as a matter of fact I usually tell my people or for that reason that work with me that I have guys who are for example Chairman of the Board of Hartford National, he's a good friend and so he comes in, he says, I said, "Mr. Newel." He says, "Okay, Roman, to you it's Bob." I said, "Okay, Mr. Newel. I firmly over the years I have developed a situation that if you are a doctor or you are in the position that you are, when I am in your office there's that very fine line that I have to observe and this way I can keep friendships for

very many years. I don't get myself; you know just falling all over you. All of a sudden I'm like under your armpit. You see so those are situations that lots of people don't do that and this is no good.

INT: No, no, I mean you are a keen, that's also a kind of observation that that, you know you are watching and you are aware of how relationships need to be.

ROMAN: I have had a few years back, this is an unrelated situation. You told me that I have Vignettes, Mr. Newel who was the Chairman of the Board of Hartford National. He used to come around; we used to talk about, talking about store. He says to me, "You know, Roman, you are running a pretty tight ship. If you would be in my position how would you do better?" I said, "Mr. Newel, I have eighteen people in my place. You've got a factory with millions of dollars." Hartford National was a big bank and they were my landlord. He says, "I'm putting you on the spot." So I figured to myself, look, I pay my rent. He cannot fire me and I said, "Well, I'll tell you something what I would do." And point blank I said, "I probably would walk through your establishment, I would find there's a whole bunch of vice presidents who have assistant vice presidents who have a whole bunch of sidekick secretaries and things like this, their biggest job at 8:00 is to build a wall for 4:00. I would fire the whole bunch, I would find that p.m. on the bottom over there that works like a beaver. I would not give him a title because titles make people just wrong but I would pay him well. And I think that you would get much more efficiency because I think that you could knock off a third of your people and get much greater efficiency because there's a whole bunch of people getting in each other's way." He says, "You know I'm the chairman of the board. I cannot do that." I said, "You asked me, I told you." So this is the way it went. About two months later they hired for \$155,000, an outfit from New York and guess what they told them?

INT: Gave them the same advice.

ROMAN: The same guy, I'll tell you another situation. The same guy comes into me one day, he says, "You know, Roman, as far as I'm concerned you are a transient." I got red in my face. I said, "What do you mean I'm a transient? I don't owe anybody anything. I'm earning my living decently." He says, "I thought that I'm going to get you." He says, "You see you or Savitt which was a jewelry store up there. You are here for a while. Eventually you will sell out, retire or die and you'll be gone." I said, "Oh, well I guess then I'm a transient." As the good lord wants, half of National got to be Connecticut National, Connecticut National got to be Shawmont, Shawmont right now is being taken over by Fleet.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: Last Christmas Mr. Newel comes, he's retired. He's now 75 years old. He comes in to buy a video camera. I recognize him. I came into the office. "Mr. Newel, I said, "Remember many years ago we were talking about transients?" He says he didn't register. I said, "You remember foxes? Half of National, Travelers, United Aircraft?" I said, "What the hell is going on? All those steamrollers just kind of caving onto their

own weight?" He says, "I would have never believed that such a thing would happen but...

INT: But here you, the man he...

ROMAN: And the show goes up.

INT: Your show certainly goes on.

ROMAN: The show goes on, right. I keep myself. You know I am referred to in the industry, in the photographic industry I'm considered a survivor because I'm one of the old timers, the only one of the old timers that's still left that's stupid enough to be in business. I talked to myself. I said if I would have to do it over again what would I do differently? Except for the camp which is a very unfortunate situation I would not have changed a darn thing in my life, would you believe it? Wherever I go, whatever I do I try to groove myself into a situation that it's under the circumstances, reasonably comfortable and you can live with it.

INT: So that then they don't have to be regrets, really what you are saying is that there are no regrets.

ROMAN: No, I don't have no regrets because I always try to do, not necessarily my best but my best for myself, call it this way. You see like right now I have a family, I'm looking forward to; I'm looking in the morning forward to go to work. In the evening I'm looking forward to going back home. I consider this thing a pretty good thing by comparison to other guys.

INT: It's a blessing.

ROMAN: So you see so this is the way it goes. There are people; you know I was just talking recently with some people because they said you know with the youngsters currently how the youngsters are. And to a great extent I remarked to them that you know particularly among the greener there is a situation that the survivors say I'm going to give my children everything that I did not have. I came to the conclusion that this is a very wrong approach because over the years I have sufficiently noticed that anything that you have is the value of it is directly related to the effort that you put into it. If you got it for nothing it's worth exactly nothing regardless how much it's really worth in the situation. I was watching other people when my kids were growing up. I am a nut of cars. At one point I used to have five, six cars. My success, I rated, I would consider myself successful if my biggest problem in the morning is to decide which car I should drive. This way we don't bother anybody. But it came, when the children went to college, none of my kids got cars 'til they, they got out of college, they earned their living, I helped them, obviously I helped them to do it but they had to buy. In college you don't get a car because people used to tell me, "Well, I'll buy my child a car and she or he will take care of the insurance and the gasoline." I said, "Sharon or Freida, we cannot go along with that situation because you will wind up to be a slave to the car. You

are supposed to be a slave to the school system where you are learning something." And it worked. We made certain when they went to college. Now with the oldest one we had because you start up with the oldest one and everybody falls into line. We sat down once downstairs in the family room and we were talking about it. I said, "Look, you will," First of all she had to know what the heck she's going to school for. She was a good nurse. Second thing is I understand that whatever you start you have to finish. It's perfectly all right later on to change your professions but initially you just cannot drive around and say I cannot find myself. If you want to find yourself go to the bathroom. You see you have to go, you have to remember that I'm doing you a favor sending you to school. You are not doing me any favors and we have an agreement. You can go to any school within driving distance. I don't expect you to be a genius but I expect you to have passing grades, you see. Assuming that you find, that I find out that you go to school to take up space I'm going to come with the truck, I'm going to pick you up, I'm going to bring you home, I'm going to find you a job someplace to push a pencil. That's it. So we have to understand each other. And there were many times that you know particularly before exams you know when they get like a bumble bee.

INT: Uh huh, gets busy.

ROMAN: She calls up Mommy or she calls up me or whatever, comes up a situation says, so Goldie says, "You know Sharon or Freida, they have a hard time.

GOLDIE: Elaine.

ROMAN: Or Elaine. We went to Boston. Mutzi ois geretz tzu heartzen, you know, went out to dinner. Somehow later on she says, "You know somehow I was crying. I'm sorry because I really don't feel so bad now."

INT: I wanted to see you.

ROMAN: Well it must just, every one of them when they went to school in Boston, you know in Boston it's a school that it's in the city, you are a part of the city. At some point every one of them wrote a letter to Goldie that now they appreciate their parents, in particular they like before Thanksgiving there's lots of parents that dump their kid to school for the year, kiss off goodbye. She says can I bring x, y, z, with us? So you see we were, you cannot bamboozle anybody. You have to play a straight hand. You see in other words when you talk to a kid and you think that you are selling them last year's snow at half price you are not doing no such a thing. I never talked down at them. There were times when they were little that when I said something it was unquestionable, this is it. When they grew up a little bit we were discussing things. Then we were discussing it further. Now they are married, they live about a mile, mile and a half from here. If they ask me something I say what I would do. You see I have to know my place in the package.

INT: And that's changed over the years.

ROMAN: Well you have to change yourself otherwise you get run over.

INT: That's right. That's right.

ROMAN: So this is the way the situation goes and knock on the wood, when people say I expect respect from my kids. No, I don't expect, I can earn it. And I think that our children respect and love us but we have to play, you know one way streets out of New York.

INT: Well yeah, I'll ask you one more question for tonight and then maybe we can continue another time. When you think back about what helped you to survive and you've told me some of those things and they're very moving. What happened to you, your values, your faith, your beliefs? Obviously these things have had a life of their own. I mean we've talked about some of those throughout the years but if you were to summarize that?

ROMAN: I will tell you something. My values, there are certain values that they are unquestionable.

INT: They remain.

ROMAN: There are certain, you see we had only one flavor, orthodox. I was considered a good boy, I knew Chumash, Rashi, Gemora and all those other good things and I was even a good student because otherwise my grandfather would pull my ears out of my head.

INT: Right, he tested you.

ROMAN: Okay. When we went to Auschwitz I was thirteen or whatever. A woman, I would say probably about twenty three years old, was sitting with a little baby, I would say, I was not much of a judge of babusky, I would say maybe three months old. The SS man came into the woman, grabbed the baby by the legs, tore it like this and throw it at her. At that particular point the whole world went topsy turvy because I figured to myself why tell you the situation, I don't remember. But I figured to myself obviously as I said I never knew that things will be as bad as they all of a sudden started to be. I figured to myself I had a sling shot, I broke some windows in the synagogue. I used to go stealing apples from the church. I figured to myself G-d saw it and I screwed up... I'm going to get it. So I'm going to get it but what could possibly a kid do, a three month old kid to deserve such a miserable end? So right there and then I got sorted out a little bit in my head, I think, that what I am going to do, my religion affected immediately will be to try to be reasonably decent. If you don't screw too many people too badly I think you are religious. Ois geshpielt. And I was doing, this was my motto and I was just chugging along, along the situation. When I came to the United States I came to South Carolina. I don't know where, if you ever were in South Carolina, at that time Thruman used to be the governor this is quite a few months ago. Somebody is on somebody's list. If they didn't have a nigger they had a Jew, if they didn't have a Jew they had a Catholic,

if they didn't have a Catholic they had a Yankee. I was a foreigner; they didn't have a card me. Of all the things I got myself, befriended with a young Catholic priest. Now I firmly believe that you can't have religion with almost anybody as long as neither party is belligerent that mine is better than yours because neither one is perfect. We have to just make a go out of it, that's it. We were talking about religion and I told them just like I'm telling you, I say as far as I'm concerned the whole damn thing is...He says to me, "Roman, I'll try to tell you something. We are assuming that a cow or a horse doesn't have no common sense, no logic. Human beings have logic. There are times in everybody's life that you don't have nobody to talk it out to. You can talk it out to your wife, you can talk it out to your best friend, and it's a crutch. You have it to whom it may concern. It's a necessary thing for you to have it, you have to have it and I don't give a damn what you belong to." I said to him, "You know, Father, you the first guy that makes sense." Now if I compare what I have by comparison to anybody else's I think that I got a pretty good place, not that it's perfect but it's a pretty good place. So when I came out from the army and I found a girl and manufactured some kids. In the fifties they used to say well, if I have any kids I'm going to throw these bibles on the table and pick one. I figured to myself the hell with it, it doesn't fly this way. In order for you to compare it how wide this is you compare it, you have to have something to compare. And I figured to myself I'm going to tell the children everything that I know and it worked, and it worked. Including the fact, you see I used to have a Malamed, a teacher, who used to teach with a mushel. Do you know what a mushel is?

INT: Uh huh.

ROMAN: For example, I sometimes used to think to myself how come that I remember so much of it. And wherever it came into a parsha, wherever it came to Russia or wherever it came to Gemora there were always up at to start with he told us a story and the story stuck with us. Goldie and I, we were very firm in our belief that the children should marry Jewish. Now the problem is that when the fire is on the roof it is too late to call the fire department. So I took it on myself and I decided that first of all I never preached to my kids on direct basis. I used to tell Goldie stories and I knew, and at work I do the same thing. I tell a story and they know already that there's something that fits for somebody's foot because if I had to tell you point blank it's not such a healthy situation. So we were living in South Windsor and the rules were at 8:00 everybody has to hit the sack. They didn't sleep because they were listening and the doors were open. So I was telling Goldie a story and this is a true honest to G-d story. We had a girl in our hometown which even I as a small ketch for nine, ten years knew that she was gorgeous. And somehow she hooked herself up with a Polish guy and there's a fine line that all of a sudden you are in a no man's land. She crossed it. She fell in love, she married him. She converted to non-Jewish. People were saying Kaddish, and people are sitting shiva. It was a horror. I said well this was just a situation, that's the way it was because I told you cannot blow it up, and as I say you are talking about engineers. I said however there was a situation, the Pollacks, and this is still a value today. Friday when he collected his money he used to get drunk and the routine there was he was supposed to beat up his wife. So when we were going, when we were thrown out from our homes she was left behind. She already looked like a rag, you know, worn out, just worn out. So and I told

this to Goldie and I said, and you know Goldie, I just thought about something else. If you get angry at me, if you get very angry at me you can call me a jerk, you can call me any damn thing under the sun but you will never call me a G-d damn Jew. And I dropped it and let me tell you something, you know how you seer it into the skin. It works.

INT: They were listening.

ROMAN: Now, to take the other side of the situation, in the same town in South Windsor at one point I was president of the little congregation. We had among us we had a woman at the board who was a convert. She was a Catholic. She got to be Jewish. Now people that convert, they are holier than the Pope. A meshumad uh, they just, they are just trying to be unbelievable. It's Ida. So since we were a small congregation I figured it out that I'll give the guy something to tear apart for an hour.

INT: Keep him busy.

ROMAN: Keep him busy and then I'll do whatever the heck is necessary and next time at the meeting I said, "Guess what, we did this, this, this everything is done and everything will be fine because after all how the heck we going to hack it?" And then later on we went to Howard Johnsons for coffee and that's it. Ida Offstein, they were carrying something in a pot and she got angry. She is Italian, she got a short fuse. She says, "You G-d damn Jews are all alike." Silence deafening. You could throw a hatchet in the air and it would hang. Coming back on experiences my grandfather was a baker and it was an honor that the local priest was a friend of his. He used to talk to, he did him a favor. You know my grandfather used to address him. Your Honor. So as I was little pisher, pardon my English, I was staying near my grandfather and he says, "Your Honor, what do you think about the situation with that girl that converted?" So he says to him, "You know, Bernie, this situation reminds me of, you know, when you go to the woods, and you find an abandoned bunch of little wolves and they are tiny without the mother without anybody, you pick them up, you take them home. You bring them up as dogs and they are real good little dogs. You take them one time back to the woods and they get to be wolves again." This reminded me, and I told the guys the story and I dropped it right there. Take your conclusions whichever way you want. But you see this is a situation if you have something to fall back at, every little situation is a lesson and they are damn good lessons. Lots of them are damn good lessons.

INT: And this one about, part of it about the importance of being Jewish in whatever way, I mean even as you lost some of the, let's say belief in G-d let's say.

ROMAN: I told my children, I said, "There were times that I wished that I never was a Jew because I suffered so much. But because I survived, because I went so much through it I might as well be proud of it. And the kids are good Jews.

INT: You've told me about that. I know.

ROMAN: They are good Jewish kids.

INT: You've told me. And it's wonderful that they are all so close here, nearby.

ROMAN: Yeah, every one of them is there that you know if there is such a thing as having nachas, yes.

INT: Well deserved.

ROMAN: Well, be it whatever it is, it's here. We're making the best out of it.

INT: Well, maybe this would be a good time to end. I know this isn't easy.

INT: With Mr. Roman Luftglas on July 18, 1995. Today I wanted to turn to the years after the war. We've spoken some about those years and you've told me some but to do it a little bit more systematically. Could you describe for me how and under what circumstances you were liberated? Do you remember that?

ROMAN: Yes. As a matter of fact the Germans simply just ran away because we were, the Russians were coming in. So one nice morning like around 11:00 or so all of a sudden we didn't see no Germans.

INT: Where was this?

ROMAN: This was in lower Salesia in Eastern Germany. To start with we were apprehensive to get out of the place. But eventually we got out of the place and we went to the town, next town we discovered it's called Reichenbach, Reichenbach Ergenberger. We went looking around over there. I guess the Russians bypassed us so and the Germans ran away. So we went looking around and we have, as a matter of quite a few people just went wild. You know they were grabbing things. They started to eat, they started to eat chap Ariene things, whatever it was and some of them got really very sick about the situation. After being for a while in town I got scared and I went back to the camp. And this was myself and Michael Selinger who was my buddy, you know, from my hometown. We went back to the camp. Then we went back to the camp to sleep.

INT: What were you scared of?

ROMAN: I don't know. We were just afraid to be outside. You know you don't, if you feel like unsafe. You don't know what's going to happen so we went back to the camp. The following morning we went out again. And we were away like for three days already. We occupied a house and we were there for about three days or so and we were starting to, started to recoup a little bit, pick up some things, pick up some food, you know we'd broken into houses over there because the Germans ran away.

INT: So this was with your friend that you mentioned?

ROMAN: With my friend, yes.

INT: And this was someone you met?

ROMAN: No, this was a friend from my hometown and we were in the camp together. And everybody kind of like went on his own. There's nobody really stuck together. There was no coherence to it. So after we zeroed in on things a little bit we went like the third day we went back to the camp and it was the scariest experience because there was nobody there. You know somehow when you are in the middle of the stink you don't realize how bad things are. But when you came back from so called civilization, back to there it was absolutely terrible. It stunk to something awful. Everybody was out of the place. There was nobody there. The doors and the windows were open and the thing was just, you know just making those creepy noises. We turned around, we went out. We had decided, so my brother, my buddy, Michael decided that he has heard that there was a Jewish girl's camp someplace in Sudetenland which was not far away from, near to Selasia. So he took off and he went over there. I reminded myself about what my mother told us, to try to go back to Poland. Well, I put myself, first of all I just recuperated by trying to eat or trying to scrounge. You know you do what's necessary to eat. I found a place and I was living in it. I occupied a place because there was nobody there. And then I picked myself up and I went back to Poland. Now to go back to Poland was not exactly a picnic.

INT: No.

ROMAN: I organized a bicycle from a German, I took it away from him, and then the Russians took it away from me. Then I used to hang onto, did you know there were constant troop movements? So I schlep along on wagons, they had wagons with horses and they has wagons, gasoline powered things. Finally I did come to my hometown.

INT: How? And how long did it take?

ROMAN: It took me probably about a week and a half, maybe about a week and a half if I remember correctly.

INT: What were your thoughts during that week and a half? Can you remember or?

ROMAN: Well you see you still did not recognize the enormity of it. I figured to myself maybe, but maybe something will happen. You never believe that it is final because if you didn't see it you just don't believe it. As a matter of fact even now a day when you see things you know like for example you see some kids on the snippets. I always look, maybe I could find my brother. Maybe it's possible. My father and my mother, obviously there's, there was no chance, but maybe. So I finally, so I came into town and the first thing I went where I know, where I used to live. Not in the ghetto now but I went to the home over there to Mrs. Zimmer. And I came in over there; obviously I was a real schlep, not much to look at. I came into her and I said, "Hi, Mrs. Zimmer. Remember me, I'm Roman?" And broke down, my good buddy, my best buddy because we used to live in a non-Jewish area because my father was working in the factory in the

cement factory over there broke down, obviously grew up taller than I did because he had a chance to grow. I had, my growing business was spent on surviving. So she says in Polish to him, "Throw this Jew out of here." So the kid he was bigger than I was, picked me up, threw me the heck out just like a dog, threw me out and this was it. So I figured to myself, you know, logically you think to yourself gee, this was my best friend's treating me like this. Oy, what's going to happen if anybody sees me? I probably will have a real severe problem. In the meantime it got to be a problem because it was like 3:00 in the afternoon, where do you go to sleep? So I had a bright idea. I went to the police station, and I told them who I am and I asked them if I can sleep in the jail. I figured to myself the safest place for a thief is in the police station. So he says, "Sure you can." So they have a bench. They didn't have no bunks, they just had a bench. So on the bench I slept. I got up in the morning and I stuck my nose out, looked around a little bit. I found out that in Shetzkavitza which was about two kilometers away from my hometown two Jewish kids came also at the same time and the Pollacks killed them. So I got a little bit nervous about the situation. I decided to move on. So I picked myself up, I really didn't have nothing to carry with me. It was just me and myself. The only thing that this time I decided to go, rather than going the way I came into Via Breslau you see I used to, in school my hobby used to be geography so I knew approximately where I am, where I'm going. I went toward Dresden and Leibtzik. In the meantime you meet people, and you talk with them and you pick up information. And I discovered that there is, there are army Russians and then there are Americans. There's the American field and the way we understand that the Americans are much nicer to the displaced person because the Russians didn't do nothing bad to us but they didn't do nothing good to us either. So I went, I went first of all back to Reichenbach where I came back. Just went back to Reichenbach and I went back to that place where I occupied and in the meantime Michael came back and he brought in his sister. And in the meantime we met another guy so that we were like four people living in this apartment. And we had decided to hearing rumors, in the meantime there were many more people in Reichenbach so geez, it's so darn hazy. We were talking with other people and we found out that we have to get the heck out of here because this is not good. I heard about some people coming there were some people they were saying that if you Orthodox and if you are a Hasid there are some Hasidic people from America that try to take you to America maybe. This didn't sit well with me so we decided to go to that American park. So we schlep. You stop and you know, you steal, you do, let's put it this way, you can survive because the Germans were very obliging, they were much more scared than we were. So we came into places, they gave us to eat; if they didn't give us to eat we just took it. I was kind of a little bit, you know I picked up on strength a little bit and I was kind of a little bit rowdy myself.

INT: What do you mean you were rowdy?

ROMAN: Rowdy? I came into a place, and I just cleaned them out of whatever I wanted, and I left them alone and I stole, you just do something and I'm going to turn you in. I probably, I'd never turned them in. Oh, I meant to tell you.

INT: What?

ROMAN: Before any, before I went to Poland I reminded myself about settling an account. What happened, I used to work on, in the camp. I used to work in a place in a factory and I, my most precious possession was a, like a one gallon paint can. Everybody had one of those things. I discovered that there was an Arien kitchen. You know what the Ariens were what the German eat. And I took on myself to sneak away which was probably like maybe call it two blocks away. In the factory I did not intend to run away or nothing. I found the kitchen. There were cans that they spill the leftovers. I dunked it in, I took it back. The guys that I worked with we shared it and it was just great. So the following day I did the same thing because we were at that time we were guarded, not by regular SS, they were like old guys, you know, SR. So I got caught by the chef, it's a lady, I don't know. A big fat lady. So she takes my number, we come to the camp. And she says "Who from your G-d forsaken pigs doesn't have enough to eat that goes stealing Arian food?" Well, it was very easy to find me and I got twenty five, a beating, the beating that you get as they strap your feet to a table and then they strap your hands over there and they play copos, done you in with like flexible hoses. I think I knew probably about five or six. The rest of it I didn't know but in every situation you have to have a little bit mazel. I was working in the factory and I was working at that time kind of as a machinist. This is the same place where that lady was, you know that I told you the welder.

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: I was, so there was a doctor in the sick bay that we had, he used to be a professor at the University of Vienna, a Jewish guy. So he was there, first aid man over there because there was really not much to do and you came into the sick bay, kiss off. This guy used to ask me periodically and he designed for me little, little signs of knives. So I used to make from blades that you cut steel, I used to make him little blades so that he could, whatever he could. I don't...

INT: To help people.

ROMAN: Whatever the heck it was. And this was fine and the guy knew me and I used to do it, I used to do him a favor. In the meantime it was kind of a, kind of a challenge for me. Well when they took me to the sick bay, you know when I got beaten up and I passed out. Obviously I must have been passed out because they found, he put me under the table as a body to be taken out. And the way I understand is that they put a, like a rubber hose or something in my stomach and put some coffee in so that. Anyhow he was one of the critical factors that I think that I survived because otherwise I would have been thrown to the dogs. So this was a situation that I have had to settle a thing for myself. The first thing when I recuperated before I went to Poland I went to Langenvela which is right over there where I used to work and I found out where this lady lives.

INT: The chef.

ROMAN: The chef. Now there are certain things that I was very angry, and I probably would have insulted and I probably would smack her maybe or something. But when she saw me she recognized me. "Get out, you G-d damn Jew." This tripped me, you know I don't think that you ever allowed yourself or you never had a chance to lose, to lose your cool and she was sitting over there like in a chaise lounge, you know. I took one of those irons that you clean in the...

INT: Fireplace?

ROMAN: In the fireplace and I started to beat up on her 'til blood was coming out of her mouth and out of her ears. Personally I think that she was done for it. This was one of the few things that I took just personal vengeance. That's how come maybe I don't carry so much poison with me because I cleaned it out for myself. But this is a situation which I consider very important and where I really had a chance to get it out of my system. So anyway going right back to the thing, while living in Reichenbach after I came back from Poland I organized myself a little car and we were going, I was going like to the farmers or to bakeries on the outside and I actually cleaned the guys out. And I brought for, we had, we had food and everything was going really good. I bought some spec. Zultz mein shuldigan you know what spec is?

INT: No, tell me.

ROMAN: That's bacon.

INT: Oh.

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: Sure.

ROMAN: But that's, this was it. So then after a weekend, you know we had had people getting together, we were having a little bit like a dance. You know it was getting kind of a social situation. We had some friends of our flavor and things were kind of fine. At one point you know you take chances. I came out of there, I know there's a bunch of Russians had a car, they didn't know what to do with it. I knew all about cars but I never drove one. So they say did you, everything is a machine over there. So the guy says, "Do you know what to do with it?" I said, "Oh sure." And we sat down in it and we supposed to have gone to hold up some farmers. I started up and you know I don't think that you remember when you drove a car you was probably very careful but I got into the car. First of all you have to, it takes probably about a few minutes 'til you get yourself stabilized, the width of the car and with the speed and I drove it. The only thing is later we came into the darn place over there, we cleaned out the German farmer and we were going back home. And in those days they used to have mechanical breaks with cables rather than hydraulics. So one guy says to me, we came into like a split. One guy says to me, "To the right," one guy says to me, "to the left." I put the brake on one cable broke and the darn thing acted, you know like a tank, just slipped over and we fell down the

embankment. I wound up under the steering wheel. They took, the seats fell out. And everybody was alive but we were on that, the what you call it? Wheels up.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: And the only thing that I had left over, you see there was a little, there was little thing. This was it and naturally the gasoline spilled on all that kielbasa stuff and everything that I had so we didn't have nothing. Later on we had to go back to the farmer and take the guy out with the oxen to pull us back out over there. It was a lost proposition. I came right back, finally I came back to Reichenbach again and we were talking with the, with my people what happened. We decided to take a chance to go to Americans, to the Americans.

INT: Before we go onto that if I could ask you a question because you've said a lot here. You know you talked about the anger that you've felt towards that woman, obviously.

ROMAN: Oh yeah.

INT: Rightfully and without any questions. What else, what did you do with that anger? You talked about taking revenge on her and that you feel that kind of in your words emptied you of some of the poison presently.

ROMAN: Let me just tell you something. I coped with it, I found myself a few guys. You know likes attract likes.

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: I used to have a set of brass knuckles. I don't think that you are familiar.

INT: Before? Before the war?

ROMAN: No, no, no, no, no after the war. I found out that there is, you know I found out. And we decided to go look for troubles. Now if you are not familiar with the German psychology because you see it, four Jews, if four Germans walk and one Jew walks here and it looks like these guys look for trouble I would side step them, let them go by. The German would never do that. He stops right here and he starts to argue with you. So the argument comes into a point where you come around to him you give him a zetz in the kishka, he buckles down and this was it. You don't go kill people but I just generally did get into fights except another time. In Studtguard, now this is already we came to Germany and I got myself fairly stabilized. We went to a football game. Now the football over there is soccer. So it was a big deal and two of the guys tell us, tell me, "Hey Roman, we found the SS man that was in our camp." I take a look, sure enough. So we took a knife and put it behind him, you know, and we said, du gait mit unz. "You know, you are going with us." And we took him to the CIC, to American CIC. This is a something, you know, up it's police. Not police or whatever the heck it is. We took him back there. We found, we found a guy because this was already kind of in late

'45. We took him to the CIC and to our good luck the captain that was over there was a Jewish guy. So he spoke to us Yiddish so we told him what kind of a scoundrel this guy was and we said, "You know mir veelin em hargeten. He says, "In America Harget men nisht. You know you don't kill people in America." We have to go through procedures but we said but listen, he was such a horrible guy and so on. He deserves to be laid out right away. He says, "No, you cannot do that. That's just the way it is. I'll tell you what can happen. I have to go to report this to my superior upstairs. In case if the guy should try to attack you you can protect yourself." We took this as a hint. When the guy came back maybe ten minutes later there was one dead guy and one broken chair and he just wrote it up that the guy attacked us and this was it. But he was just, this guy was a genuine bad egg. So you see situations like this I had a, I called this venting, venting my misery. I had to get it out somehow otherwise you see just to go around to say nothing happened, it just does not work. So this was the way I coped with it, plus than later on I owe it. You see once I came to the American side I came to Munich. You know you go through the border, you know you schlep through it, you just...

INT: So you still were with your group.

ROMAN: We were like three, four, four guys but you always when you come to a place, there's always more Jewish kids, there was no problem. And you know it was, I wouldn't say camaraderie but it was total cooperation. Everybody helps everybody to see what we can do. Where should you go? I heard that this and I heard that that. So they said the good places, I heard that a good place is Munich, (?). So we came over there, sure enough and the Deutsches Museum which was one tremendous big place. This was a, like a DP reception center where people could sleep overnight and have something to eat. It was operated by Unrah, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: So I was over there and I generally don't like to be in a situations that I have to follow like a, you know. So I found out that the Unrah happens to have motor pools and they happen to have all kinds of things. So I found where the motor pool is and I asked them, "Do you need somebody to work for you?" "Oh sure." I went to work for; I got myself a job with the Unrah. Now I was working over there as a mechanic and everything was going fine. A guy comes in, they were in uniforms, you know they had like special kind of uniforms, kind of military. A guy comes in and he is a very fancy American, you know an older guy and he speaks to me in Yiddish. This was Mr. Jaslow. I spoke to him on his 100th birthday in Boston.

INT: Really.

ROMAN: This guy says to me, "Nu, vus iz dein numin. I said, "Avram de veis vee tzu traben a car? Yes, I know how to drive the car. He took me out from there from the Unrah and took me into the AJDC. Now the AJDC was working under the umbrella of the Unrah.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: And originally I started to, and he says to me, "We'll show you something how you could do things. You like to do this, this." He put me into a film unit.

INT: Oh, that's where you started to show...

ROMAN: He showed me, he directed me over there. He was a big shot but he told the other people that here you got a guy, teach him how. He knows how to drive already. And this is how I got into the situation. Over there by at the AJDC. I actually worked myself up from a film unit operator to a motor pool dispatcher. This was a big job. You have 200 vehicles. I told you about the situation. I never before in my life spoke on the phone if you pardon my English. I got to the situation where I had an office and a telephone but I never spoke at all. And you know there is, it's not a big deal but there is that moment anything once you take it to the phone and you hear the noise and every, it's all gone. But there is that moment of hesitation. She said, "You don't really know what the heck to expect from the other side." So I was over there. Then I used to do quite a bit. I was a good driver and I wound up to be a chauffeur to the doctor, Mr. Joseph W.W. Schwartz who was the director of the AJDC.

INT: Right. And he's the one who helped you come?

ROMAN: Well, he's the one that clarified my situation plus he helped me. Because you see he was a chain smoker, like he smoked constantly like from Munich to Frankfurt he was just one from the other one. I had to in Studtguard I had to empty out the tray. I took him over there. So we could speak Yiddish. With Mr. Jaslow I could speak Yiddish. There were about two ... There were a whole bunch of Jewish people that, American Jewish people that came in to help out over there. So if you mind your business and you observe the lines that you are not a smart ass or something like this you get to be liked, you get to be trusted and it was just going fine so he was telling me what do you think you're going to do? So I told him what I was hoping to do in this particular case and he was helpful to me. He was helpful to me.

INT: You mean when you said I want to go to America?

ROMAN: He was instrumental. As a matter of fact if you stop for a second maybe I have something that I could show you.

INT: Sure. So these were recommendation letters from.

ROMAN: I got letters from, from the departments over there and as a matter of fact they recommended even to some people to whom it may concern in South Carolina, in Columbia, when they knew where I'm going.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: And this was it.

INT: You know before we talk about your actual immigration to the United States how would you say that, kind of what went through your mind, do you think? I know it's hard to remember but in those months after liberation did you, how did you make your decisions? What went through your mind about what you had just been through? How did that change in that time? Is that something that you can kind of bring forward?

ROMAN: Well, you know, I'll tell you something. I, sometimes I talk about this thing, you know, and I personally think that your way of thinking was kind of formed a little bit as we said before of falling back at home how you heard things because I came to a few very basic conclusions. First of all one firm conclusion was although I had a good life in Germany this is not the place that I would be. So I made a conclusion. Second thing, I made a decision and it was a pretty bright decision that in order for me to survive anywhere I have to look at myself like at a piece of merchandise. Is it sellable? Does anybody want to buy it? What is so great about me? Can I make myself useful? Because this is the only way you can survive. To say that here I am and I'm a big survivor, this, even then it did not stay with me. So those were situations where if I would say to a certain extent, to a great extent is from the points, you know there are lots of things that when you are a young person your parents told you things and you thought to yourself oh heck, just mind your little thing, that they just really don't know anything.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: And then maybe thirty years later all of a sudden you say to yourself holy cow, you know this makes a lot of sense.

INT: So what was it that your parents said that was reflected in those?

ROMAN: My parents told me that if, first of all you have to learn. You have to learn. When you are young you are supposed to associate with older people so that you should learn from them. When you get older you are supposed to associate with younger people so that you keep yourself on the ball. You see there's a whole bunch of stuff that they stressed to me how important it is for me to have a solid profession. And I saw my father as a professional, that I mean he was a sheet metal mechanic but never the less he was. If I would have had my way my dream always was to be an engineer, a mechanical engineer. This was my dream. So then since I couldn't do that so I figured to myself so we'll take the next best thing. Anything mechanical I used to eat it up. I don't know whether I told you about it but in Munich while I was working for the AJDC, there is an organization you probably know about it, ORT.

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: Okay, ORT was very instrumental. ORT, first of all you know I can bring you to the water but I cannot make you drink. ORT had if you wanted something, tell me what you want, they have the instructors, and they show you how to do it. So once I

made the decision that wherever I go, first and foremost I have to have a profession. So the fact that I was a driver and the fact that I was a film unit operator, this was nice but I figured to myself what happens if I happen to be in an environment that they don't have things like this? You see to a great extent I used to, I used to complain about the American teaching system that you go to school and you learn a major and you don't have nothing when you come back. And if this happens not to sell you have...

ROMAN: Now I always believed that no matter how good things are they can get worse and if they don't happen, so it's a chip on my shoulder, you see. So I try to learn as much stuff that I would enjoy doing because I am a believer that if I enjoy doing it I just will do a better job. And in this particular case I can get someplace and anything that I learned through ORT or along the route of whatever the heck it was every darn thing that I learned at one time or another I used it. And it was to a tremendous advantage to me to place myself into a position that was advantageous of, let's put it advantageous to me in a sense where I could be relatively secure.

INT: Right and you could offer some skills that, special skills.

ROMAN: I had things, in other words, a stupid little thing like for example when I was in the army already I was in basic training. I really didn't like to be in the infantry but you know in the army you can, you had freedom of complaining. It was a rotten day in Louisiana. It was raining outside so they took us into the barracks; they decided to show us movies about V.D. The lieutenant comes in and sets up the projector, the projector conks out on him. I said to him, "Lieutenant would you like me to help you with the unit?" He said, "Do you know anything about it?" I said, "Yes I do." And I fixed it. He says, "Do you want to run the damn thing?" I said, "Yep." I had myself right away a situation where on the ship I was a projectionist. It was great. You see if you have something to offer you always can zero yourself into a situation. I told you originally I consider myself opportunistic because opportunities present themselves constantly.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: Your job is to be able to first of all recognize them, and second thing you have to do it quickly because if you start to cogitate about it, it just goes away, and it disappears and it's gone.

INT: You seem to also take things on as a challenge. You've used that word before even talking about the camp and you know, making these knives for the...

ROMAN: Well, you see in other words to me I am not afraid to try things. Granted there is sometimes that it didn't work but you know the house is a winner. If you try enough times, obviously if you make one mistake and if you are stupid enough to do the same thing you deserve it. But I, I observed things, and I came to conclusions, and I tried to, and generally they were pretty darn good conclusions and it helped. You see in other words there is such a thing as doing things like automatic and there is such a thing as

doing things, and seeing, and thinking and you can improve on it, you can come up with a better idea.

INT: And to trust your instincts that you might be able to come up with a better idea.

ROMAN: You see, remember one thing, there's, you know there's a tremendous amount of experience in life, knowing human nature, knowing your own abilities, knowing generally the reactions of people, what they could do possibly under certain circumstances, the overall thing. I don't think that I can explain it really to you because I'm just talking like from the top of my head and I personally think that this is what makes the situation, in other words you know when they say you cannot sell ice to an Eskimo. Who the hell wants to sell ice to Eskimos? But I could sell them a warmer or a pocket warmer or something like this. You see it's not a situation to come up with some cock eyed bull story but, or something totally radical but to come up with an answer to a project, to a problem.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: And this is, a mechanic that came to mechanical problems it was great. If it came, obviously my children, I think that they respect me because if I gave them advice it worked because there's no substitution of learning things in the school of hard knocks.

INT: Right, and you certainly have those.

ROMAN: So you see so I used to, there were instances that I told my kids something, you know Freida or Sharon or whoever. I'd say, "You know this idea, I don't think it will work because." They'd say, "Oh, Daddy, you don't understand." So I figure to myself heck, it was no big deal. It's a good time to learn a lesson. So I said, "Well, look, do whatever you think." So she did it and it didn't work out. Did I tell you about Sharon when she had the problem in what's it called? In Arizona as a nurse?

INT: No.

ROMAN: Sharon calls me up. She says, "You know, Daddy, it's terrible the way the doctors treat the nurses." She was a nurse, a registered nurse. "And we are fed up with it and we are going to do something about it." I said, "Sharon, if somebody, did anybody do any harm to you?" She says, "No, but the other nurses, you know, that's terrible." I said, "Sharon, I don't think that you should do that because you know what generally happens is when it comes to stand up for things you've got to be hung out to dry all by yourself." "Oh no, Daddy." So I figured to myself the worst thing, what can they do? They'll fire her, so I'll support her. So what the heck. It was not a tragedy where life was hanging on it so I said you know I personally would say there are times also that you have to abide by the rules. She's a married woman, she's a grown up person so you don't, and you talked differently like I told you not to do it. So I said you know I, from my experience I would say that if I have a problem I try to solve my problem and that's all. Don't try to be a speaker for the whole world because sometimes it backfires right back

into your face. "Oh Daddy, this is different." I said, "All right, well you do whatever you feel right but I just, at least we talked about it." Sure enough, you know one day, one day called up the nurses to speak their piece So you see, but I left the door open so Sharon calls me up. She says, "You know, Daddy, I should have listened to you because it happened exactly the way you said." I said, "Well, Cookie, I'll tell you something. If you make the same mistake twice you're stupid. But the first time it's just a lesson, that's it." I always had and I think I still have a sufficient amount of power, I never had to use it, you know, to jump on. If I see that you are doing something drastically wrong I have a way, I have a way to be very forceful about it where you ain't going to get past me. But this is a situation that I save for extremes and thank G-d I never had an extreme with my children. But this, this is the way it is. You know the art of communicating I think is a very important thing. And obviously you always learn, I learned a lot from Yankees.

INT: When you came here?

ROMAN: From here, from Yankees, you know while I'm in business.

INT: New England, yes.

ROMAN: You see there's a special, you know I admire low key. You see the fact that you have money doesn't mean a damn thing to me. The fact that you are a manager it means a great deal to me. You see so you are learning things, and you are observing things and you are adjusting yourself constantly.

INT: Talking about adjusting, how did you then in those years, going still in these years...

ROMAN: In Europe.

INT: Yes, and after the war, and when you, as you said you were still hoping maybe your brother maybe would be alive but on some level you knew that others had not or you had to accept that others...

ROMAN: Most of them did not, yeah, most of them did not.

INT: How was it for you to mourn that or do you feel you have mourned that?

ROMAN: Would you like to know something? Mourning is a situation, I don't know. This is, you know like crying about spilled milk. It was, first of all you are so preoccupied with trying to find a position for yourself. You know there's a firm saying that my skin is closer to my body than my t-shirt. I was so preoccupied to find myself a place in the society. I knew that they were dead. The only thing is that what I used to, you know when it used to hit me and hit me hard is when I worked myself up to a certain position and I was comfortable. You know you work like a beaver, you work, work, work, finally you are doing, finally I came home, I had a nice apartment, I had this. Then it hits me. Gosh, wouldn't it be wonderful if my parents or my brother could be here

because I could really support them with class and they would be so proud of me that I really made a mensch out of myself contrary to everybody. They used to think that I will rot in a jail or something. You see and even today this is the situation where it really gets to me when you start to think how it was and how it could have been, you see, this is the, this is actually the situation. Because to cope with the loss just like with Sharon I plead with Goldie, obviously Goldie, she's just a different person, you cannot help it. But I plead instead to complain about the fact that she died, that's a fact. There is no way to change it. I latched onto the point, yes she lived 32 years only but I know people that are 65 and 70 and they did not accomplish a fraction of what she did. And I am proud of it and you know it's not how long you live but what you did with it. And I think that she lived a quality life. By quality life she left a good name behind.

INT: And a good name is important to you.

ROMAN: I think that this is the thing. This is the thing. People, you know I know and I tell my people even at work, "Listen, you can be the nicest guy, you screw up once and it's as if you never did a darn thing right. So you constantly have to be on good behavior". I value my family. My children, you know you earn your, respect you have to earn. There are some people, I know some Greener here that says, the guy says, "Because what I went through, because at my age I expect respect from my children. I say, "Sam, don't be a jerk. Respect you have to earn. There is no other way. You can have fear that people can be afraid of you or such thing but just truly respect I know that I have to be on good behavior, not because I'm such a good guy but in order to preserve my children learn to believe and for whatever me and Goldie stands for and you have to guard this thing because it's very easy to screw it up."

INT: Roman, I want to say something about that because it strikes me after just the little bit that you've told me about the horrors, you know, that you personally experienced and here you come and you tell me, you tell your children, you tell your workers but none the less it is important to live a life with a good name, a life that's worthy because you have lived with certain principles. And I guess I just feel like I want to stop and note that because you know somebody, you can imagine that after what you went through and just the description you give of that horrible beating, you know, about that horror, you know. You could say after that, the hell with everything and you don't.

ROMAN: Let me just tell you something. Let me just tell you something. I learned to see hypocrisy. You know I told you when I saw the German taking the woman's baby and tearing it to pieces. Anything that I learned went to pieces. However, I learned enough to have enough smarts not to say that okay; I'm going to be a wild animal but to say religion in my book will be that I'll try to be a reasonably decent human being. If I didn't, pardon my English, screw too many people too severely I consider myself decent, okay, because if I want to be holly I'd have to, I'd have to. There is no such a thing, okay. I can say that I went through the camp, I was after the camp I was always usefully or gainfully employed and I behaved in a way that I didn't have to step on nobody's toes and I considered this thing extremely important to me because I can go anyplace. You see I went to California a few years back. I found out that in Los Angeles there's a guy by the

name Raab, Raab. Now Raab is a guy from my hometown. He was probably about three, four years older than I was. I knew that he was over there. I looked it up; sure enough there are three Raabs. I flip a coin. Goldie and I, we were over there because let me back it off a little bit when Hillary was born Sharon was living in Arizona so we were in Arizona, then we decided to go from Arizona, you might as well go to L.A. So we went to L.A., we went over there to the zoo down a little further south, everything was fine. So I said to Goldie, "You know, I hear that there's, I heard that there's that guy Raab." I called him up. A lady with an accent answers, "What do you want?" So I said, "My name is Roman Luftglas. I am a landesman of Bernie Raab. Could I see him?" "You must want something." I said, so I quickly lost my cool. I said, "Look, if you want to this is my telephone number. He can call me up." Sure enough fifteen minutes later Bernie Raab calls me up. Now Bernie Raab was a son of the only Jewish mail carrier in Poland who was in our town. And I remembered and I reminded him, you know, when I had to go from home to school my mother always told me, because the guy, he got to be very, very sick. So when a person was sick in the olden days you had to go say Tehilim. He says, Goldie says to, Goldie. My mother says, "Roman, on the way to school stop for fifteen minutes zug a posuk tehilim. So I went and I did and I reminded him of it. But before when he called me up I said, "Who was that woman?" He said that's my wife. I said, "You married a G-d damn gestapo broad?" And I just really laid into him. So he tells me, you know he has a big factory that makes industrial kitchens from stainless steel, employs 500 people. You know but among a Greener to prove yourself you have to have a certified check to prove it otherwise they don't even believe you. I say, "I think it's wonderful so let me ask you something, Bernie. Since you're such a gantza knocker. What would be the big deal?" When we had the Hazkarah in New York at that time we used to have it while we were still more people.

INT: For your town?

ROMAN: For our hometown. We were a handful of people. We even had our Rav. "Why don't you get your tail to New York and come over there? You can even come to Hartford to stay with me if you want to." He says, "I wouldn't do that for nothing in the world." I said, "Why?" He says, "Because there's Kuba Zelinger. "Also a guy from our hometown who used to be a copel who beat him up and I would have to kill that so and so. So I said, "This is another story." You know this was like maybe thirty years down the line. So I decided to sell him on the idea. I said, "Bernie, don't give me a line of horse manure for the simple reason if you would have now, don't be a B.S. artist. If you would have had the opportunity to be a copel would you take it? After all it gives you an extra meal." I say, "So maybe the guy just did it. Maybe he is sorry. Maybe you should talk with him. Maybe he will apologize to you. Are you planning to carry it for the rest of your miserable life?" Anyhow I must have done a sufficient amount. He came to New York and they shook hands and this was the situation. Now along the same line did I tell you about the situation where a guy from my hometown stole my bread?

INT: No.

ROMAN: When I was working, when I was in the camp when I had the pig that I was taking care of. At that point I made, you see we used to have a, we used to have a round bread about that much in diameter and everybody get a little piece, six, for six people. I managed to have a reserve of bread, one ration. Now one ration of bread is equivalent to like a quarter million dollars, even more because this get, a quarter million dollars ain't going to save your life when you're dying from hunger. And I used to put it under my pillow; you know we had straw pillows. And every evening when I used to get new bread I used to eat the, I used to take the old bread and eat it. I used to have myself a rotation. In the camp there was certain rules, you don't steal the other guy's bread and you don't be a muser, you know, squealer.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: Those are two things you just don't do. I used to have a guy next to me; we used to live like on shelves. Yussel Oserofsky, he used to work at the other, during the day we were working in different places but at night we were sleeping like herons next to each other. Somehow he was, he was selected to be shipped out of this camp. Over there when you go someplace you are kind of certain, 99% certain that we probably will never see each other again. He stole the bread. Well, I'll tell you something. I was very upset to say the least but somehow I heard the story that when they loaded them up on the truck and he was sitting like right near the gate when the truck pulled away he fell out broke his neck and got killed. So I figured to myself, my, it suits you right you son of a gun, it suits you right. And this was it. Many years later his sister, who lives in California has a daughter who lives in New York, the daughter was getting married. I got invited and Goldie got invited to the wedding. Did you ever get so scared that you feel like click, click, you know like needles? Goldie thought that I'm getting a heart attack because I turned white. I got so scared. At the door where I was coming in Yossel, this is the Helen Oserofsky, her brother, he survived. He says to me, "Hi Roman." Just you know, "Hi Roman." Now there is a ton of stuff Goldie says to me, "Roman, are you feeling all right?" You know I thought that, you know it's such a shocking experience and the whole damn thing goes through you. So he says, "How are you doing?" And I came to a conclusion right; you know conclusions you have to make quick in a hurry. What am I going to do now? Shall I start world war three? Shall I tell him to give me three rolls? Shall I give me three ration of bread or fifty rations of bread? I decided to keep my mouth shut. Just don't say anything because it's no use to say anything. You know we cannot dig the bad things out. So then I said, well he married that German woman, a shiksa lady. He used to be a Chasidish guy with peyos mind you. So I say to him, so you know it was extremely difficult for me to keep a straight face but you just have to do it. I say, "So what do you do?" Au tzu ois gelust a mieser. He is a bagel king in Chicago. He had eight bagel stores so he's going to give me six dozen of bagels. So I said, "Well, use it well." I never saw the guy again. His sister came to visit me recently but those are situations that you have to make snap decisions and you have to, you have to put on value the bad that I do, what is it going to accomplish? Just for the hell of it we just don't do things. You know like some people say I don't give a damn if I spend a million dollars to teach that son of a gun a lesson. I'm not going to do no such a thing. See it's just simply I'm wasting good energy going after a stupid thing. He's probably going to find his mark

someplace else. I'm not going to get myself dirty with the guy. But those are situations of survival.

INT: It's unbelievable that he became a bagel king, don't you think?

ROMAN: G-d almighty I tell you something. It was such a horrifying thing.

INT: Did Goldie know the story?

ROMAN: I told Goldie. Goldie.

INT: Did she know before? I mean...

ROMAN: Goldie knew the story because I told her this thing once. But when this happened and Goldie says to me, you know she was with me. And I just thought that the world is going topsy turvy, you know. How is it possible, you know 360 degrees and then 180 on top of it? So...

INT: And you managed to still kind of figure out what you are going to do?

ROMAN: Well, you see I managed. You see first of all experience teaches you. You know there is a famous saying if you can't see it say nothing right, shut your mouth because you see once it comes out past my lips and I really hurt you unless if I wanted deliberately hurt you and I don't care. And I really don't care whatever I do. Even later if I apologize you will forgive me but you will not forget. So when I am really, there are times that I have down times that I could jump at anybody, just bite his throat. I go in a room, I am left alone, the family knows. I don't go screaming. You cannot go to work. I cannot go holler at my people like a maniac. So I just shut my mouth, I just mope around 'til it goes away. I take a pill or whatever the heck it is and it goes away. You have to, you see let me tell you something. When people say, I used to have a salesman working for me and he says to me, oh, he was an antagonistic son of a gun to order other people, you know. So we used to, in the old store we used to have kind of a mezzanine. He forgot that I was upstairs and he brags, this guy, later he was a thief. But this is something else. He says to the guys, he says, "You know, I have a temper that if a guy crosses me I can squash him." Now I know that if anybody tells you that they have a temper they are so full of it that they don't even know. Because if I have a little kid and I have a temper I can kill. But if I see a guy six foot five with muscles like this I ain't going to let my temper go because I know that something will happen. Therefore I can control my temper. So when I heard this thing I came down, I said, "Irving, I heard that you are bragging to the guys that you have a temper. You never showed it to me." He says, "Well, you're the boss." I said, "Irving, let me put you on notice. If I ever see you lose your temper to any one of the people you will be history." He didn't have any temper, you see. I really think that unless, you see I don't even think that this was a temper. This is, I think that I momentarily got up, you know, there is such a thing as getting out of your mind. I really think that I must have lost my marbles for a second. I just got wild because I cried, I screamed. I remember distinctly, you know with that lady.

But you just, you just, you just cannot say. You know you generally when you are doing something you know what you're doing.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: And unless if you want to be an imbecile and say oh I lost my temper. I really don't think that this generally this applies.

INT: These times when you say you feel down or you know, you just need to be by yourself, when do those come or are there patterns?

ROMAN: There is a variety of things that trips it. Lousy weather will trip it. Some, you know there are certain, let me just tell you something like this. I am firmly convinced that the luggage that I acquired, it stays with me. I am also firmly convinced that if I would not have a job, if I would be idle there's a whole bunch of that stuff that is waiting to get, you know it is just waiting to enter. What I have developed a strategy is I try to keep it on the other side of the door. It's there. I know that it's there and you know there are thoughts. You know sometimes a something that triggers a thought and all of a sudden, you know. Sometimes I do my walking, my four mile walk in the morning. You know you work. Usually I do it at 5:30 in the morning so in the wintertime it's dark. Sometimes you know all of a sudden you know like you see a vision of your parents. It just, it just comes at you. It just comes at you. I don't think that I have any control over it because it all of a sudden you know you are walking, you are always thinking unless you know, when you sleep you don't think maybe, who the heck knows? But this is the situation is that you are trying, you know the alternatives and you figure out how to avoid it. You see in other words if I would like to go for looking for troubles, yes, I could be on a ton of all kinds of pills. And yes, I could go to shrinks and they could do whatever the heck they would do, I don't know. I think that I cope reasonably well with my problem. It is a real big problem but I must get, first of all with situations like I am grateful for the fact that I have decent children. And this is something; you know this is something that can derail it to a positive thing. I have decent grandchildren. I have a good wife. I have a decent home. I come in Friday when Goldie prepares for Shabbas; you know it smells, it smells so special. But then again on the other hand this darn thing comes around to you. You say but wouldn't it be wonderful?

INT: You'd like to.

ROMAN: Presently they have a situation...

INT: Do you want to stop for a minute?

ROMAN: Presently they have a situation in the synagogues particularly Yom Kippur. They have a service called Matarology. After I finish with Yom Kippur it takes me a good part of a week to get back to the balance because when they start talking about things like this, it's not they talk about Treblinka and things like this, those are triggers that remind me. You know it scrolls in front of your eyes, the whole damn thing is just

whoosh and it's right there. And this is the time when I call the epis pills, be valuable, be it whatever the heck I have to take it because otherwise you feel like it's tearing you apart, you see. So I would say that yes, you try to be happy. I don't pretend that I'm happy. You see I am fortunate that I find people that I can talk with. I don't keep things bottles up. I try to put it in different, in a variety. I always try to manipulate the things to try to give them a slight different twist and it looks better sometimes. You see you know it's nothing is written into stone so...

INT: It sounds to me like it's all genuine. The pain is genuine, and the happiness is genuine and the trying to see things.

ROMAN: You see the point is you still have to go on. You see like when Hilary got to be Bat Mitzvahed, if anybody will tell me that I will make 70 I would say you are full of what the bird seeds. It's impossible, I will never make it. I've had people say to me so how did...

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Roman Luftglas on Tuesday, July 18th. We've talked about some pretty heavy things here. Did you ever question your ability to go on living? Was that ever a question?

ROMAN: There were two times but this was early in the camp. One time I was working in a place, I think I told you about this thing. I was working in this shtikshtokover.

INT: Oh, that horrible...

ROMAN: This is the place where you know it burns your face.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: You know it's so terrible that you actually wish, you say I cannot cope with it, the hell with it. But then something unique happens like I don't know maybe the bread tasted a little bit better or maybe there was a sunny day while we were going, walking to work. I don't know what the heck happened. Maybe it was just kind of a situation that I just was super down and then you decided damn it I'm going to hack it. And along those lines I'll tell you just another situation.

INT: Are we okay here?

ROMAN: Now I spent a reasonable amount of time looking for some German people and if I could even today, send them probably today would send them \$10,000, I would. Now I was working in a place where we were building a railroad and we were working naturally and working. You know in wintertime you pick the damn 30 meters of iron and you pick it up, you know your hands glue themselves, you get pieces of skin torn off of you. My good fortune was when it was carrying, no matter how short anybody was I was shorter so I didn't have to carry so heavy but never the less it was all right. So we were

going out and we were working and then we had to go to a little, like a shack for lunch in other words to take a break and then you go back to work. Now as we were walking down, this is I'm trying to tell you how you cannot condemn old people. I saw over there, gosh must have been maybe a half a mile away, not quite a half a mile away a farmer's house, a farmhouse. I decided I didn't decide to run away because running away is just a wait no. It was in wintertime, I fell behind a bunch of dirt and snow, the column went by and I went to this farmhouse and I came in and over there was an older lady, an older lady, you know. But a lady, she was probably about maybe 40 and a daughter that was probably about fifteen, sixteen. I came in over there; you saw what you got with the stripes with the whole thing. I said, "You know, Maybe you've got something to eat. I'm so hungry." She sat me down on the floor in the kitchen. This was a farmer, the farmer's house and she gave me Kleisel, you know this is like a piece of dough about like a big snowball with a plum inside. Three of them I ate. This is the first time in ages that I felt like full. I never went back because you know there are both bears and pigs. I thanked her and this was it. I spent some time to go over there to this area and to see her, if I could find those people but you know they were fleeting, they ran away because the Germans were much more afraid of the Russians than of the Americans. So they just went away. But this is a situation that you do have decent people in every flavor and above all you have situations like, I have a hang-up on German cars. I have a BMW; I have a Mercedes, whatever the heck it is.

INT: You do.

ROMAN: Yes. So I have a guy, shephard, he's from Shephard's Steel, the construction outfit. He buys stuff from us. He comes around, he says, "You G-d damned Nazi," to me. I say, "Shepsel, how did you come up with such a fancy word?" He says, "Driving those Nazi cars." So I said, "Shepsel, take a look what you're driving. You are driving a Continental. Was there anybody worse than Henry Ford? For Pete's sake what's the matter with you?" And this way he just, I shut him up. I know you see like there are certain people that I won't do this, I won't do this. I prefer to look at situations, you know with eyes open wide. If I find that you did me wrong I'll assure you I'm not naive, and I'm not stupid, and I can be very vengeful and I can track you down. But just to go, I am doing the same thing then what the Germans did, you see. And this is just not really so good. So you know you preach to the children, you're supposed to be, you're supposed to be nice to everybody, you know, regardless of color and everything. Then you come up with a statement like this. Yes, there were Germans. Frankly I'll tell you something, I was to a great extent more abused by the copos, and they were Jewish and we have had the Hungarians, and we have had the Ukrainians and we had all kinds of chaos. So if you want to, Yudenepister, you must have heard of a Yudenepister. We have a Yudenepister from my hometown, the most horrible guy. You probably if you ever heard about Gross Rosen. You see our camp was a satellite of Gross Rosen. The Yudenepister in our place was Boruch Meister. Somewhere down the line if you listen to it you will always find out he was from my hometown. And when I came into his camp, you know, from another camp he recognized me. So he spoke Polish to me. He says, "Jack Granges, where's your father?" So I'd say, "He's gone." Mordka, but he remembered.

INT: Your brother.

ROMAN: Yep. So what he did for me is he left me alone and this is the only, as a matter of fact he had three brothers with him. One of them was a very, you know and genuinely pious person. The only thing he could afford to be pious over there because he didn't have to go to work or he davened Raphael Fulik. So he asked me, he used to, this kid used to go with me to school so somehow he connected tuberculosis and he was just going down, down the drain. So Boruch Meister calls me into his office. He says, "I want you to go stay with Fulik for a little while." So I went over there.

INT: You had a rest.

ROMAN: Yeah, you see. So what I was hoping that he just don't do me any good but don't do me any bad.

INT: Right, to leave you alone.

ROMAN: I have a chance somehow just to...

INT: When was the other time, you said there were two times, once in this camp and another time?

ROMAN: No, they were both times in the camp. Both times in the camp. I never, I never considered, I never considered anything just it must have been; I'll tell you I remember that there were two times. It must have been under conditions that were just very, very dire and like you hungry. Oh yeah, in Falbrick we had typhus and you know the fever eats you up. And all of a sudden you feel something warm on your face and a guy pees on you from the top and guys, you know like fifty of them per day they just keep shipping them out. There are extreme situations where you feel like throwing the towel in but then all of a sudden after everything got normalized they take you to, the, you know you kill all the damn lice and you take a, you know they give you that bath with creosol, you know that burns your skin off. And you somehow you are willing to hack it.

INT: To try again.

ROMAN: You see. Yes, you are willing to hack it. You know I, personally, I am. I heard that somebody saying that committing, committing suicide, that taking your life is cowardice. I really do believe that under normal conditions I consider it cowardice because if you have any smarts to think it through. You know sometimes people think that when you die you just die for a little bit and then you come back. But you see people die for a very long time. I never saw anybody coming back. There are no refunds. No refunds.

INT: No, you know that. So what helped you begin your new life here in America? What, how did you? What helped you begin that new life?

ROMAN: Well, in America itself?

INT: Yeah.

ROMAN: In America itself when I came to South Carolina, first of all they asked me, so what do you do? So I figured the easier, you know over there I didn't really speak so, such English anyway. So I said, "Well, I'm a mechanic." They found me a job as a mechanic.

INT: You went to work right away, I recall.

ROMAN: I came in on Saturday. On Monday I went to work. I thought I was very proud of myself. And when it came, you know during lunchtime I had to go to a restaurant to eat. I really didn't understand any stuff and you know in South Carolina you speak English, their English or else. So you say give me the soup. It happened to be good, I remembered this one and I ordered like two weeks straight.

INT: You asked for it again.

ROMAN: You see so this was good then later on in the army I learned flexibility. You see for me the army was, you see the same thing like people say you know jails, American jails I would sign up for two lifetimes. Like a person it was but obviously now I have a family, you know that's different. But in the army I did pretty well. After the army I came to Hartford.

INT: You had a landesman? Somebody, is that how it happened?

ROMAN: In Hartford. My landesman now lives in Poughkeepsie. And Michael, he lives in Hartford. As a matter of fact he built up enough guts that he with his wife went cross country by car schlepping for three months away.

INT: Now you mean.

ROMAN: Right now he is away and I couldn't do it because I would miss my kids too much. I think for two weeks for me is, I didn't even have two, my vacation from the last two years. But I don't miss it. I came here to Hartford. So first of all I went to work, you see, and I was hanging around but I couldn't zero in because those people really, they themselves didn't know where they are. You know they gave him a job and they stayed, they put him into a place to work with woodwork, the guy was a woodworker like you are a cable walker. He didn't do nothing about it. I said to him, "Carl, why don't you just take some time, first of all, zero in on what you want and learn about it and go after it." "Yeah, but I don't have no time. I come home, I'm tired, and you know a day is a month, and a month is a year, and a year is gone and this is it." So I went to work, first of all as a mechanic. So I went to work as a mechanic in a little place and I didn't like it at all. In the meantime I zeroed myself, first of all I wanted to go back to the army.

INT: You did.

ROMAN: Yep, I wanted to because I liked the army. I had a good life in the army every place I went. I sometimes think to myself if I would have to do it again would I do it over? Yes, I would except for the cockamamie experience over there. But I wanted to go to the army and Carl started to holler, screaming, you just came back. You almost got killed and this and that and you stay with us. We will hack it out together somehow. So I went to A.C. Hiam, to a bigger place as a mechanic. And over there I was working, already I was making \$36 a week and I met a girl. And all of a sudden somehow the life is worth something entirely different. In the meantime I found out that since I was the low guy on the totem pole you work on salary plus commission. They gave the good gravy work like Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday I had solid work, then I used to get squeaks and rattles and those squeaks and rattles you cannot make a living. So I had heard about a place, Pat and Whitney. So I went to Pat and Whitney. I took a day off. You know that's a big deal for me and I already knew my girl and I knew that I had to do, you know you have to do something more. If you're going to die a grease monkey this is just not a great future for me. So I went to Pat and Whitney and I applied for a job as a sheet metal mechanic and a welder. They gave me a test in blue prints I passed. I went through welding oh, it's a great. We'll put you on the second shift as a metal, on the second shift you're getting a ten cent an hour bonus. I figured to myself, wow, this is fantastic. Well, as you are filling out the papers have you been in the United States Army? Yes. Have you been honorably discharged? Yes. Are you a citizen of the United States? Not yet. You have to be five years. They bumped me. To say that I was disappointed it's an understatement because I was good enough to be on front lines in Korea but I was not good enough for the G-d forsaken place over there. But somehow you know, once you make that move you start to follow it. So I said, pardon my English, "G-d damnit, I'm not going back to the grease monkey business. And I found an outfit, Tom Electronics and they were looking for a mechanic, for a welder. I went over there; you know they were, they were making those hangers that you hang jet planes on it. So when you do it you have to do it right because it's being fluoroscoped it has to be 160% right. He saw my work, I got a job. And I was working over there; I was making a much better living. The only thing is I don't think that you ever had the experience to smell a husband that comes home as a welder. You stink, literally stink. I had to take off my clothes, put it in the closet and take a bath before I even could talk to my wife. And I was doing pretty good over there and my mother in law alov hashalem who was a wonderful lady, she used to think that if you only push a pencil for half the money but to be a respectable guy in an office, you know, this would be wonderful. But she really never, she never interfered and I was making a living and we got ours. No, we didn't get even our first baby yet. But at one point I was doing some precision burning, you know very heavy steal and my boss came around, he wanted to see what I'm doing. He stepped on the hose. You know those are those settling hoses and the blue flame just gave me a lick. And all of a sudden I had a red; you know they had to give me some special penicillin junk, whatever. I was on the sick list. So my wife was working at the insurance company and my mother in law was babysitting with me. So I read in the paper that they are looking for a photographic salesman. Salesmanship know how is not necessary but

knowledge of product is necessary. Now since then I learned otherwise that I personally think first of all, salesmanship is important, knowledge of the product I'll teach you. I went and while I went to the doctor I had to go over there to the place. I went to the doctor, after the doctor I went to the place and I applied and the guy hired me. He hired me on Friday, he says, "Saturday you come to work." I came into work. Now you see sometimes you don't know what you got. I came into the place, this was a discount house, Academy Sales, a meshugoyim house, you know it was very busy, people crawling all over you. It's a terrible thing. I came home; I said to Goldie, "Goldie, this is not my thing. I don't like it. I hate it." Goldie says to me, "Roman, you will do me a personal favor," but you have to listen to your wife once in a while.

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: She says, "Do me a favor. Do me a personal favor. Work for a week. If by the end of the week you don't like it you always can go back to the garage, otherwise you just have to give him notice anyhow, "because I was on sick leave." I said, "Oh, okay." Well Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday it really was not as crazy as Saturday and then I made a discovery that assuming that you know your product and assuming that I can speak to you convincingly, that's what salesmanship, it's not b.s.ing. It's being able to speak convincingly. So my, the big boss came around to see me and he used to believe that in order for you to be a good salesman you are supposed to be Arian looking, tall, blonde. I don't have neither one of those situations. So then he discovered that I was doing exceptionally well selling stuff that they never dreamt to sell. So he says to his sidekick, he says, "We are going to send him to school to correct his accent." So Al Sefers says to him, "Bernie, you will do yourself a big favor, you leave this guy alone just the way he is." So while I was working over there I, first of all I brought in some heavy duty stuff, you know, like roloflex, two, three hundred dollar equipment and I was doing real well. I developed a camera hospital and people were coming in from all over creation. As a matter of fact they put me to the very end of the store and they clicked who was coming to the store. Most of the people were coming to the place over there.

INT: Where you were.

ROMAN: And I was doing really good. But my boss used to believe that compliments are the things that pay. He paid me nothing. I was doing cash, in the first year I did for them probably about a half a million dollars' worth, you know, starting from ground zero and I hinted to him politely, don't forget at that time Goldie already had a baby, little Sharon. I cannot throw around odd jobs; you know I hinted to him that I'm doing so well. As a matter of what I did like came Christmas time I took a sheet of paper and I made myself a battle wagon, a tank and an airplane. It was fifty to one hundred, one hundred to two hundred, two hundred to five hundred; this was the highest stuff that we sold. And I used to make myself, I made the, you see I made the situation deliberately, I said, "Bernie, I'm fighting a private war." And he thought that this was real funny. He said, "How is the war doing boychik."

INT: He liked that.

ROMAN: So he came around and I really, mapped it up and it was doing good so that he can see, touch it. But he just says, "Well you're going to be in charge of the, you're going to be the manager but nothing showed up.

INT: No raise.

ROMAN: No nothing. So I listened very carefully over there and I discovered from the guys that there was another discount house and that those guys hated each other's guts. So I decided, you know, animals don't fight they bluff first, but you have to be prepared to fight if necessary. So Bernie comes around, he says, "Nu boychik, how is the war doing?" I say, "Take a look over there." And then he comes back, you know. He says to me, so I say to him, "You know, Bernie, I just noticed something during lunchtime that there is no honor among thieves." He says, "What do you mean?" I said, "There was a guy," I knew that those guys don't talk to each other. "There was a guy during lunch hour, told me about that outfit over there in the north end that he wants me to go over there, start up a photographic department. Don't you guys have any honor among each other, trying to steal each other?" And I was; now I watch a person's face because the mouth lies but the face does not. And this guy starts like this; I knew that I hit the nerve. I said, "I think that's terrible and I dropped it." It was very busy. At 2:30 the floor worker, the floor manager comes around to me. He says, "Roman, Bernie wants me to take you out to Frank's Restaurant." In the middle of the week? Going to a fancy restaurant? We went to the restaurant. He says, "Oh, incidentally," he says, "He is giving you a \$15 raise." I said, "Thank you very much." I didn't say, I didn't say a word anymore. I just left it alone 'til later on I came out with a bright idea. If you are doing so good for the other guy maybe you can do so good for yourself. Now here comes a whole brand new project. You can have, you know you have friends but when the chips are down, you know when you laugh the world laughs with you, when you are uv tzurus, you are all by yourself. I went to the floor walker who had this, to wound up being a good friend. He was the only guy that could help me.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: When I was very busy he could help me. He knew what was going on. And Bernie, you know photographic equipment, if it's technical, people are afraid of it so they just shy away from it. So I said to Irwin we were going home, I said to him, "Getsel, I have a proposal for you. If you like it you will tell me. If you don't like it you just swallow it like I never said anything to you because I have a wife and a kid and I cannot afford to lose it." I said, "I personally think that you and I could start up a business and we could do it." He says, "Let me talk with my wife." And I talked with Goldie and everybody says, "But how are you going to do it?" I was doing the buying, I was doing everything but I never did the paying. You see the paying is the office is doing. So he comes back the following day, he says to me, "I think that we should give it a try." I said, "Now remember I don't believe in being a little bit pregnant. You're in or you're out." He was an honorable guy. So he says, "Well how do we start out?" So I said, "Well, over the weekend I'm going to make an inventory." So I made myself an inventory of

what I wanted was like \$50,000. Where do you get \$50,000? I brought it down to \$45,000. I brought it down to \$40,000. I brought it down to \$35,000. Everybody you go to, your friends, they say, "Oh, my money is tied up. In cash I can do nothing for you. Sorry." I go to the bank, you know bankers that were doing business with me they say, "I think you are a nice guy but you know we are not in business to set people up in business. You don't have any collateral. So sorry." So then I said to Gansen, "You know I think that we are attacking the situation the wrong way. Why don't we see how much money we can raise and then we're going to have just the inventory." Well, fortunately I have a sister in law; she had \$5,000 and here the mother, that she had \$5,000. So together we borrowed \$10,000. Now if you are an unknown person you are discovering a few things to yourself. First of all I have to find a place. Second thing since you are unknown, you have to put three months...

INT: Rent?

ROMAN: ...rent. Third thing, electricity, you had to put a deposit. Telephone, you have to put a deposit. On top of the deposit I discovered that the cheapest way would be you can get unlimited telephone calls in but limited out. So if I wanted to call Goldie I rang three times, she called me back. It was an experience but what I was hoping that within the first year, I started out in April, that by the end of the year if I could do \$100,000 I would be doing good. Oh, incidentally, nobody wants to sell to you because you are unknown. You talk to Eastman Kodak, they say, "Listen, new businesses we consider like cancer, if you survive for five years we'll talk to you." The first year we did \$170,000. I paid off my loan within three years. The only thing is that later on, again, here you have a situation now my partner; we were considered a very solid partnership. A partnership is good only when all parties are necessary to each other. If you would be just the money it's no good because all of a sudden I can be a gantza knocker uy myself. We were good working with each other but what happened, here comes the situation. Irwin Gansen is a New Yorker. He was much better educated than I was. When he started to have money he wanted to be accepted in echelons that he does not really belong to. He wanted to live a life that he never lived in. I said, "Gansen, you're buying drinks to all those scums. I'll bet you as soon as you ain't got any money they won't even talk to you. Why are you pushing yourself where you don't belong?" He says, "Oh, you're a Pollack, you don't understand." Well, p.s., since then it was a situation that he got divorced because you know money, you see you have to have a tremendous amount of discipline with money. I consider money a wonderful thing, that if I want to buy something I buy it. I don't owe anybody anything. I feel secure. This is mostly but to try to push myself into territories that you see I just will not do it. I am with people that I feel comfortable with. What you see is what you got. If you don't like it, tu mir nisht can toivous that's it. This guy, later on about, so we split.

INT: He did.

ROMAN: He decided to go to insurance business. He comes in one day to me, he was drinking. He was taking; I didn't even know what the hell it was, bennies and uppers and downers and all that mishagos. So I said to him, he came into work drunk once to work.

I said, "Gansen, this is the last time I want to see such a thing because what you're doing after working hours it's your business but we have to have discipline." We split up. Maybe fifteen years later, oh I went, so I was by my, when he left me...

INT: You were alone.

ROMAN: When he left me we were doing like \$235,000 a year. It was considered a very solid partnership. All of a sudden he decided that he's going to go to insurance business because he can screw around after working hours where the wife does not have any handle on him. So I was very glad because I didn't have to, you know, you have to, it was awful. But be it as it was, he was very good at the insurance and then he moved out to Michigan someplace. And then all of a sudden the whole damn thing somehow fell apart on him. He comes back to Hartford, I always considered him an honest, and he was an honest and a decent person. He was a screwball but this has nothing to do with it. So he comes in one day, "Hi Roman, how are you doing?" "I'm still doing the same thing." He says, "You know, I wonder if you and I could get together and be in business together?" Now, I'll tell you something, in partnership you learn a few things because it's like a marriage except you see with my wife if I have an argument we can make up in bed. What am I going to do with a turkey? So you have to, I had a, you know we had a partnership agreement and at that time I made a specific point. First of all wives are not allowed to take any part in business and second thing is if we have a disagreement nobody leaves the premises until we got it straightened out. And this worked good because nobody leaves the premises because I know myself that by tomorrow I'm going to be ready to kill him and it worked. And then later on when he decided, he came into me, he says, "I'm leaving." So all we have to do, I was very uncomfortable because I never flew so low. But since then, you see in partnership there is no such a thing as black and white. I constantly had to take the situation, now there are certain things which were very important to me. Obviously the register was honest; there was no question about it. He wanted to be the front man, he wanted to be the president, and he wanted to be the handshaker which is perfectly all right with me, okay. He was very good at work. We split work so that I did the repair work on the cameras and I, both of us did good selling and things were going pretty good. When he left my biggest worry was, you see he knew how to write a proper letter, you know, the top, and the middle, and the end and everything. I didn't know that stuff. So he left and I had a bright idea. You know if I have to write to Eastman Kodak, me, so I came up with an idea to myself. I said to myself, you know, in Europe if I want to write to anybody of any consequence, first of all writing with the typewriter is an insult. So I had, I have a pretty decent handwriting. I wrote to whom it may concern, this is what it is, this is the background of it. This is what I hope for it to hear from you, to the point. Because I knew that if you give me a letter that is sixteen pages I'd say fadrei de a cup. What do you say on the bottom over there? What is it that you want? And it worked, and it worked really well. And I discovered that by yourself if I do something right it's my fault, if I do something wrong it's exclusively my fault and I learned to like it very, very much.

There's a variety of ways to say something. When he came up with that situation I needed like a luch in cup but I am not going to say, so he says to me, "What do you

think?" So at that time my company was doing like six and a half million dollars. So I decided to take a chance. I took out my operating statement and I said, "Here, Gansen, prepared to pay half?" He says, "And I used to call you a Pollack. I couldn't do it." So he said it. I didn't have to say no and I could tell you one thing, if he needs financially any kind of help or so I'll be glad to help him out. But I still believe that to be partners with your wife, that's it.

INT: Well, you really went out on your own and you overcame some of your own insecurities about how to do that.

ROMAN: Well, would you believe insecurity I always have. Goldie has a cabinet with cans of food, I never use it. Periodically they pop so she throws them out, she replaces them. I have gold pieces because I figure to myself, G-d forbid what would I do? So at least I can bribe my way out, save my family, save something. You see I have several idiosyncrasies, you know the old stories, and nobody knows how it is 'til you really were in there. You can talk about; this is the same thing like when people talk, when our daughter passed on. I hope you should never, du ous nisht ga pruberin, you know they say. There is no comprehension of anybody how horrible the thing is, okay. It is just unbelievably terrible. The fact remains that there are people that they say I'm sorry and they probably genuinely mean it but they really don't know what the hell it's all about. So you see this is a similar situation. I was under circumstances where my values and I mean it most sincerely, and my people that I work with know it. If I get sufficiently provoked where a guy threatens my personal situation I know how to, how to make him a head shorter. But I consider human beings, you know anything that I own, anything that I have has a certain value but only a certain value. We can go up to here but not an inch further because it's just simply not worth it. You see so those are things that you kind of learn. Yes, I have money and I didn't have no money and I had situations that I have had I got myself into a partnership where unfortunately I was out of all the big knockers I was the only guy that could buy my soul back. I was grateful, I was grateful that I could talk it out with my wife. I was grateful that I had to bear myself out. I was grateful to just maybe put myself back to normalcy. You see those are things that you learn the hard way the values of life. Now the values of life is not just dollars and it's not just going to shul, it is a whole package of what life is and darn it, take it for whatever, take it for whatever it's worth it but it is a very important ingredient that unfortunately now a days people just simply, a lot of people they just don't know. As a matter of fact when my children were growing up I had an obsession that anything that you own you valued to the extent of the effort that you put into it. If you're being showered with a bunch of stuff that you have tons and tons of it it's really not worth to you a damn thing. My children, when they went to school they don't have no cars. When they came home they could use my cars. They knew that I, my craziness about cars, they took care of those things. This was fine but to put a kid with a car and with insurance with all this chasarai now you are going to school or you are doing what? And I am willing, let's put it this way, I know that I checked with UPS, they don't deliver where I go. I help out my children. Eventually I have to leave the whole darn thing behind. Anyhow I know that fully well but in the meantime I like them to know that every one of my kids worked with me in the

store at one point or another so that they know how things happen, they know what the appreciation of life is, the appreciation of what you have. Things just don't happen.

INT: Well, maybe we should end here, Roman. I think that...

ROMAN: I think maybe we should leave it.

INT: It is Tuesday, August 8th and this is a continuation of an interview with Roman Luftglas. We've been talking about your family and your commitment to your family. How did, and you say you got married when you were 28. How did you choose your spouse after the war?

ROMAN: You know when after the war I did not intend to get married for the simple reason because I recognized that I don't have no place to put my head down. In order to get married in the olden days they used to teach you have to have something to offer, some kind of security. I was in total flux. So I figured to myself when the time comes when I feel secure. I was twenty; it was too young for me. Then when I came to the United States I got drafted. I certainly did not want to have some widow crying after me that she met me for three months and her, you know. You just don't go catch metzius. But when I came out from the army I all of a sudden got so sick and tired of being single that I was, well I was on the prowl. And I, well it was a situation where I met a lady by accident that was an aunt of Goldie's and I rented a place over there for \$7 a week.

INT: Now where was this, back down south or was it here?

ROMAN: No, this was already here, this was here in Hartford. Now what happened is I came here to my friends, Carol and Gene. But for a single guy to be, to hang around a married couple it somehow it didn't jive. I didn't have nothing else except my uniform because I just came out from the army, that's all I had. So in the afternoon, this was like in August, we were hanging out where right now you wouldn't dare to go even with an Israeli tank. We were hanging out and sure enough a lady comes up, she says, "Nu, I see epus, a Jewish boy, a nice soldier. Who are you? What are you?" She was the chief yenta of the place over there. So she says, "You know she has a nice room for me if I want." I looked, sure enough it was it. And I lived over there, it was kind of, it was a nice arrangement. I had myself my room; the lady was very friendly toward me. Just before Rosh Hashanah an older lady, another lady comes in with her daughter, with two daughters and a guy. So the older one looked like, looked much more like a marryable person which is my sister in law. And this one was a twenty-one year old kid, not even twenty-one yet. So talking with her and then I asked her for a date. And then I went to her house and you know you can see her at home, her mother was a wonderful lady, I mean a super lady.

INT: Yeah, you've said that before.

ROMAN: Yeah, so I figured to myself I've got myself a great thing going. Let's go for it. So she says obviously I bluffed my way around. She says you know she has a friend

that gave, you know tender or whatever it was. I said, "Goldie, if I see this guy anywhere close by I'm going to run him down." Now it was fortunately she took my word verbatim because we did get married, obviously 42 years ago. And I think, I think that she is the guiding light for me. She's the guiding light for me because I have a person that I can really talk it out with, very straight. And we got fine results and here is the pudding.

INT: Yeah, so before you said you know when you were 28 and you got married you were ready to get married and stay married for good.

ROMAN: That's right. I never considered to, you know like now a day, you see people say well, if it doesn't work, so what. You know, I'll tell you something, we started up in a way that I didn't have the proverbial pot to pee in and she really didn't have nothing either because they were not a well to do bunch of people. All I had to my name was \$300 mustering up; I had to buy myself a suit because her sister was getting married. And then when it came to buy a ring for her I actually had to borrow money from her. You see but I can tell, and you know I was making as a mechanic I was making \$35, \$38 dollars a week and she was working for the insurance company so she was making another \$30, 35 dollars. And we were living; you know you had to make sure that I get an allowance of \$5 just to take care of my cigarettes and my car. I used to smoke in those days and the car expenses and what not and I had to save up some money for a gift for her when the time came up. And she used to manipulate things, you know for the milkman and for this and for that. You appreciate things like this just like in business when I told you that it used to be a time that I didn't have enough money to pay my bills but somehow I managed to manipulate that I never bounced a check and I appreciate now that I can pay up everybody and I don't have to worry about things. This is a situation you work up the hard way, anything that I have I had to work for it and it's appreciated. It's simply just appreciated.

INT: So let's say about matters in the household, how did you make those decisions? Did you agree most of the time about these kinds of household decisions?

ROMAN: Well, I had to get a little bit tamed obviously. Goldie in charge at home and she used to take care of things. When it came to major decisions we had opinions and we worked them out. It came out kind of what concerns us because I constantly learned. You see when it comes to just regular life obviously she knew more than I did.

INT: Now why is that?

ROMAN: Because of, because I never was exposed to, you see don't forget when I came out I was, I came out from the camp. I was still at the level, I knew how to survive. I knew how to steal, I knew how. I knew all those things how to survive not to be hungry but there are finer points to life that you have to learn and I didn't have a chance to learn. I was still at the level, with certain things I was at the fifteen year level and looking back I can recognize, yes because I remember that even at the camp after the war we used to have girls, Hungarian girls, they were, you know, somehow girls are much more grown up. A girl twenty and a boy twenty, you know the boy is just a brainless cockroach.

They just were, they just knew what to take and what to save and what to take for them. I latched onto a bunch of stamp collections; I carried the darn thing with me so I still was really a kid. So in this particular case what happened, Goldie knew what, how a married life is supposed to look like because she had parents, her mother because her father passed on early when she was a little girl. She knew things that the point is how to make a home and a home is supposed to be not just a place to sleep and a place to eat, there's supposed to be more to it.

INT: That's right. That was important for you to have somebody whose experience was different.

ROMAN: You bet you, absolutely, absolutely. And you are trying to learn like heck. You are trying to learn as fast as you can just like I learned in the army to survive; now I had to be a civilian. I had to learn how to survive. In the meantime you know in the army you had a situation where you really didn't have to worry because the sergeant told you when to go to the bathroom and everything else. Here you have to make sure that if I don't have a good job I have to find myself something better and so on and so forth. So you, you have actually a certain amount of control over yourself and you have to just steer yourself along the lines.

INT: Right. Do you think that your war experiences affected your ideas about having children or in what way did they, when it came to that?

ROMAN: When it came to have children we simply, you see we didn't do nothing like for about at least a year. '55, no, we did about two years without kids because we simply believed that we have to stabilize, we have to be stable ourselves before we can bring any destabilizing factors into life. So Sharon was born in '55. We were married in '53. Sharon was born in '55. And then we, then we decided that after three years that it would be a good thing to have another one and after three years there was another one.

INT: What do you remember thinking and feeling about having children?

ROMAN: Would you like to know something? I really didn't put any, any value. I didn't put, it was just a matter of this is what it's supposed to be. You see I really didn't make any big issue out of it because it would be wonderful. As a matter of fact you see like for example when I remember when Sharon was born. My wife says, "Who are we going to name the baby after?" So I said, "Goldie, I really, you see to me this does not matter. You do whatever you want." It simply, it simply didn't make, it was of no issue to me. What I was hoping is for a healthy baby, this is the only thing that I was hoping. I didn't give a damn if it's a boy, and it's a girl and I can tell you something since I have three girls I think it's the greatest thing since Manischewitz invented wine.

INT: Who was Sharon named after, out of curiosity?

ROMAN: Sharon Anne, the S is after father, after her father and Anne was after my mother.

INT: Right, because she was, you told me, she had, she was a Chana.

ROMAN: Chanala, yeah, Chanala. And Freida, Freida was after my aunt. And Elaine with the, you know they do that modernistic way, the E is after Elias which is my father.

INT: Yes, right, I remember you told me that. How did you deal with the war with your kids? Was there a conscious way in which you tried to tell them some things?

ROMAN: About which war? About the camp?

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: There was, you see I'll tell you something, there were, you see you apply things with people as things develop. In those days, not that I tried to hide anything because I really didn't have nothing to hide but I didn't find no opportunity to make, to make any big announcements about the situation. Goldie knew, Goldie knew enough just to know. You see later on when they got, grew up older when I could talk with them so that I could apply my experience toward a story.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: That's when it was but initially when they were little I can tell you one thing, that when my children were little I was very, very strict. My kids knew that when I say something I say it once only. I could go to Queen Elizabeth's place and they would be as good as gold and they were equally as good at home. And initially the way I looked at the situation is when they were little I don't negotiate with anybody because if you don't know nothing what the hell am I going to do, going the blind to lead the blind? As they were getting older we used to discuss things. As they got older I was making suggestions. Now I keep my damn mouth shut unless they ask me and I say this is what I would do. You see the whole thing is that I tried to put things into perspective to a point that there's a time for everything. There are certain times where you have to know I'm not the gontza knocker and I cannot own the joint and I cannot dictate. As a matter of fact just yesterday Freida says to me, "You know, Daddy, they told me that I have to come to the office. They would like that I should work a little bit cheaper. What shall I tell them?" but she's all nervous about it. I said, "Well, Freida, first of all you know the value of your services." I hear from other people that she is excellent in her profession. I said, "The only thing that you have for sale is what you got right here and what you can do. If you give it away, there's no inventory there is nothing to sell. So if I would be you when they say that it's too much you simply tell them, you know it's a funny thing," in this case I'm talking to her. "You know, it's a funny thing, I frankly was considering to ask you for much more money because by comparison to other people how they charge for the same service I am definitely too low. And if they ask you for money you simply just tell them I simply cannot do it. That's it." Now obviously she has enough confidence in me and she saw me working at things that she works it. And today I said,

"So Freida, was the meeting there?" She says, "Yes. I told them the way we were talking about it."

INT: And it worked?

ROMAN: And she says, "It worked." Because you cannot find a person, you know a good occupational therapist that puts her heart into the situation and she's got a reputation over there also. I said the same thing that I told you about it when she went into business. I suggested, "You do the very damn best you can. Money is the result of your effort, not the primary thing because if you go for the money I guarantee you will fail." And she works at it this way and it works.

INT: So I'm trying to kind of sum up your, let's call it your philosophy of child rearing. I mean you've talked about openness with your kids, a kind of stern, a kind of disciplining when they were younger so that they would know what...

ROMAN: In other words I will bring it to you like this. When my kids ask me, "Daddy, why don't you go play with us in the sand box?" I said, "Do yourself a favor and please remember I'm not going to play." I just didn't feel like playing in the sandbox. I said, "I'm not your buddy, I'm your father. Now a father's job is very different than this." You see I make sure, I make damn sure that my kids know that I would give my right arm for them and there are ways to demonstrate even when they are little just like I demonstrated to little Richard, remember I told you with the fax?

INT: Yes, yes.

ROMAN: There are ways to demonstrate that they know that I can spend.

INT: That's a great story.

ROMAN: Yep. And as a matter of fact I have another situation where we found out that there was a Mrs. Strauss, a teacher who was pulling Freida's hair. You know they said, but they were only second graders so she was, Freida was chubby and she was just pulling her hair when you know they had to line up on the squares over there of the floor and if not she pulled her. And Freida came home a few times and she was crying and Goldie tells me about this things. She says, "What are we going to do about it?" I said, "Let me see what I am going to do about it, okay?" Now I always am afraid, you see. So what I did is I did my service calls. At around 9:30 I went to the school, and I went to the principal and I said, "I would like to see Mrs. Strauss. My name is Roman Luftglas; I would like to speak to Mrs. Strauss. Would it be okay?" He says, "Is there any problem?" I said, "At the moment, no," and that's it. He brought me to Mrs. Strauss and I thanked him and I said, "I would like to speak to Mrs. Strauss," simply. And you know teachers, as a rule I have found out that sometimes they are very cowardly, too. You know they are chicken. So I said to her, "Mrs. Strauss, my name is Roman Luftglas. I'm Freida's father. I understand that this and this transpires. If my daughter does something wrong I consider myself a sufficient disciplinarian that you tell me and I'll straighten it

out but I would give you a strong bit of advice to keep your hands off her. Do you understand?" She says, "Yes." I said, "Thank you very much," I didn't give her a chance to say anything. We left it. I told Goldie. When Freida got, already got married I told her about this thing because I was afraid that if she knows about it there's a possibility she might take advantage of a situation where maybe something could go wrong, you follow me?

INT: Uh huh.

ROMAN: So those are situations that I will go to great lengths to make sure that my family is safe and secure and loved is not a matter of me telling you how much I love you, love is to demonstrate that we are a safe and secure bundle. You know it, I don't know I can explain it to you really well but there is a special kind of a feeling that the family feels right about things, you see. And I think that this was a situation that guided me all along the lives with my family. I didn't make, nobody goes to school how to be a parent. You are riding by the seat of your pants. I know that my parents were strict. I know that my parents were fair. It took me a couple of hundred years to find out.

INT: Right, that's how it happens.

ROMAN: Obviously I had something to hang onto and if you show the children that you are vacillating, insecure, the whole damn thing winds up being insecure. Freida, I told you, I think, about the situation where Freida had a girlfriend.

INT: No.

ROMAN: And the girlfriend was going through, the girlfriend's family, parents were going through a divorce and obviously the girlfriend, she kind of got sour and Freida acquired the girlfriend's problems. Now Freida was a happy go lucky kid. All of a sudden I see her with that long face. I say, "Freida, what seems to be the problem?" So she tells me about this thing. I said, "You know, Freida," She was growing; this was in high school already. I said, "It's no good for you to have just one friend. It's simply just no good. Have some more friends because it's unhealthy. You see what happens; you are right now acquiring the pain that she has. You don't have any problems in your family or do you?" "No, I don't," but you know she feels sorry for her. We leave it alone, things don't improve. I say, "How you doing?" "Well, Daddy." I said, "Freida, I will forbid you to associate with this girl because I am responsible for my family's security and if anything interferes with this security I will do what's necessary to bust it up." And she was crying and we decided, I decided, we decided, I decided to give a little test. One day about 11:00 around the mid-week I went to high school. I stayed in the corner. She goes with a girlfriend. I come out, "Freida, I would like you to go with me to the principal's office." We went to the principal's office, I excused her. She was sixteen years old then. She got a good licking from me and at that time I said, you know every one of my kids, my strictness, you know you'd think that I was walking around beating up. Each one of my children at one point got a good licking and then we were living just on promises. You see bluffing as long as I had something to back myself up. I

said, "Look, you push your luck and one of these days you will be sorry that you ever started." So I took her home, she got a good licking and she cried out and everything else. I said, "Simply to put you on guard that I will keep an eye on you and if I see you with that girl you will be sorry that you were born." We left it alone. By the evening I apologized to her that I was too strong. I said, "But Freida, please understand you are my responsibility and somebody has to play the tune in this family and this is my assessment and this is what we have to do. So, yes, I was too strong because you are a sixteen year old young lady. I apologize to you. You know you cannot be too big for your pants. I can make mistakes; I'm not playing G-d. It was, then they'd always send her for eight weeks to Israel, to my family over there and you know it got itself diluted and over the years it disappeared, the situation. But now we are talking about it periodically and we are, you know it's a situation that I personally feel even now a days that I came across a little bit too strong. And I'm not bashful to admit it but never the less at least the family knows that you stand for something, you see. It is extremely important. You know if I tell you that I'm going to do this and then I'm not going to do this then maybe I'm going to do this, you really don't know what the heck is going on. This way not, I'm not that I'm perfect but this is what it is and this is what's required to run my family, and if anybody tampers with it he's going to get it, and that's it. So you see people used to say that I, I used to, I have friends that used to call me little Napoleon. But my partner that was with me, he used to say, "You're too strict, I could never tolerate the situation like this. I would never be a father like you." I say, "Do me a favor, mind your damn business. During work we are partners, after work you run your thing your way." What happened? He got divorced; the kids are completely screwed up. So I guess at least I have, I have a constant.

INT: Right. And as you say I mean it seems that you still bring it up or I don't mean that particular situation but do you feel that your kids could come up to you and let you know if?

ROMAN: I look, I told you a few times during this situation that sometimes I think what would I change if I would have a chance to do differently? As far as the style of upbringing my children I would not change one iota because when we were going for vacations together we were doing things together. We used to sing Hebrew songs and Yiddish songs and we used to tell stories and we used to laugh our heads off. It was a family, it makes me feel good about the situation, you see. However, I see now a day's people like they read more to their children. You see I was always busy working, you see. They read more to their children. I would probably adopt other peoples' a few things but I would not change my style.

INT: Yeah. So if I were to ask, let me ask a couple of things about your children. What goals did you have for your children? We've talked about this some but when you thought about how you wanted, their future and what you wanted for them what were the goals that you had for them?

ROMAN: You know to make goals for children you really don't know exactly because the children are developing slowly and you are adjusting yourself to things. Now let's

take the oldest one for example. She would like to play the piano. I used to play violin. So I told her, I said, "Sharon, since you like a piano and I like an organ. How about if we buy an organ and you could do with this? Under one condition I'm going to shell out money for the tickets, perfectly all right. I'm going to pay for the lessons, it's perfectly all right. But you will promise me, and you know your promise has to stick. Every day, a minimum of a half an hour of practice has to be done otherwise it will just not work out in your favor, I assure you because you promised and I got it and you're going to have to do it." I know, you see now here we fall back again on experience. I know that the initial situation and let's say in music, if everything would be so, if everything would be so easy you would have nothing, but, you know you wouldn't know if it was right you are on the streets. There's a part 'til you go through the etudes and all those things, you know the basically why exercises. It's tough. It's boring. But once you get over that hump there is an invisible hump. It's like a new world, I know that. She didn't know that. That's how come that I extricated from her a promise that she will have to do it. And sure enough I'll tell you something. When she was twelve years old she was teaching. She had six kids she was teaching. She was good. She was fabulous. She really was good. But practice, when she started with the organ I had to buy a special because my people were, are little people. She had to get special extensions for the pedals and all that stuff but she was really good. And from my children I expected one thing, whatever you start, just like I told Sharon originally. I said, "Down the line you can change direction but whatever you start, first of all you have to finish it. You have to finish it." And then I changed plenty. I changed at least three, four times my direction. But you have to finish it; otherwise you will be a nobody right across the whole situation. And this is the way it worked and you know you have to have, I don't think it's principles, you have to have certain rules and you have to adhere to them. And my wife used to say many times, "Roman, you are just too strict with them. And I'd say, "Cookie, we have to do it this way. There's just no other way. There's just, I don't know of any other way." To me psychology was if we can't do it the right way we have to ram it through but we have to get across, that's it.

INT: So how would you like your children and your grandchildren too for that matter to view you, to see you, you know if you were to think about that?

ROMAN: My grandchildren, even the littlest one, Ethan, he likes to curl up with everybody. But when I say something he knows that I say it once and I don't do things. You know the only thing that I can say that as much as little, as little patience as I used to have I have less of it now. So when they come to my house, which they are always welcome. Now last, I don't know, before Thanksgiving or something, there was a full house of people and Ethan was hanging around over there between the women in the kitchen and I knew that something will happen, they will spill something on him and they will be au gehocked av tzurus. I said, "Ethan, I want you to be out. There is downstairs a room to play with toys with everything." He doesn't listen. I have a famous grip by the arm. I said, "When I talk to you will listen," and I hold him by his arm. He looks at me and somehow even little kids know when you talk and you mean it. There is something. Same thing like you know if I go to a dog he can sense that I'm not afraid of him, you see. He got the message and from then on when he came in the kitchen I said, "Ethan," (boy

would run away) you see so you have, I don't think that people are any different than animals. You have to develop a territory on integrity. You see that when I talk to you. No matter how good things are they can be worse. If they had, don't happen I'm pleasantly surprised. In every one instance with my children I have a situation that if push would come to shove even today I have a sufficient amount of, I don't want to say authority. If something drastic would happen I have certain, a special amount of perseverance that I will prevail.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: I never had to use this, this prerogative.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: I never had to use it. But I always am, you know like when I go to work I play a famous game, what if? What if this, what if this, what if this, now if it doesn't happen, so we play it next time.

INT: What do you mean you play that? In your own mind or?

ROMAN: In my own mind, in my own mind. What would happen if this, and what would happen if this and what would happen with this so that if something, if it doesn't happen so I say well heck, nothing happened. But if it happens I say well.

INT: So you kind of prepare yourself.

ROMAN: Yeah. I have had once a situation; I have an extreme sense of insecurity that no matter how good things are they can get worse. My manager, who was with me now twenty eight years, at one point it, was a situation like a little bit touch and go. I called up a guy from Wellesley, Eastman Kodak headquarters. I spoke with the guy on the QT. In an emergency he would be glad to come to work for me. And then I have to use it.

INT: Right, then it got bad.

ROMAN: But you see I have to have a backup.

INT: Okay, do you have a sense of how your kids see your years in the camps? Do you have a sense of how they think about you there?

ROMAN: Just the way I brought up this situation about the camp, they know about it, they think about it as a very heavy experience that they wish that never happened that grandpa learned a lot of things. And that I had a, you see if you tell a person that you had a hard life they listen to you, they listen to you but you know it's very difficult for a person really to comprehend. And for me to try to explain to you what hard life is and also that I'd have to put your hand and put it on a griddle to burn it. It's not the objective. So what I try to do is on the basis of, and so I said to the, and remember when I told you

all when I was in the camp and this and this happened, this is the way I reacted, and this is the way I survived and this is what the other guys did. I utilize it as a vehicle to let them see the, let them see the results of a situation if it would occur, you see. In other words they know that there are people who are no good, they know that even here we have a sufficient amount of ingredients that they are no good. They know that I have an extreme sense of insecurity and I told them why and I told them what I would do if something would happen so that this way they also know what's going on.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: And under certain circumstances for me to bribe to convince to do something to do it, it is not a shameful thing because to me, and I told them point blank, I told my family, I said, "I will go to any length to protect my family." And I'll tell you something, if you say it and you mean it this alone gives a tremendous sense of, of feeling good about and feeling good about yourself, you know, because you are always worried well, what would happen? Well, my daddy will help or my daddy would, you see you've got somebody to come to just like I would, you know I have to go to Goldie sometimes to belly ache to her also because this cannot be buried into yourself.

INT: So when you had difficulties and decisions to make was it Goldie who, would you say she was the person you would turn to?

ROMAN: No, Goldie was my sounding board more than anything else. Goldie was my, you know I had to have somebody that I can talk in confidence. You see I told you about the situation when I had this lousy, the lousy thing with the properties that we had.

INT: The real estate and the lawyers.

ROMAN: With the real estate. Now this was, this was a horrible, this was a situation that I thought that I'm going to strip my belly button because I never was antagonized like this in America. I know that some of my guys, their lawyers or whatever pick pockets, whatever the heck they were, high falutin people, they go to their wives. Their wives say, "Listen, I don't want to hear about your damn problems. I don't want to hear anything about it." I spoke with Goldie, we talked it over. I said, "Even if everything would go to pot I will tell you the same thing what I told your sister when I borrowed the \$5,000 from her. As long as I have my mind and my ten fingers we ain't going to die from hunger and we ain't going to go to the soup kitchen," you see but somehow to think it and to say it, to talk it out it is just so very important. It somehow shapes up. You see because you can't think of a storm and then it just disappears. When you say it just somehow it forms itself.

INT: So you don't have to hold that all inside that you can...

ROMAN: No, you see I am very fortunate that under certain circumstances I have a handful of very good friends that I can talk, I can talk it out.

INT: So there is a friend, a network of friends or...

ROMAN: A handful of friends. You see in other words you talk to different people on a different level and about different things but I really don't have nothing to hide but there are certain things that they are just, you know when you laugh the world laughs with you and when you are av tzurus you are av tzurus all by yourself.

INT: Yeah. When you were, well I know you are working now as well, what would you say, you were telling me before about the way you take out your motorcycle sometimes and it gives me a sense that you try to bring some leisure into your life as well. What was the balance of work and leisure in your life?

ROMAN: Well, you see leisure is a very peculiar thing, you know. Vacation for example, I never saw my parents ever take vacation. If you never had it you don't miss it. I never considered, I see I have friends of ours that they like live a whole year for the vacation. And on the vacation they live like there ain't going to be no tomorrow. And then they come back and they are av tzurus financially and everything else. So for the, first of all you would think that I never went nowhere but I traveled extensively, obviously companies paid for it. I took Goldie with me, as a matter I even took Bernice and Henry with me. We went to Sweden, we went to Denmark, and we went to Germany. The only thing is you know what happens? On those situations when you go the companies roll out the carpet for you so that when you go by yourself you are so spoiled that you say ver daf dus, you see I am supposed to have gone for vacation this year so Goldie took sick and I couldn't do it. So what I do, I really don't put that much stress on those things because I have a ton of different hobbies. First of all if I'm av tzurus I can go upstairs and play my music and I talk my heart out and I play my heart out. This is the most wonderful thing, believe me. Second thing, I go downstairs and do my glass work.

INT: Stain glass.

ROMAN: Or periodically in wintertime or during the summer I hardly use it is the hand radio to talk with other people. You know you talk with them; you have to be careful what you say you know 'cause nobody hears you except the whole world. You see and then periodically I want to be; now Goldie knows, for example that Saturday morning if it's not on the motorcycle it's in the car. I go gallivanting. Now gallivanting means I don't know where I'm going and I, you see in Connecticut you cannot get lost because you will wind up eventually on 84, 91, or 95. Anyhow I go someplace and...

INT: You go by yourself?

ROMAN: Yeah, just by myself on the motorcycle. On the motorcycle I prefer to go to the country, just schlep along over there, just to the country I stop, take the binoculars, look at things and do something's and so on and so forth. So you see the only thing, you see but regardless of all that stuff now you have a whole rosy picture. When the problem that I think that I have that it's, I consider it serious and I try to cope with it the best that I can. First of all I can get worked up in such a hurry. For such a stupid thing that later on

in retrospect I look at it, you know, and I get very easily depressed, particularly when there's no sunshine or when it's really creepy. I tried so music generally, the right kind of music helps me to lift myself up or I get to talk with people, so. But I am, after all said and done I came to the conclusion that the luggage that you acquire during the life you cannot shed it. It's with you all the time and if things get very bad I take Ativan, you know, to cool me down.

INT: What will bring on the depression, usually, do you think?

ROMAN: I don't know. I don't know. Sometimes a real stupid nothing. You see just gets me, it gets me so tzu verfen that I feel like I'm going to explode.

INT: You can feel it.

ROMAN: Just it's a terrible thing. It's a horrible feeling. So I have, Goldie says to me, "Take an epis pill.

INT: A what?

ROMAN: An epis pill.

INT: An epis pill.

ROMAN: Yeah, so though fortunately those things don't happen too frequently but they do happen periodically that it is just like a subconscious reaction. I think I told you about it that when I was just married, and I had just a cold, and I was home and I started to think about things and it, you know it just like closes down on you and it felt like I couldn't breathe. Fortunately in those days Doctor Man came in and gave me some horse pills and it helped me. Those are situations that unfortunately it's there.

INT: When you say to think about things, back then or even now do you mean past, do you mean?

ROMAN: Past, past.

INT: You mean Europe, you mean then or you mean...?

ROMAN: No, there are certain, there are certain situations that all of a sudden it trips you up that you don't need to take a book. That's some stupid little thing that trips you off and it is just, it is just no good. That's how come that during the summer I don't have a problem. I mentioned that sunshine has a certain amount to do with it.

INT: It does, yeah.

ROMAN: Because when it's dingy, I mean gray and miserable and yech.

INT: Have you ever gotten any professional help? Have you ever sought professional help?

ROMAN: There were a couple of times, there were a couple of times a few years back that I was seriously, you know this is when I had the tzurus over there that I was seriously considering to talk to somebody but then I thought oh, the hell with it. In the meantime it went away. You see I know, I know my problem. The only thing that I don't know is how to cope with. You know sometimes I just don't. As a matter of fact I don't even know how to cope with it because I was talking with a doctor so he gave me the Ativan stuff. He says, "When you have a problem like this take one. It takes about a half an hour and it cools you down." You see but you know there are certain things that you just simply have to live with and don't forget it's, it's a lot of years of all kinds of stuff and if you would not take your life seriously you probably to a great extent you don't give a damn maybe. But I want to say that I take my life seriously but I think always about situations where I am, you know in other words I back off and I look at my situation where it is. You see this way you get an assessment. Even in business, periodically I stop and I just assess the situation what it is and you make some corrections and such things. Remember, I think I told you that when Sharon was dying and I was whispering the Shema.

INT: You didn't tell me that.

ROMAN: When it comes to religion I always was take it or leave it because after all this stuff that I learned was a line of horse manure and everything else. I told you about the Polish priest that I was talking to in South Carolina and he got me kind of straightened out in things like this. Goldie and I were with Sharon and her pulse was going, you know, like 70, 40, she was, you know she was sliding, sliding, sliding. Goldie stepped out for a second, and I have heard someplace that the last thing, this is what I heard; the last thing that goes on a person that is going is the hearing. I cannot prove it either way but I figure to myself I'll buy it this time. I was whispering the Shema to her. And then later on, you know, she passed on. I took off her wedding ring off her hand. You know it was a relief, you know. After the funeral, after everything was done maybe like two weeks later down the line I used to think to myself, Luftglas, for a wise guy a big mouth as you are you had so many answers to all the damn questions under the sun. How come you are latching onto the razor blade when things are going on well? To a great extent I am glad that I had something to latch onto, you see. But those are situations.

INT: Yes. Sure, that was very meaningful.

ROMAN: Meaningful is, you know let's put it this way, I didn't even think about meaningful. It is just the same thing like you know when during Yom Kippur when they have the reading of the Matarology, they call it right now. The whole damn thing scrolls right into in front of my eyes. It's a horrible thing. To me it's a horrible thing because as much as you think that you have things under control they never really are because I know that even if I meet periodically with the Greeners that were with me in the camp. They say, "Roman, remember this? And Roman," you see I can't remember everything

but when they start to talk, my G-d you remember a word but geez I don't remember and I didn't even remember that I was here and I didn't remember and you remember, you remember you can't remember everything verbatim as you said you observed it very wisely. You said you know, that life is a whole bunch of vignettes and I guess you are so right because you don't go, you don't live according to a book you just live according to the situation as develops from it early.

INT: And obviously in your case to your heart, I mean you, who would you be if you didn't, if you didn't respond so hard?

ROMAN: Well, you see you have a situation like this. Religious, I think I am religious because I try not to harm anybody and I am not trying to do anything bad to other people. This is what more or less religious it is. The stuff that I learned at cheder and that stuff that I learned from my grandfather it's that I am discovering along the line that it is ingrained into you. You cannot eliminate it and you know the sadness is the situation that you can try to be something else but you will not be something else because if you go through all the garbage down on the bottom it's there, you see.

INT: Deep down it's there.

ROMAN: Yeah, so.

INT: All right, well, you know we've talked about a lot of the things that have to do with your beliefs and attitudes. You've told me about some of those things. So I guess there's one more kind of area I'd like to ask you about and then maybe we'll stop.

ROMAN: Sure, no, that's all right. No, that's okay.

INT: Was there anything during the war that happened that was difficult for you to share with anyone would you say, even with those that you did share those things with your family or with Goldie, were there things that kind of remained with you?

ROMAN: You have to be a little bit more specific.

INT: Is there anything about the war that you have found still now difficult to share, to talk about?

ROMAN: No.

INT: So you've been able to...

ROMAN: Yeah, I just, actually I can talk about every aspect of it, some of it is, it wakes up fringe situations that are a pain in the butinsky but basically I can, I can talk about the whole darn situation. I think that the worst thing that I have the difficulty to talk about is when we got separated, when I all of a sudden I wound up to be, you are all by yourself and you have to fly. And then all of a sudden you really don't think in terms oh, I'm all

by myself, I have to do things. You just simply start doing things, that's it. This is what I have to do to survive, to survive for the moment, you see. And you never, you see you never had the luxury of thinking in long terms. I never allowed myself, what am I going to do if first of all I never believed that I'm going to get out alive in the first place. I just knew that right now I'm alive and they might call us out and machine gun us out anytime they want to. So what you're doing is you are living, you are living for the moment, and that's all, and not even for the hour, not even for the day, for the moment and you are doing whatever the heck is necessary for the moment. You never worry about what's going to happen later. Who the hell cares what will happen we will worry about.

INT: Was there ever a time then or since the war when you felt you just couldn't go on? Did you ever?

ROMAN: There were two times. There were two times, oh yeah. When I was working in the shtikshtokover, you know the place that was such a horrible place. At the one point somehow I couldn't cope with it, it was overwhelming me and I was hoping to die. I was hoping, geez, I think if I die, as a matter of fact there are a couple of guys that fell into the silo, you know and I guess they just died. But you know there is a time, you know I sometimes say that no matter how bad things are they can always get worse and believe me I can at least say that two times in my life I have reached the bottom. I think this was the bottom where I just, I just figured it's no use. So to tell it but then again a simple something happens that you are willing to give it another crack at it, you see. So you have to be, actually, I did not, when I gave up on, when I gave up for the moment because it was not for a big time, for a long time, for that I remember distinctly though where I was, I just had it. I just had enough. When I really gave up on myself that I would, I didn't, I was too cowardly to kill myself but I was hoping that I, I should just already die. But I just, I just had to have, you know you always have a little bit hope someplace down the line later on that maybe something will happen. One time where I gave up on myself is when we found out that Roosevelt died. Obviously later on I found out about Roosevelt something else but this is a different situation. At that time I figured to myself somehow I was hoping, we were under the illusion that Hitler, no matter how bad he was to us he could have been much worse to us if Roosevelt was the, wouldn't be there. Where then later on one evening we heard that he died. I figured to myself oh shucks, I guess this is it.

INT: So those were the two kinds of hopelessness.

ROMAN: That's right. Yeah, that's it but you have to be, you know like now a days you see the problem is that now a days people can be pushed to the limit. They have such a shallow limit; they have such a shallow limit. They don't even know what it means to just really be below the dungeons, really be lower than the lowest animal. And I guess you still, you still want to live, you still want to live, you see. And this is it.

INT: Well, it's a credit, I think, to you, you see. I think that's what I find in doing this in learning from you that, you know that that's it. That doesn't have to be the response, you

know, and yet that's the response you've chosen is to live, and be productive, and to give to the world and to, you know.

ROMAN: Well, you know the gift to the world and so on and so forth, this is really not because I have to live usefully. I have to do something not because the book says that I have to do something but...

I think that you probably have a dried out throat already. Would you like to have something to drink? Say yes.

INT: Is that how I'm talking like? That's okay, that's okay. Thank you. We were talking about living in the face of all of this.

ROMAN: You don't take, you don't take it as, and you know you don't make any issue out of it. You don't even think about living. You just have to do things not to get into a worse situation. It's not a matter of trying to improve yourself it's a matter, it's bad. You are trying to make sure that it's not any worse.

INT: This is a continuation of an interview with Mr. Roman Luftglas and we're going to check that this is working. The first scale is about, we call it Jewish identity survey and I'll read you a statement and you can tell me whether you agree with it. Either you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. For example, I am proud to be a Jew. Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

ROMAN: I strongly agree.

INT: Okay. I feel that I am personally connected to Jewish history, one link of a chain that extends for over 5,000 years. Strongly agree, agree, disagree.

ROMAN: Agree.

INT: Good. Jews have had an especially rich and distinctive history. Strongly agree, agree, disagree.

ROMAN: Agree.

INT: Agree. Being Jewish is so much a part of me apart from Jewish traditions and customs I couldn't stop being Jewish. Strongly agree, agree, disagree.

ROMAN: Can I qualify it?

INT: Sure can.

ROMAN: I will say the same thing what I told my children, that I was born Jewish. There were times that I wished that I was not Jewish but since I suffered so much because I am a Jew I am proud of it.

INT: That's a fair answer and that fits somewhere in there. It sounds like agree to me. Do you think so?

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: "I couldn't stop being Jewish."

ROMAN: I never, I never considered being anything else.

INT: Right, right. For me, Jewish involvement is a way of connecting with my family's past. Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

ROMAN: Ah.

INT: If you want me to say it again.

ROMAN: Please say it again.

INT: For me, Jewish involvement is a way of connecting with my family's past.

ROMAN: Well, let's put it this way, I would be on the minus side of agree.

INT: Okay, that's fine. We'll put it right in there in the middle somewhere. I am committed to being Jewish but Jews shouldn't publicly display their differences from other Americans.

ROMAN: Sighs (pause)

INT: I am committed to being Jewish but Jews shouldn't publicly display their differences from other Americans.

ROMAN: No, I disagree.

INT: Okay. I feel there is something about me that non-Jews could never understand. Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

ROMAN: I disagree.

INT: Okay. When you think of what it means to be a Jew in America would you say that it means being a member, and you can tell me, you know, if any of these or all of these. A religious group, an ethnic group, a cultural group, a race. How would you determine what it means to be a Jew in America?

ROMAN: To be a member of a group.

INT: Is it a religious group, an ethnic group?

ROMAN: Not necessarily a religious group. A group. I would say an ethnic group.

INT: Ethnic group.

ROMAN: That's right.

INT: Okay. I know it's not always easy to give, you know, these are complicated questions.

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: With one answer. How important would you say that being Jewish is in your life? Very important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all important.

ROMAN: It is important.

INT: Okay. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Anti-Semitism is a serious problem in the U.S. today. Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly.

ROMAN: Agree.

INT: Okay. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: When it comes to a crisis Jews can only depend on other Jews? Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?

ROMAN: You know here I will have to again, qualify a situation.

INT: Go ahead.

ROMAN: Because as a Jew I discovered a problem that the Jews have and this is we're talking in large. When things are uv tzurus Jews as a rule stick together. When things are good they tear each other to pieces. In retrospect I also will say that in Israel, when I was in Israel, you know you have three people and fifteen opinions.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: Everybody was talking politics, I piped in saying you know if I would be an Arab I would know how to destroy Israel. Everybody got shocked with the statement and after we cooled it a little I said, "You know, all the Arabs have to do is kill the Jewish people with kindness and the Jews will do a trick on themselves." So it was kind of a ha, ha, but the fact is that this is problem, I don't know if I answered it for you but it's kind of a roundabout way.

INT: Okay, that's okay. I think that's all right. We'll leave it at that. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement, that being a good Jew means advocating values of social justice and concern for the poor and disadvantaged? In other words, do you strongly agree or somewhat agree.

ROMAN: I agree.

INT: You agree.

ROMAN: I agree.

INT: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Being a good Jew means having a personal commitment to Jewish religious beliefs? Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?

ROMAN: Please read it again.

INT: Being a good Jew means having a personal commitment to Jewish religious beliefs. Do you agree?

ROMAN: I agree.

INT: You agree.

ROMAN: Yes.

INT: Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about, they say here Pentateuch about the Five Books of Moses.

ROMAN: Yeah, the Pentateuch?

INT: The Torah is an ancient book of history and moral precepts recorded by man, or the Torah is the actual word of G-d, or the Torah is the inspired word of G-d but not everything should be taken literally word for word.

ROMAN: The first one.

INT: The first one. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: A Jew's moral behavior should be guided by the Jewish religion?

ROMAN: I mildly agree.

INT: Okay.

ROMAN: Because we have, we have other inputs along the lines which are important.

INT: Uh huh, I understand that. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: To be a Jew in the full sense requires observance of religious rituals, practices, etc. Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree?

ROMAN: Somewhat agree.

INT: Okay. Do you agree or disagree: Jews have a special responsibility for one another no matter where in the world they live?

ROMAN: Yes, I agree.

INT: Okay, strongly, somewhat?

ROMAN: I agree.

INT: Okay. In your opinion how important is it for a Jew to have a Jewish education? Very important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all important?

ROMAN: It is important because without an education you just really don't value, you don't have any values as a Jew in the first place. Yes, it's very important.

INT: Okay. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Jewish religious practices are not essential for Judaism to flourish? Do you agree, disagree?

ROMAN: I agree. Wait just one second. Jewish...

INT: Religious practices are not essential for Judaism to flourish.

ROMAN: Wait just one second. Jewish, this is a negative...

INT: It is, isn't it. So what it means is do you agree that it is not essential, right, for Jewish religious practices for Judaism to flourish?

ROMAN: No, for Judaism to flourish you have to have the Jewish practices.

INT: It is, so you disagree.

ROMAN: That's right.

INT: It is upside down.

ROMAN: Yeah, we have to go dissect this.

INT: Okay, even if you have no children who are already intermarried please answer the next two questions: Hypothetically, if your child were considering marrying a non-Jewish person would you support or oppose the marriage?

ROMAN: I would oppose.

INT: Oppose. Okay. If your child married a non-Jew how would you relate to the marriage? Strongly support, support, be neutral, accept with reservations, oppose, strongly oppose?

ROMAN: Under the circumstances I would support. I don't have no choice.

INT: All right. Please follow these directions: rank in order from most important to least important the answers to 16 and 17. If it's the most important you say one, if it's the least important it's 4. So here is an example: To what extent is your involvement in Jewish religious practice based on community affiliation. Is that the most important? How would you rate that?

ROMAN: It's about 2.

INT: 2. To what extent is your involvement, so that's 2.

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: Okay. To what extent is your involvement in religious practice based on belief in G-d? 1 is most important, 4 is least important.

ROMAN: I would say 2.

INT: 2. And what about based on an expression of Jewish identification, is it a way in which you express yourself as a Jew?

ROMAN: I would say definitely 2.

INT: 2, okay. And your commitment to Jewish survival, and to what extent does your involvement in Jewish religious practice based on your commitment to Jewish survival?

ROMAN: To Jewish, are we talking on the basis of the kehila is a 2.

INT: To what extent do you see your involvement in Jewish communal activities as an expression of your need for communal involvement and or philanthropic connections? 1 would be most important, 4 would be least important.

ROMAN: 3.

INT: 3, okay. What about your involvement in Jewish communal activities as an expression of Jewish identification?

ROMAN: 3.

INT: 3. Your involvement in Jewish communal activities as an expression of your commitment to Jewish survival.

ROMAN: 2.

INT: 2. And your involvement in Jewish communal activities as the fulfillment of religious precepts related to the welfare of the community.

ROMAN: 2.

INT: Okay. Now these next questions can be, the answer goes from 1 to 5. 1 if it's not important, 5 if it's very important. How important was it for your parents that you be identified as a Jew?

ROMAN: I'd say probably 4.

INT: 4. What did they do to foster your identification as a Jew? And here you can tell me which of these apply and you can explain anything you want to explain. For example, religious practice?

ROMAN: Religious practice was strong in cooperation with my grandfather because my father had to work, you see, so going to cheder was an unquestionable situation. Being observant was okay. I would say it was middle of the road. As far as my grandfather's influence it was very, very strong. So I would land in the middle on the situation.

INT: With the influence.

ROMAN: In other words I knew, I knew what's important and then I also knew how much I could get away with, you follow me, so that I would not be, I would not be just a plain Shabbas guy just for the heck of it, do you follow me?

INT: Right.

ROMAN: In other words I knew that it's important for me to be a Jew but it also was a situation that sometimes it really didn't really make so much difference if I just deviated a little bit.

INT: Right, to your parents.

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: But your grandfather you think...

ROMAN: My grandfather was very strong about things and he put some powerful influence on things.

INT: Okay, that's fine. And okay, so we have that. Religious education.

ROMAN: Cheder.

INT: Right, so that the, they didn't, for them that was important.

ROMAN: This was very important. Religious education was cheder plus rehearsing the fahar zach if you pardon my English, Shabbas at my grandfather's. I had to, over there you had to read in Hebrew and translate the sedra of the week into Yiddish. Obviously going to shul. And the shul, it was a small place that the shul was really not that far away. So religious education, yes, it was stressed.

INT: What about identification with Zionist causes? Was that something for your?

ROMAN: I was, I joined a Betar but I really was not politically inclined. I didn't understand that the Jabotinsky deal to the extent that I understand it now. It was kind of nice, you had a uniform, and you were singing, and there was, I was a little knocker, nothing.

INT: Involvement with social causes.

ROMAN: Social causes in terms of what?

INT: Well, this is a question, what did, in terms of your parents did they, would you say they did anything to foster that.

ROMAN: No, you see my parents were very busy...

INT: Working.

ROMAN: ...working and surviving so they were not involved in any political process, be it, so be it obviously let's put it this way, if there was to help out a person to do something right for a person, yes. But to be a tzedaka clapper you know, no. If somebody says tzedaka clapper what is it? I hope you know.

INT: I do know.

ROMAN: Good.

INT: Of course I know. So let's say a question about youth groups that were really the Betar.

ROMAN: Well, you see but on the other hand, so you see on one hand I belonged to the Betar and on the other hand I belonged to the Polish Falcons.

INT: And what was that?

ROMAN: Now the Falcons were a gymnastic group. It was, you see I learned from my parents and frankly I guide myself along the lines that I am not affiliated with any political causes. I want to; I prefer to be a nobody because I can be one much longer. That's it because there's always the situation that I'm afraid that if the other guy comes in somebody will put the evil eye on you and...

INT: Yep.

ROMAN: Makes sense. So I prefer to be just a plain nobody. I'm very comfortable.

INT: And the Falcons, that's interesting that was like a sports club.

ROMAN: This was a gymnastics sports.

INT: But not Jewish it was...

ROMAN: No, no, no this was strictly Polish but I didn't, I went over there because I liked it and it was a very organized, very organized, the gymnastic situation as you know.

INT: Yeah, the whole thing.

ROMAN: Yeah, anyhow.

INT: Okay. And the synagogue involvement, your parents.

ROMAN: Synagogue involvement was, well, over there the synagogue involvement is that I had to go every morning to shul. I had to go, during the day I had a loaded schedule, and I had to go to cheder and then later on when I was what, 14, 15, I was just busy helping my parents to survive.

INT: Okay. How would you describe your parents' goals in fostering your identification as a Jew? Is there a way you can speak about that?

ROMAN: Let's just put it this way, the parents did not have to foster it as a Jew because I was very much aware all the time that I'm Jewish. If not by good nature from the Jewish part was by the anti-Semites from the other part. So you did not have to remind me that I am and I never even considered to be anything else because I knew that this is the peckle that you have and this is the peckle you're going to live with and that's it. Give you kind of lopsided answers.

INT: No, you know I know that these questions fit a certain time in Jewish life but they don't always fit the time that we're talking about. It was a different world then. I mean there wasn't...

ROMAN: Well, so you see there are things, you see you have to remember one thing like for example I told you along the line, along our interview that at one point where we were, this is the place where I the first time considered just to die. I wished that I would just croak, you know I was working at the shtikshtokover. And we had a rabbi from Klombutz, a Klombutzha rabbi and over there we used to give, actually, the place was so bad that they gave us a piece of kielbasa and a square of butter. And the Rabbi said that at that time you should not eat that stuff. And he took it supposedly to the toilet and then he, he ate it. So you see, when you see, you see discrepancies of a certain bunch of stuff yes, you have the values, you know there are certain things that you acquire when you are a youngster that nobody can eradicate. But at an early age I learned that there are, there's a whole bunch of things that they are not so but you have to learn to overlook it. I don't remember, did I tell you about the situation, my father was a Cohan. And you know the Cohaneem during the holidays when they benched the kehila I was staying with my grandfather and you know you are not to look at them because otherwise you turn blind. I was curious to the extent that I decided to risk one eye. I didn't tell my grandfather because he would make me a head shorter, I would look really funny. But I cupped one eye very tight and with the other eye I took a look what's going on over there, closed my eyes for a while, and looked down at my shoes and I discovered that nothing happened. Obviously I wouldn't dare to say it to my grandfather because he would make mincemeat out of me but you see there are situations that as a youngster there are sometimes things that you question, you question.

INT: Yeah, sure.

ROMAN: And so I don't believe so strongly in that stuff. But never the less there are things that you learn, and there are things that are ingrained and there are things that you cannot eradicate. There is just no way, as a matter of fact I remember when I told you about the last minutes of Sharon. So it's there.

INT: It's there.

ROMAN: It's there. You can say no it's not and oh, I am such a great hero, you know like the people that say I don't believe in G-d but you step on his hand and he says oh my G-d.

INT: It's there. How strong would you say is your Jewish identification and involvement? 1 would be not strong, 5 would be very strong. From 1 to 5.

ROMAN: I would be in the middle.

INT: 3?

ROMAN: 3.

INT: Okay. What was the primary family practice or ritual that influenced your identification as a Jew? If you had to...

ROMAN: At home?

INT: Yeah.

ROMAN: It was just Jewish. There was just nothing to question about it. It didn't have to influence me. That's what it was.

INT: I understand.

ROMAN: And this is it.

INT: How important is it for you that your children be identified as Jews? 1 is not important, 5 would be very important.

ROMAN: It is important.

INT: Okay.

ROMAN: It is important. You see my daughter, Freida, the one that has the little kid; she got married when she was twenty-eight. And you know it was getting to the point that she told me, "Daddy, I will never marry a non-Jew but you know a girl when she gets to be twenty," you know there is such a thing that I recognize on her about loneliness. She can have all the chatzkas in the world and all the toys, there is loneliness. And the parents, yes, the parents are there but there is something that is missing. And Goldie used to be extremely sad where she would not tolerate. Now one very important thing that I learned is that my wife and I when we saw something that the kids were doing unlike I see a lot of parents that they are afraid to tell the youngster I would tell them. As a matter of fact when Freida was already quite grown up at one point she started to frequent bars. I am fortunate that I have a very open...

INT: Communication.

ROMAN: Communications. I said, "Freida, I want you to know one thing, before I got to be your father I was a boy so anything that you tell me I was there so there's no news for me. I simply will tell you point blank, you have the only thing that if you give it away there is nothing there. So don't just go lower yourself and cheapen yourself because you certainly are not going to improve your position." She listened and she heard. I talked with Goldie at times, you know because we were living in South Windsor and Sharon was supposed to have gone to a junior prom and Goldie put her foot down, no, because you know if you don't try something you don't know how it tastes and you just, maybe it would be good, better than different. You don't try that, certain things; you don't have to know everything. Goldie says, "No, that's it." She came complaining to me and, "But Daddy, but Daddy," I said "Look, Mommy said so sweetheart, ain't going to do nothing. But I'll tell you what I'm going to do. We are going to put our house on the market." We

had a nice home. "Put our house on the market, we'll move to West Hartford and you're going to have all the Jewish people in the world."

INT: That wasn't the case in South Windsor?

ROMAN: But all you had Jews by prescription only. We took it and we did it and now she was already a senior in high school so to click it's a big project. Anyhow, we discovered that among Jews you got a lot of chaos also, good, bad and indifferent; you know you learn those things. So on those basis, fortunately she had just one year to hack it and with support she went through and then in school in Boston she did all right. It was no problem over there. Somehow it's a different exposure.

INT: Yeah.

ROMAN: She always, she stuck with Jewish kids. Anyhow she belonged to the Hillel and whatever on her own. With Freida, at one point I was saying to Goldie, I said, "Goldishka, let me ask you another," (sometimes you have to prepare the grounds so that there's no shock) I said, "Goldie, if Freida would marry a Jewish guy who was a royal S.O.B. and if she would marry a non-Jewish guy who happens to be loving her really, would it be such a?" You know it's almost like the Fiddler on the Roof. Would it be such a terrible thing? She says, "Well, I wouldn't like it." I said, "See that I wouldn't like it but if it's between bad and worse you have to pick, you have to pick a person of some kind." It turned out that we didn't have any problems. It turned out that all the kids are married Jewish which is, I'm pleased. I can tell you one thing, you have to work on it and you have to work on it not when the kids are grown up, this is too late. You see you have to work on it since they are little you have to give them identity, you have to give them pride, and you have to give them a purpose. Not because you are active in the synagogue, this is not good enough. You have to abide by it. You have to actually tell them why you are Jewish and why you are proud to be Jewish. And you know they got something to hold onto just like if you tell, if I tell my kids that I'm a good person and I proved it out to them that maybe I am a good person they will believe me. In other words kids are not stupid people. So this is the basis of how it evolved. I, personally think that one of the most important things is that I hear from a lot of people I cannot understand how my daughter got married to a non-Jew and we are so active in the synagogue. You see the important thing I firmly believe that if you actually put a base on the situation, they had to go Friday nights since they were little kids they had to go to services, we had to do Kiddush, and we had to talk about how things used to be in the olden days and how I did it. It just didn't fall down from the chimney that all of a sudden I do it and how it reminds me about; you know sentimental things and values. If you hook those things up together you will get, you have a better chance to get a result. There is nothing guaranteed but let's put it this way, if I give you a good reason you probably will follow it but I cannot tell you up high in the sky because first of all you're not stupid and second thing is today people have a right to question. And finally, I am not bashful to tell you, listen, I don't like what you're doing and let me tell you something, if you mess up the family this will be really a shame. And I did even go to the extent where I gave the kids sometimes a guilt trip. I was a good travel agent.

INT: How did you do that?

ROMAN: If a person I didn't, I didn't do it on them but I said, I used to tell a story that it would be such a shame on the family to live with a situation like this if this and this would happen. I think that this is terrible and it's inexcusable. I didn't say that if you would do it but I was talking about another person and I made it as visual, as vivid as possible. And you know we go back to the basic point, a good salesman is a guy that can convince his wife she looks too fat in a mink stole. So you are selling, you are selling, you are selling. You have to speak convincingly.

INT: And it's like what you told me the first time we talked from your Rebbe, you're teaching with a metaphor, you know teaching.

ROMAN: But all I firmly believe in it. I so firmly believe in it, in other words, even now, yesterday the two big ones were here.

INT: Yeah, your grandchildren.

ROMAN: Yeah, so the big one and the little one tell me a story. I tell them a story and every story is a truthful story. If I have to tell them next year it will be the same story about this particular situation but it always has a conclusion, you see. In other words, where they were talking about my work down in Korea so I tried to tell them how important it is to be flexible, and to be adaptable and to learn things. You know I was barbering and doing whatever it was necessary. It is important. In the meantime I had an opportunity to tell Hillary that education is an extremely important thing. However, to a certain extent I am really upset with the American's standard of education because when a parent spends \$50,000, sends their kids to school, the kid comes out after four years, the best thing you can say about a youngster that he's trainable. Yes, they have a, they acquired a certain amount of ability to understand that to comprehend. But they are as dumb as a shoe, you see. In Europe you learned usually a primary thing and then you learned a backup because possibly what you trained for at this particular point when you're coming out maybe it doesn't sell so well so you have something to fall back at. I said, "Hillary, the most important thing for you is after you finish school you should be able to support yourself, possibly to help your husband if you ever get married to support him. So you have to have flexibility. Just to say that I would like to be a space scientist or something like this, it's kind of silly and if there are people that say well, my kid goes to school to find herself, if you want to find yourself you go to the bathroom. It's a quick story about that thing. And you know we talk about those things, you see we talk about effects and causes of a situation so that when I tell you I also tell you why and I figured to myself if 50% or 80% leaks out I still got a little bit leftover. If I wouldn't have to do nothing, if I would have done nothing then I would be of gehacked antzurus.

INT: Yeah, yeah.

ROMAN: Now, obviously there's a very important thing, you have to be devoted to your family. In other words, that their quality time that they have invented right now, this is such a line of horse manure that it's absolutely unbelievable. There are times that your youngster spills his guts at the most unpredictable time, and you have to shoot from the hip, and you know you have to, you have to be a judge, and a policeman, and a father and whatever the heck it is to be whatever it is. And that's what, if it comes through you're a hero, you could equally be a bum too. People say that daughters were terrible, were difficult. I have three, had three daughters, they were a joy. You see occasionally you know, whatever, you know if you say that everything was just plain and smooth, yeah, everybody got this, this situation.

INT: Well, it's only human.

ROMAN: And we simply, they learned one very important thing. Goldie and I had to present ourselves as people that they can feel, you know, to love a person is not to go to bed with them but to be, you have to trust me. A youngster has to feel for that reason anybody has to feel comfortable. I have to feel comfortable too. Not comfortable but secure. It's not comfortable but secure, you are coming home, you know that if you do well your parents notice it, if you do bad your parents notice it too. I take active interest in it. We solve problems. Freida, this morning at 7:00 the telephone rings. "Daddy, I need a pep talk." What happened, she is an occupational therapist, and they want her to work for cheaper money, what shall I do? So we had a talk about things and I said, "What could the worse thing happen?" I said, "The worse thing can happen that they cannot use your services." I said, "Freida, over the years I have found out one very important thing, in Hebrew there is a word, gaum zu letova, whatever happens it's always for the best and then it is for the best because it always happens. You think that this is the end of the world, no, this is not the end of the world." I taught my daughter originally when she went to work I said, "Freida, you want to be in business for yourself, that's fine. If you do the very best you can the result is money. If you are going for the money I guarantee you fail." Well I hear from other people that she supposedly is very good at her profession, it makes me proud and everything else but she has, then you see once you are good and people want to step on you have to be able or have the convictions in yourself to say politely, there is a political way of talking. Say look, frankly I was considering asking you for more money and all of a sudden you are coming with a situation like this because I'm treating so many kids. She says, "If I bring my children to a child care center, three of them, I don't get a price for three, I get each one is a separate situation." I said, "This is the only thing that you have your time and yourself. This is your inventory. If you cannot sell this thing who needs you?" She had a talk. This afternoon she calls me at work, she says, "Daddy, it went fine." I say, "Good, Ketsula, I'm proud of you." See, so you know the fact remains that when youngsters, when youngsters, when children get even older if you keep that contact they, you see obviously I, they have much more, they have decisions of their own but they know that if push comes to shove she can talk with me, and we talk it out and we come to a conclusion. I don't tell them what to do, but I make suggestions and on basis of experience that they had with me that whatever I told them it was flying, is believable. So you see the bottom line is you have to be believable.

INT: Right, about all things including you know what we were talking about here about the importance of Judaism and they needed to see that. Okay, let's see. In what ways did you try to instill a strong Jewish identity in your children? Circle all that apply and briefly explain what you do. Some of this we've talked about already so you know, you can just...

ROMAN: I try to demonstrate on the family level.

INT: Right, that's right.

ROMAN: And live it.

INT: Right. Religious education?

ROMAN: Without any questions, for all of them know how to daven, all of them know how to read.

INT: What about identification with Israel or Zionist causes?

ROMAN: Zionist causes, no, but Israel, yes. You see Zionists causes, in my opinion, is political stuff and this again, it's against my grain.

INT: Right, not for you.

ROMAN: You see.

INT: What about summer camps, youth groups? Did they do any of that?

ROMAN: Yes, they did some but mostly what we did during vacations you know I very seldom, I don't even remember when I sent my kids to a camp. We used to go as a unit and we had a good time and we'd on the way back we used to sing Adon olam and whatever. We had, it was just great.

INT: Right. What about Holocaust remembrance activities for your kids? Was that something?

ROMAN: They had to, they recognize it, and they know, and they are very much aware of it and sometimes they take part if they are asked.

INT: Any rituals during mealtime or bedtime? Any kind of Jewish rituals around?

ROMAN: I used to, well, I'll tell you something and in here we fall right back to the very basics what you learned at home. All my children learned the Modei Ani.

INT: Um, really.

ROMAN: Yep. Because my mother, before I went to bed when I was a little kid she used to, she used to recite it with me. What they are doing at home I don't know. I know that on Shabbas they, all of them light candles, some of them are a little, even a little bit on the kosher side which I am not really that kosher. I mean not that strict kosher. But Friday, definitely, they go to synagogue, they sing, they say the bracha. Comes Yontiv they are very much aware of it, be it Hanukkah, or be it whatever. On Yomin Tovim it's just it's a family deal, that's it.

INT: Right, okay. All right. Now there is somebody who wanted to say something.

ROMAN: Hello Ketsula.

INT: When you teach your children about Jewish beliefs and practices how do you present these issues to them? Would you say as expressions of a Jewish lifestyle, as religious obligations or something else?

ROMAN: Well, there is a part of a Jewish lifestyle, it is taught by demonstration, and by talking about it and by living it.

INT: Right. How important is it for your children to raise their children with a strong Jewish identity? 1 would be not important, 5 is very important.

ROMAN: I would say it's important.

INT: It's important.

ROMAN: It's important.

INT: In what ways are your children trying to instill a strong Jewish identity in their children? Now it's probably different.

ROMAN: My children?

INT: Yes, in their children.

ROMAN: Would you like to know something? They are doing the same thing what they learned at home, honest to G-d.

INT: And is it true for each of them? I mean in each of their household they do the same, the very same?

ROMAN: Yep, yep, yep.

INT: That's interesting. So religious practices...

ROMAN: You know if I came, I came on Friday to Freida's and she has nicely decked out the table with candles. Every one of them can recite the blessings.

INT: Yeah, I know what that means. Do they send their kids to summer camps, youth groups?

ROMAN: Yes, well, summer camps too but they go to school, they go to regular school and Hebrew School.

INT: Hebrew School afterwards. Are they involved at all, how about the grandchildren's, your grandchildren's involvement with Holocaust remembrance activities?

ROMAN: Only when they are asked for. You know they are aware of it and when they are asked they do it, otherwise they just simply know. It's not a matter that I'm making it a primary, a very important thing, it is simply there, and they are very much aware of it, and I don't expect from them to stand on their ear but let's say like last year I was asked to light the candle and introduce the liberators. And the children who were there to carry the candles and so on and so forth. They are, well, they are aware of it. There is nothing really to be proud of it just simply it is there, that's it.

INT: It's there. How important were your grandparents' influence in the transmission of Jewish identity to you? Well you told me before your own grandfather.

ROMAN: Well, my grandparents were very important, yeah, very important because again, you see my dream was, you know what you are doing at home you are trying, you are trying somehow to do the same darn thing, you know. Like my grandparents were living a little bit down maybe three, four kilometers down the road. So I used to go to my grandma's, and I used to go to my grandpa's, and my grandpa used to come to shul and it was just a part, that's the way it was. So I finagled a situation that my kids, as a matter of fact my son in law, of Sharon's, you know, I finagled a situation that he got a job at Combustion Engineering and they were living close by. They are all living, you know they are maybe like less, maybe a half a mile from each other and about a mile and a half, two miles away from me.

INT: So how did you do that? Because that's pretty special in today's world.

ROMAN: Well, first of all the kids want, you see there is a very important thing. First of all girls tend to gravitate toward the family. Assuming that you feed the right stuff. You see my son in law, let's say take Sharon's husband. You know there are situations that happen. He was a professor of chemistry and space sciences. And as a professor you know it, he got three years, on the second year you have to study, like a gypsy. I knew my, Sharon was a nurse so she went, wherever they went, they went to Arizona, they went here, they went to Rode Island. You have to find certain opportunities to talk because I just cannot say to Steve, listen, you should do this or this because he will tell me to go to hell. So I said to Steve, I said, "You know, Steven, I noticed that every time

you anchor down a little bit in a situation you have to start prepare to move someplace else. You know he was kind of brand new after the MIT's and all that other junk. So I said to him, "If I would find something, let's say along the lines of chemistry you are quite flexible and adaptable, would you be willing to listen?" He says, "Oh yes, because you know the biggest problem is how do you stick your foot in the door?" Now at that time he was making, ver vais I think \$17,000. My truck driver was making as much money as he was making at, let's say in Rode Island already. So of all the darn thing things one day they asked me, I don't even think that you wanted to record this.

INT: Yeah. That's all right.

ROMAN: One day he asks me. No, one day the combustion engineering whom I supplied with products, they asked me, would I, they will have a factory wide contest photographic contest. Would I like to be the judge? I said, "Sure I will." So the situation and the girl that was working with me was the secretary of the top honcho. Now I know that a secretary is an extremely important person because she turns the bosses head in the right direction in the morning otherwise he really doesn't know that much. So we took care of the situation, the judging's and everything. It came out really nice, everything where everybody was very pleased. And then she calls me in and she says, "You know Roman, I would like you to come down, we would pick out, out of the winners, we would pick up twelve of them for the calendar, for the factory calendar." I said, "Okay." I said, "May I ask you a question?" You know, the worst thing she can tell me is to go to hell and I refuse to. So I said to her, "You know, I have a daughter who lives in Rode Island. Her husband is a chemist, he's a nuclear chemist. Would there be a possibility for him to get a job here because I simply would like to have them closer here?" She says to me, "Well, do you have a resume?" I said, "No, I don't carry a resume with me but I'll ask him and he will give it to me." She said, "Why don't you do it." So, I called up Steve, and Steve brought me a resume and I gave it to her. And a guy comes in, now this is like a two story situation. I was working with her in her office, and there's a guy that comes in, and he just barges in and he goes right to the sanctum, sanctuary over there where...

INT: Where the chief is.

ROMAN: In the holy place. He knows me and I recognized him. And he says, "Hi, Roman." And I just went, it reminded me because about four weeks before then the purchasing agent says to me, "Roman, I have a guy over there in the upper class, whatever the heck it is, he's going for vacation, he needs a wide angle lens for his camera. Could you lend it to him for a couple days?" So I said, "Sure." I had a used one; I'd lent it to him. He forgot to return it. I decided not to make any fuss about it because it was a used lens. Anyhow, I didn't have that, so I figured to myself let's leave it alone. The same guy was the guy that barged in, that's how come he says hello to me. So she must have given him the, I don't know who he was. I didn't know who he was but all of a sudden I get a call from him. He says, "What the hell gives with you? You know I understand that you are looking for a job for your son in law. Why don't you tell me?" He's the director of personnel. I said, "Well, usually I don't have a habit of knocking on the door saying you got a job for my son in law? I cannot do those things, you know

because I firmly believe in that fine line not crossing." He says, "Your son in law will have a job. Let him come. When can he come over for an interview?" I called up Steve. Steve made it like the following week, something on Tuesday, he came in the interview. You see and there's a point. Okay, I opened a door, Steve got in there and I backed off. You have to know your place. Obviously he presented himself well and he did everything right because the guy calls me up, he says, "I'll tell you first before I even tell Steve. He has a job if he wants it. We're starting him off with \$45,000 a year." This is, you know, like...

INT: A million then, right.

ROMAN: So I said, "Would you do me a favor? You tell him." Well, p.s., Sharon called up, at that time she was still, obviously she was still alive. She called up delirious. "Guess what?" You know all of a sudden we are mentioned we have to live like human beings already. So we have to move over here. So they lived with us for six months and let me just tell you something, this is a project, you know because they had already a youngster. They had a little kid and well, he still works there. He got a very good, very good position. Obviously, he earned it.

INT: Right. He proved himself.

ROMAN: He earned it, you see. He is a Ph.D. in whatever the heck it is over there, and, but those are situations that happen, you see. Now with Freida, again, one day she called me up and I told you about this thing, that the parent, parents usually are the last ones to know what's going on. She says, "Daddy, can I have lunch with you?" This means can I talk to you? So we went downstairs over there in a restaurant, we eat. She says, "I'm going out with a guy. He's Jewish." I said, "Fine." She says, "I have to ask you a question. I was invited to his parent's home in Maryland. I came to their home, their home, it looks so poor. What do you think?" So I said, "Well, Freida, I'll tell you something. When I met your mother I didn't have a proverbial pot to pee in. Does the guy love you, really loves you so that he would give his right arm for you?" She says, "I think so." I said, "Well, Ketsula, you can have all the money and be the most miserable person under the sun or you can be as poor as a church mouse and be as happy as a lark. I, personally, think that assuming that you guys really, truly love each other that you will give your right arm for the other one. You probably got me." She said, "Gee, Daddy, I was hoping to hear that from you." So this, those are the results. And Elaine has also a husband, a local guy; he's a nice guy also. Look, you know you have to, let's put it this way, there are times that you have to know when to stand back. You have to know if you want to be helpful, you have to be helpful so that it doesn't look like you are helpful, you know you have to be very careful how you do things. But the bottom line is that it worked for me.

INT: Yes, and they're here.

ROMAN: It worked for me, and it worked out and I have a point of reference.

INT: Yes, okay. Circle the number of each type of schooling you received for your formal Jewish education and note how many years you attended that type of schooling. So you went to cheder.

ROMAN: I went to cheder 'til I was about fourteen years old and I started up at about four.

INT: Did you have a Bar Mitzvah when you were?

ROMAN: Yes, I did.

INT: Okay.

ROMAN: It was not as elaborate as here.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: It was not elaborate.

INT: What was it like? Was it a...

ROMAN: Well, you get an uf roof, Shabbas you do your thing. Then they have wine and cake and then at home you have, the family gets together, mazel tov, mazel tov. I got a watch, a real watch that I never wore the darn thing. I lost the watch because it was gone, you know.

INT: With everything else.

ROMAN: Yeah. I saved it for better days. So you save it. And this was it, yeah. And then once you did it you knew that there would be, now, you see over there in Europe it was different because when you start to go to cheder you get the tzitzit. When you get Bar Mitzvahed you get the tefillin. When you get married you get the tallies. Here they are doing it a little bit different.

INT: Different, that's right.

ROMAN: You see. So I'll tell you something, as a matter of fact, right at this moment I do have a set of tefillin. I know how to put them on.

INT: Your children okay, so they received formal Jewish education.

ROMAN: That's right; Sunday school and they were Bar Mitzvahed, Bat Mitzvahed.

INT: Bat Mitzvahed. And so it was a part-time Jewish school, a Sunday school.

ROMAN: Sunday School, yeah.

INT: Did your children ever participate in any Jewish youth group or Jewish camp?
You told me...

ROMAN: Yes. No, a Jewish youth group, this was the, in South Windsor, yes.

INT: In the synagogue?

ROMAN: Yes, this was a synagogue group, yeah.

INT: Referring to Jewish religious denominations do you consider yourself to be
Conservative, Orthodox...

ROMAN: Conservative.

INT: Conservative, okay.

ROMAN: I was Orthodox. I was for a while Reform. I found out that the best place is
in the middle.

INT: Were you raised that you were raised...

ROMAN: Orthodox because this was the only flavor.

INT: Right. And your parents also were...

ROMAN: There was no other flavors available.

INT: If you are a member of a synagogue now with which denomination is the
congregation affiliated? The synagogue you belong to is Conservative?

ROMAN: Emanuel, yeah, oh yeah.

INT: About how often do you personally attend any type of synagogue, temple, or
organized Jewish religious service?

ROMAN: Most of the time, sometimes I just you know the problem is that on Friday
sometimes I don't feel like going but after I went I'm glad that I did.

INT: Yeah, right.

ROMAN: You see I do go on Fridays. Sometimes I go on Saturday and I feel great
about it. On Yomin Tovim I always go.

INT: On high holidays.

ROMAN: That's right. High holidays I observe. I got kind of some high reformers, I observe one.

INT: Okay. All right, this is not applied to you. No member of your household is a member of a church or other non-Jewish religious group?

ROMAN: No.

INT: Okay. Now here, here's a list and what I need to know from this is never, sometimes, usually, all of the time. Do you or your household observe the following practices: light candles on Friday night?

ROMAN: Always.

INT: Always. Say a blessing over a cup of wine on Friday night?

ROMAN: Always.

INT: Say a blessing over challah on Friday night?

ROMAN: Always.

INT: Refrain from handling or spending money on the Jewish Sabbath?

ROMAN: No.

INT: Refrain from traveling in a car on the Jewish Sabbath?

ROMAN: I don't refrain.

INT: Attend a seder during Passover?

ROMAN: Very much so, yup.

INT: Read from a Hagadah during the seder?

ROMAN: Yep, absolutely.

INT: Refrain from eating chometz during Pesach?

ROMAN: Absolutely.

INT: Buy kosher meat for home use?

ROMAN: More or less. Goldie, Goldie would like it but sometimes, I'm the guy that busts it up.

INT: Okay. Eat only kosher meat outside the home?

ROMAN: No.

INT: Use separate dishes for meat and dairy?

ROMAN: If Goldie hasn't we didn't do it, no.

INT: Light Hanukkah candles?

ROMAN: Yes.

INT: Have a Christmas tree?

ROMAN: No.

INT: Hear the Megillah on Purim?

ROMAN: Yes.

INT: Celebrate...

ROMAN: Simchas Torah?

INT: No, they don't even have that here. Celebrate Yom Haatzmaut Israel Independence Day?

ROMAN: Not really, not really.

INT: Fast on Yom Kippur or?

ROMAN: Yes.

INT: Yes. Fast on Tishbeiv?

ROMAN: No.

INT: Fast on the fast of Esther?

ROMAN: No.

INT: Engage in formal prayer?

ROMAN: Whatever was that?

INT: Engage in formal prayer means in shul.

ROMAN: Yes.

INT: Engage in personal prayer, you know.

ROMAN: Yeah. This is at times.

INT: At times, that's fine. Now we're talking about volunteer work. That means working either in some way to help others or in an organization for no monetary compensation. Have you in the past twelve months done any volunteer work yourself as part of a group for a Jewish organization, synagogue, Federation, school, etc?

ROMAN: Let's put it this way, since I'm working,

INT: Yes, you're a full time worker.

ROMAN: I really don't do any of that. I used to, let's put it this way, it's not volunteer work. I helped out the chabad. Yeah, help out the chabad. And then finally I got very angry with them. At one point in my, I had to give the Rabbi Gropin a piece of my mind. You see I thought chabad was a good organization. I don't know that much about it. First of all I admire Schneerson. He was kind of a... he was radiating respect.

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: Second thing, they were doing things that most of the other people didn't do, you know like they show you how to put on tefillin. They made you aware of Jewishness which I think it's very good. It's like chicken soup; if it doesn't help it won't hurt. But when they started to mix politics of Israel I got very upset. And Rabbi Gropin used to come around and I always used to give him \$100 bucks. So he comes into the store, "Nu, Reb Luftglas vus macht a yid? He says, "He wants \$125, \$150." I said, "I won't give you nothing this time." He says, "What's the story?" I said, "Rabbi, you know to talk bluntly, or a person is a prostitute or a person is a pious person." I never said a pious prostitute. He says, "What are you driving at?" I said, "I consider politics a whorish business, pardon my expression. I considered your job 'til now as a pious job but since you are mixing in politics of Israel and try to influence outcomes of their lives your rating in my department dropped a whole bunch of points and I ain't going to give you nothing." And for the longest time I didn't give him nothing but now I just, you know, you cannot carry on forever. So to be a do gooder of any particular kind, I am not.

INT: Okay, that's fine. If you belong to a synagogue have you ever served as an officer on the board?

ROMAN: Yes, I was president.

INT: All right, you told me about that.

ROMAN: Yeah, I was president, but it was at a Reform synagogue.

INT: Right. In the past year did you and/or other members of your household contribute or give gifts to Jewish philanthropies, charities...

ROMAN: Oh yes, 'cause this is Goldie's department and I do too. It's not philanthropies, it's just, we just do because it's supposed to be done.

INT: Do you read any Jewish periodicals, newspapers or magazines?

ROMAN: Oh yeah, The Jerusalem, well this is my information department and the Forveds and the Tug.

INT: The Tug.

ROMAN: Is gone.

INT: Nisht du mer.

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: How many times have you been to Israel? Never, once, twice, three times?

ROMAN: Probably about three, four times.

INT: Three, four times we are getting to the end here. Has anyone else in your household ever been to Israel?

ROMAN: My wife, my children, every one of my kids was in Israel.

INT: Everyone. How emotionally attached are you to Israel? Extremely attached, very attached, somewhat attached?

ROMAN: Emotionally? That's a very peculiar question because I consider Israel a very important part of Judaism because without this thing you just really are, you lose your identification, you wind up to be like a no person. To be emotionally attached, per se, I really don't think I am.

INT: Okay, that's fine. Not attached. Have you ever seriously considered living in Israel?

ROMAN: No.

INT: No. Among the people you consider your closest friends would you say that none are Jewish, few are Jewish, some are Jewish, most are Jewish, all, or almost all are Jewish?

ROMAN: Most are Jewish.

INT: Okay. Do you agree or disagree? Political lobbying in support of Jewish causes is an important right for American Jews?

ROMAN: Important and right?

INT: Yeah.

ROMAN: I really don't have no comment on it because I really don't know.

INT: Okay, that's fine. Do you agree or disagree? Separation of church and state is an important constitutional right?

ROMAN: Yes.

INT: Okay, you agree.

ROMAN: Yes.

INT: Okay. Do you agree or disagree? Under no circumstances should the government give any support to religious, educational institutions including text books, transportation, school services or teachers for children with developmental problems?

ROMAN: With things the way they are right now it's a very peculiar situation to say yes because otherwise you're going to have a whole bunch of cockroaches that get on the band wagon. So I am not clear on it, you see.

INT: Okay.

ROMAN: Although I would think it would be a good idea if the government helps but you know if a little bit of good pulls in a whole bunch of repercussions we have to take it under consideration.

INT: I understand. I understand. It gets complicated. Do you agree or disagree: it is the government's obligation to support the poor through a welfare program? Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?

ROMAN: By government do you mean the top government in Washington?

INT: Yeah.

ROMAN: I think that it's the responsibility of the community to help truly poor and truly incapacitated but right now this situation is carried too far out and I am very, very strong about things. If you can't, if you can't do something because you are incapable because you are sick, because you are old, I think that it is my obligation to help you without any reservations. But just because you like to lie on your tail and do nothing, I just don't think so.

INT: Okay. Do you agree or disagree: abortion should be legal as it is now allowing a woman to make her own decision in consultation with her family, rabbi and...

ROMAN: That's right.

INT: Okay. In your opinion, what proportion of each of the following groups in the United States is anti-Semitic? And the answer would be most, many, some, few, you're not sure.

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: Big business: would you say most are anti-Semitic, many, some few?

ROMAN: Some.

INT: Some. What about union leaders?

ROMAN: Union leaders, I really don't know because I never was involved.

INT: Okay. Hispanics: most, many, some, few, not sure?

ROMAN: I don't know that much about Hispanics.

INT: Okay. Blacks?

ROMAN: Blacks, to a certain extent, yes. But you see here we go again, I have to qualify it because anti-Semitism is generally a part of anti-Semitism is kind of jealousy of one person that has it and the other one that doesn't and the Jews happen to be working to make a mensch out of yourself because. So I would say there are blacks that are anti-Semitic.

INT: Okay. Democrats? When you think about Democrats do you think most, many, some, few?

ROMAN: As Democrats I wouldn't know. I would much rather go, I would much rather say that there are certain individual groups.

INT: Okay. What about Republicans?

ROMAN: I would do the same thing because they are the same turkey except dressed differently.

INT: Liberals, conservatives?

ROMAN: Conservatives, now here we got a problem. It depends. You see now the conservative, there are so many. The ultra conservatives are outright anti-Semitic.

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: And then you got quite a few shades of less, you know that I had some of my best friends were Jewish but they are dead.

INT: Yes, that one I hadn't heard but I know where it comes from. Catholics. Would you say most, many, some, few?

ROMAN: Although the Catholics are, they happen to have it in for the Jews on the basis of the way their religion was dictated to them, by the cataclysm or whatever.

INT: Mainstream Protestants, fundamentalists would you say?

ROMAN: Fundamentalists, probably yes. Protestants, you know there are the WASPS, they kind of, I would say probably that you know they stick to their own, you know.

INT: Okay, so some might be anti-Semitic.

ROMAN: Yeah, that's right.

INT: And what about Muslims, would you say most, many, some, a few?

ROMAN: I really don't know enough about them.

INT: Fine. Okay, do you favor or oppose giving preference in hiring to each of the following groups: the disabled, in other words would you be in favor or not to giving them, to hiring, to giving preference in hiring?

ROMAN: I will just stop the situation right here like this, I never, I am in position to hire.

INT: That's right.

ROMAN: I hire people on the basis of their ability and only ability. In other words, men, women, or whatever they had, whatever flavor they are it doesn't make no difference. And I have, I was disappointed with Jewish guys, and I was disappointed with other flavor people and I even experimented to a certain extent because I don't remember whether I told you, at one point there was a guy that I spoke with that he

looked like the Hunchback of Notre Dame, awful. But if you talk with him for two minutes you completely forget, he has the absolutely most fabulous personality, just a super person. I decided to try to give him a break. I figured maybe we can hack it. He couldn't make it.

INT: No.

ROMAN: He couldn't make it. People, in other words he just couldn't overcome it. It was such a, you know, people just talked, talked the wrong way to him, and treated him the wrong way and we talked about this thing. I said, "Look," in those days it was easier to do it. I said, "Look, we tried but I guess we didn't make it." I was too small at that time to just keep a guy on the payroll but I gave it a try. And I am very much committed to consider your ability and this is the only thing that I consider.

INT: Okay. I don't know if this will apply. You'll let me know. When you were growing up which of these best described, best described your father's usual stand on political issues? Would you say that they were very liberal, middle of the road, conservative?

ROMAN: My father, I would consider in then their days he was conservative.

INT: And what about for your mother?

ROMAN: My mother that talked usually on the point of what I would consider now a day conservative.

INT: Okay. Now I'm going to ask you to think about some history. Please check off who you supported in the following list of Presidential elections if you can remember.

ROMAN: Yep.

INT: In 1960, Kennedy or Nixon?

ROMAN: Kennedy.

INT: In '64, Johnson or Goldwater?

ROMAN: Johnson.

INT: In '68, Humphrey or Nixon? Hubert Humphrey?

ROMAN: I don't remember this one.

INT: Okay.

ROMAN: It was not very important.

INT: Back in '72, Eugene McCarthy or Richard Nixon?

ROMAN: It would have to, I don't remember.

INT: Yes, it was a while ago. '76, Jimmie Carter or Gerald Ford?

ROMAN: Would you like to know something? I voted for Carter because I figured he was, you know I had kind of a screwed up logic. I figured he was a complete nobody out of nowhere and I figured a new broom, 'til he smartens up we got at least a few years reprieve. But it turned out it that it didn't work because he was a...

INT: That's good thinking.

ROMAN: He was a very naive turkey that fell into a snake pit.

INT: In 1980 did you vote for Carter or Reagan?

ROMAN: Reagan.

INT: Reagan. In '84, Mondale or Reagan?

ROMAN: Reagan.

INT: In '88, Dukakis or George Bush?

ROMAN: Dukakis.

INT: In '92, Bill Clinton or George Bush?

ROMAN: Oh, Bill Clinton.

INT: What best describes your political party identification now? And I have a list here, is it conservative Republican, moderate Republican?

ROMAN: I am a conservative.

INT: Democrat?

ROMAN: No, I am not a Democrat and I am not a Republican.

INT: Independent?

ROMAN: Independent. But I am on the conservative, conservative to the point that my views are conservative because you know right now the word conservative is very difficult to describe because people...

INT: I know.

ROMAN: ...painted any which way they want. So assuming that we understand what conservative means.

INT: Okay.

ROMAN: In the sense of conservative.

INT: Okay. When you first started to vote were you also independent?

ROMAN: I always was independent.

INT: You always were independent.

ROMAN: This goes along with the situation that I don't want to be a political entity of any kind.

INT: Okay, that's the end of this questionnaire. I have one other one. Do you have another fifteen minutes or so?

ROMAN: Sure, why not. What the hell. It's an easy one.

INT: Okay, this one goes like this; I'll explain it to you. We're going to do two things. I'm going to ask you to think of a stressful event that happened to you within the past two to five years.

ROMAN: Two to five years?

INT: Or if you wanted to take it more.

ROMAN: Two to five years I had the problem with the, with the situation where I was involved with the partnership.

INT: The real estate.

ROMAN: With the real estate situation. It was extremely stressful.

INT: Okay, so that was a...

ROMAN: This was in the last five years.

INT: Okay, and that was, just to describe that again, that was...

ROMAN: To describe it I was a partner among eight partners, and I happened to have been the guy with the deep pockets and I discovered that I, when I signed the papers jointly and separately, this is a very severely word that I was, that it scares the heck out of me and I found out that I can be antagonized like a common criminal although I never did anything wrong to nobody. I never owed anybody any money but I was being blocked, you know wherever you go you got a situation like this. It just almost looked to me like, like you going against a cement wall. But even this came to pass.

INT: Well, that's what we're going to talk about. These questions ask you to answer when you think about that situation, for example if I were to say to you I tried to grow as a person as a result of the experience. That experience, would you say I did this not at all, I did this a little bit, I did this...

ROMAN: What do you mean I tried to grow?

INT: As a person.

ROMAN: Well, as a person any experience that you have you always learn something be it positive or negative. As a matter of fact if it worked out good you probably will repeat it. If it was bad, if you do it twice you're a jerk. So yes, I learned a lot. As a matter of fact I learned, among other things I learned, with all due respect to the last, they are all a bunch of jerks. The only thing that they do know is where to put the pintlech so that everything is correct. Common sense I still consider extremely uncommon and I, you have to rely in the final end on yourself to a great extent if you have the guts to stand up. And well, I learned, I learned a tremendous amount. Above all I learned stick with what you know. Don't put your nose into situations that it doesn't belong to.

INT: Well, that's learning for sure.

ROMAN: That's right, that's learning for sure.

INT: With this situation and then in usually would you say I turned to work or other substitute activities to take my mind off things?

ROMAN: I worked constantly and I'll tell you something, in my business I am fortunate that in my business I deal with people which forces you. In other words, if you come in to talk with me about something I cannot tell you about my sad story because you really are not interested in my sad story. So this decompresses the situation to a certain point plus my tremendous advantage was to be able to talk it out with my wife and with some close friends. Because and naturally I needed, I needed some support because you all of a sudden you find out you are so damn all by yourself. So you learn.

INT: I got upset and let my emotions out.

ROMAN: By emotions out you mean like whip out and stamp your feet?

INT: Whatever.

ROMAN: No.

INT: I try to get advice from someone about what to do.

ROMAN: By talking with people I always, you know advice is like opportunities, there's all kinds of stuff that comes at you. It's your job to sort it out and some of it is good, some of it is lousy, some it is no good.

INT: Right. I concentrated my efforts on doing something about it in that situation.

ROMAN: I really was, to a great extent if you deal with a big bang you really are helpless about a situation. I did something about it and in retrospect that not knowing, knowing that I don't like to fight two fronts, I cancelled out one front. Remember the situation that I paid up for everybody the \$300,000. So I did something about it and in retrospect these people which in point blank language told me that they are going to go after me and they could really put somebody behind the register. I alleviated the problem for myself.

INT: Right, so you were able to find a solution.

ROMAN: And at that time the lawyer said, "You're crazy." But obviously they didn't know the whole picture. Sometimes you don't have to tell everybody the whole picture.

INT: In this situation I said to myself this isn't real. Did you do that ever about that?

ROMAN: No, it was very real.

INT: You knew it was.

ROMAN: The only thing is that there was one situation where we had, one of the partners was, two of the partners were lawyers and they said that there is a saying that you know where you over extend yourself, there's a technical word in legal form. That you know you buy more than you can bail yourself out because later on you know the returns will come in. Later on if Grandma has wings she'd be a helicopter, you know. I said, "I cannot do that in other words I will not bend over any further than to the point where I can pull myself back." And the guy said at that time told me, "You know you are a Pollack, you're a farmer." But I was the guy that could pull himself back up tall, after all.

INT: And you were the only one.

ROMAN: That's right.

INT: I put my trust in G-d. Did that ever come into the picture?

ROMAN: No, I don't think so because G-d was busy with other things.

INT: Other things.

ROMAN: He has more important things.

INT: I laughed about the situation.

ROMAN: No, I did not laugh about it.

INT: No. I admitted to myself that I couldn't deal with it and quit trying.

ROMAN: I couldn't do that because you know not that I tried to be a hero. There was just simply I couldn't do it. I had a family. I figured to myself, you know, what could possibly be the worst thing? And on that basis I tried to just protect myself whatever there was to protect. But I just never threw up the hands.

INT: No, that's not your style.

ROMAN: No, that is not because it's not my style, it just never came into my mind, you see.

INT: I restrained myself from doing anything too quickly.

ROMAN: This is a very difficult thing to say because you know ever my attorney told me once, you see I am very impulsive in doing things and he mentioned once to me, he says, "You know with your background, Roman, if you face a problem, (and this is over years he knows me, for forty years) you try to solve it. You know, fix it, or kill it or run away." This is how I imagine he claims that this is because of my background. But I assess the situation and I try to resolve it as fast as possible. However, in this particular case this does not apply because in legal terms there is such a thing as time takes care of things. And if there is a forever situation and you just twiddle your toes and eat your heart out. You can't do nothing about it.

INT: I discussed my feelings with someone.

ROMAN: My feelings, my position. My feelings, my feelings were av tzurus. My situation I discussed with my wife.

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: Because I have more sheriffs coming to my place than my goodness you used to think that it's a party here. It was not, it was not good. I tell you it was not good. Ah, but tell you something, I have a very good, a customer who happens to be a very good friend of mine who did something because of his decency and politeness he signed

instead as a junior partner to a project he signed as a partner. And you know a signature can be hell to you and you know some people say well, it's only a signature. It's not only a signature. This guy happened to have been at one point a big shot in UPS, I mean really high up. This guy even now he's retired. He earns a million dollars a year. This is a real millionaire. He got stuck for fifteen million dollars. I got stuck, you know this is by comparison; my wife is beautiful by comparison to whom? But you see those situations happen.

INT: For sure. I use alcohol or drugs to make myself feel better?

ROMAN: No, no, I took some pills to calm me down but I don't take alcohol or drugs. Well drugs, wait just one second. A calming pill, you know, not Advil that some dumb thing over there.

INT: A...?

ROMAN: A calming down because I was ready to jump out of my skin. Yeah, constantly under you are constantly under pressure.

INT: How long was that for?

ROMAN: About two, three years. This was phew, it was bad. You see the problem is you see that let's say during my bad times in Germany all I had to do is just worry about myself. Here you worrying about, well my kids knew as a matter of fact, my son in law, Steve says, "Dad, I have \$60,000 saved up if I can help you with it." I thought that was great although I thank G-d I didn't need it but you know the story is when you laugh the world laughs with you, when you are av tzurus you are all by yourself. That's the way it is.

INT: Yeah. Okay, I got used to the idea that it happened. Did you do this a little bit?

ROMAN: Well, I did not get used to it you just learn to live with it.

INT: You learn to live with it.

ROMAN: Yeah, you don't get used to it.

INT: I talk to someone to find out more about the situation.

ROMAN: Oh, I talked with a lot of people and I knew my, you see the problem is that I knew my problem. You see it was not like it just fell down, it's all over here. It was just getting from bad, progressively worse. The problem was that I couldn't, the worst thing is that you cannot see the light in the tunnel. You see you just can't, you're just being like sucked in and sucked in and all of a sudden they negotiate with you and they want more and more. You don't have it anymore 'til it finally got settled down and phew, I was ready to get drunk with coca cola.

INT: I believe you. I kept myself from getting distracted by other thoughts or activities.

ROMAN: No, it was not a matter of me getting distracted because you see I, when I have a problem, you know I used to work once for a guy when I started in retailing. He says, "Roman, when you leave the store I want you to wipe out everything, just forget about it." I said, "Bernie, I cannot do that because if I have a problem I carry it with me until it's resolved. I cannot do it so it's with you." The only thing is what do you do, you learn to live with it. You know that's kind of, you know, like when a person has cancer he said, "You cannot believe it." I know that we had such a hard time to say cancer but later on I'm all of a sudden it's somehow you just, you're just in it.

INT: You take it in.

ROMAN: You just, you're just rolling with it.

INT: I day dreamed about things other than this.

ROMAN: No, I didn't day dream about those things I tried to keep, let's put it, I was busy and my family, well, my family was a great help to me because you just, you just at least have somebody to come to, you just have somebody to talk with, you see, so. I was not just like thrown to the dogs.

INT: Right, right. You kept on functioning but...

ROMAN: Oh yeah, I functioned semi normally I think.

INT: Yeah, yeah. I got upset and was really aware of it.

ROMAN: I was aware of it, and I was upset but I just was not upset to kill myself about it. I mean yes, I have a problem. I came to the conclusion; the bottom line of the conclusion was what would be possibly the worst thing? I don't think that they can put me to jail because I didn't do nothing wrong. I think that I could lose everything that I have so there was a time that I did not have nothing, so what. As long as I have my ten fingers and my mind I probably so I won't be that high but I'll be there.

INT: Right.

ROMAN: You see in other words, we have to; we have to look at the facts because if you want to eat yourself up just about the dollars you're just going to be dead, definitely.

INT: I made a plan of action.

ROMAN: I really don't think that I made any plans of actions because I was reacting mostly. The situation was rolling and I was just reacting to it, you know and I was never in the position that I could dictate.

INT: Right, although later on you proposed this was...

ROMAN: Well, this is I took advantage of an opening that I saw. This was a situation, this was something else but basically with the big stuff I just reacted.

INT: I accepted that this had happened and that it couldn't be changed.

ROMAN: Oh yeah.

INT: I held off doing anything about it until the situation permitted.

ROMAN: No, things were being done; you see the problem is that you are in a position that you really cannot do nothing because there's a whole bunch of lawyers. So all I knew that I had like a monthly bill of two, three thousand dollars to pay the lawyers, and to pay the lawyers and to pay the lawyers. And I had to resolve, they gave me the information and they, we talked over about those things and we came to what ideas, and what should we do, and what could we do and this was just it.

INT: Right. I tried to get emotional support from friends or relatives.

ROMAN: The emotional support that I got is primarily from my work. Well, emotional support it was, it was simply, you know, like when a little kid walks and holds onto your skirt, it was somebody to talk to because Goldie was just, there were guys that their wives says them, "I don't want to hear about that damn stuff. I had enough. Don't talk to me about it." With my wife at least I could talk. She couldn't come up with any good things because she never was in a situation like this. This was unique to us.

INT: I just gave up trying to reach my goal.

ROMAN: No, I did not.

INT: No, you did not. I took additional action to try to get rid of the problem.

ROMAN: Yes, I took side action. This was that situation with the bank in Boston over there.

INT: Right that you told me about. I tried to lose myself for a while by drinking alcohol or taking drugs.

ROMAN: Oh, hell no.

INT: I refuse to believe that it had happened.

ROMAN: That never such a thing.

INT: Never. I let my feelings out.

ROMAN: No.

INT: I tried to see it in a different light to make it seem more positive.

ROMAN: I just left it, I just resigned myself to the point that I rolled with the punches.

INT: Yep.

ROMAN: You see I didn't want to throw any other light because there was no light.

INT: I talked to someone who could do something concrete about the problem.

ROMAN: Well, I had lawyers, darn it. They did concrete stuff.

INT: They're concrete. They are very concrete. I slept more than usual.

ROMAN: At times, yes and times no.

INT: I tried to come up with a strategy about what to do.

ROMAN: I had my strategy. In other words I knew what, you see once you resign yourself to the point, what is the worst possible thing that could happen, there is really nothing else to do. What could possibly happen? You know I always firmly, I trained myself in a situation that I anticipate the worst and if it doesn't happen I'm pleasantly surprised.

INT: So you thought through what could be the worst thing.

ROMAN: I thought to myself well, G-d, for it to happen, G-d, you see, look, if the worst possible thing would happen we got soup kitchens, darn it, I certainly ain't going to die from hunger.

INT: Okay, we're almost done here. I looked for something good in what was happening.

ROMAN: Oh, there was no good in it. There was a lot of lessons.

INT: There was a lot of lessons?

ROMAN: There were lots of lessons but there was nothing really good.

INT: I thought about how I must best handle the problem, how I might best handle the problem.

ROMAN: I handled it the best I could because there was no other alternatives for me, really.

INT: I made sure not to make matters worse by acting too soon.

ROMAN: You could not act too soon for the simple reason because the lawyers wouldn't let you. You had to go through the lawyers, you see. You get to be kind of a...you're on a ride.

INT: Yes, it's out of your hands.

ROMAN: That's right.

INT: I tried hard to prevent other things from interfering with my efforts of dealing with this.

ROMAN: Wait, wait, wait, this is?

INT: I tried hard to prevent other things from interfering with my efforts at dealing with this.

ROMAN: No, I tried very hard to be busy and I would reverse the situation. I tried very hard to leave this thing, let it roll because there's really nothing that I can do about it and to run my life semi-normal.

INT: I went to movies and watched TV to think about it less.

ROMAN: No, I didn't have the patience for it.

INT: I accepted the reality of the fact that it had happened.

ROMAN: Yep.

INT: I asked people who had had similar experiences what they did.

ROMAN: Well, you had some people and they have, but you see the fact that you had a problem this doesn't solve my problem. I still had my problem. So that the only thing I would say oh, you too big deal.

INT: I felt a lot of emotional distress and I found myself expressing those feelings a lot.

ROMAN: Just one second?

INT: I felt a lot of emotional distress and I found myself expressing those feelings a lot.

ROMAN: No, I really did not express them. You know by talking out you loosened up a little bit on it and then you see then I just simply was, you see I took the side like this, at least so us gentzen gelt, you know. At least I had a way to rescue myself so you know.

INT: Sol zen a kaparah.

ROMAN: The things are bad but they could be just so much worse.

INT: Right, right. I learned to live with it.

ROMAN: Yep.

INT: Yep. I did, oh, I put aside other activities in order to concentrate on this.

ROMAN: No, no, no.

INT: No. I fought hard about what steps to take.

ROMAN: I knew that there was really not so much hard to think of it. I knew that if something would happen this would be the next 'til I couldn't do much more.

INT: I did what had to be done one step at a time.

ROMAN: Yep.

INT: I learned something from the experience.

ROMAN: Oh, you bet your bippi.

INT: I prayed more than usual.

ROMAN: No, I really didn't pray so much. I didn't pray so much. I really didn't pray because this didn't have nothing to do with G-d. It's a screwed up situation and G-d is too busy. It didn't make me anymore religious or so. It didn't make me any less religious. I guess you know you can't get none.

INT: Yes.

ROMAN: You just, you don't think about it, you don't get overly emotional where you cry, or you fall apart, or you do the why me and all that stuff. It's a problem. It could have been good, then I would be a hero so it was not good. So I'm a bum so that's it.

INT: And you just, as you say you learn from it.

ROMAN: Well, let me just tell you something, if I do it the second time I deserve a swift kick in the pants.

INT: Okay, I think we're finished.

ROMAN: It's almost like having a baby ask me.

Memorial to the Children

INT: This is an addendum to the interview with Roman Luftglas for the memorial to the children naming book. And I guess what we're asking here is for the, some information about names that you might remember, particularly children. So I know that...

ROMAN: Well, as far as children, obviously my brother.

INT: Your brother. And his name?

ROMAN: Henry.

INT: Henry. And his Jewish name?

ROMAN: Henach.

INT: Henach.

ROMAN: Yeah.

INT: Okay. And he was born?

ROMAN: He was born in '28.

INT: In 1928.

ROMAN: Yeah. So he was three years younger than I was.

INT: And do you know how old he might have been when he died?

ROMAN: Well, I was fifteen and he was twelve. He was twelve. Yeah, he was twelve.

INT: And he wasn't, obviously, all the same would hold for him, the place of birth that you gave us?

ROMAN: Stockover, yeah. You couldn't be born too far away.

INT: Not too far away.

ROMAN: No.

INT: Okay. How would you describe him, how he looked and what he liked to do?

ROMAN: Would you like to know something? Just recently I saw a, Goldie and I went to a store and I saw a little girl that you know that somebody has always, somebody as a matter of fact we have a friend of ours, let me just derail myself for a second.

INT: Sure.

ROMAN: We have a friend of ours who writes books and all kinds of things except that you are taller, she looks exactly like you.

INT: Really?

ROMAN: She lives across there they are wonderful people too you see. My brother was younger. He was freckled, he had auburn hair. He wore glasses. I used to beat him up. But if anybody else touched him it was oy veyes mere, it was bad for them. I wish I would have him here. That's just about it. There's not much to say about, there's not much to say about it. We were, he was a good kid, you know, looking in retrospect he was a good kid.

INT: Did he do music like you?

ROMAN: No, he did not.

INT: No?

ROMAN: No, he did not but he was much younger, three years younger so I guess he didn't have as many interests for whatever reason. He was just a plain good kid.

INT: Did he used to play around with you? Did he kind of pull pranks?

ROMAN: Well no, because I used to, I wanted to play with other kids. As a matter of fact, now, now in retrospect I'm looking at situations, you know like for example he wanted to schlep along where I go and I didn't want him to go so I gave him a shot over this way. He goes crying to my mother and I get a schelaking for beating up my brother. So I came to a conclusion. I said, "Gee, I hardly touched him I got a licking. Next time I give him a goota zetz, this way I get my money's worth at least. But this is kid stuff. I wish I would have him now but that's not the way that goes. As far as other kids, there was a whole bunch of kids from our hometown.

INT: These would have been neighbors or relatives?

ROMAN: No, not relatives, the relatives, no. I have a cousin, she lives in Israel and she's married now. She has children. She's a grandmother now also but she was from my mother's step mother so she was kind of a, that's a cousin so I just it's good to have any cousins.

INT: Sure. Were there other kids that you wanted to mention, other names?

ROMAN: Oh yes, well I used to have like right here I have Mike Selinger and Gene Wall, that's brother and sister. They're from my hometown. As a matter of fact those two, when they threw us out to the ghetto, remember I told you we had one room with all our family was? They were living in the kitchen. So it was Michael, and Gene and Bernie, their younger brother who did not survive and then was one of, two more cousins that were living in the same kitchen. The girls died. The boy, Schlomo Selinger is right now a very famous sculpture in Paris.

INT: Oh yes, you

ROMAN: That's the guy that I knocked his tooth out.

INT: (laughs)

ROMAN: Yeah, but he is a very famous sculpture. He did the memorial thing around Paris over there. He's quite, he's the cat's meow in this department. I have some friends from my hometown, we used to keep together, we used to stick together, you know. We used to have every year a Hazkarah. So what the way I rigged it, the way we rigged it up is we used to go to Brooklyn and every year, every other year they used to come over here. And for the New Yorkers to come down here you know this was a big deal, you know this is going to the country. And we had services, we had a memorial service in our shul and then they had a, for the rest of the day they had it in my house. The only thing is that after Sharon got, took sick you know if you don't pay attention to things they just fall apart. Now lots of them are now retired, some of them died off. You know everybody, you know now you got less and less of those people. And some of them moved to Florida so the thing fell apart.

INT: Right. Right. Well, I'm glad though that we were able to talk about your brother a little bit.

ROMAN: Oh yeah, yeah.

INT: That that's recorded here.

ROMAN: It was, well, it was my Henry.

INT: Yeah.

ROMAN: What else would you like to know?

[Tape 9 - End Side 9] **End of interview**