

8:49, Tape 12 A Seated Interview

Camera A: Close Up Shot Side Profile

Sound Quality: Usable, low Some ambient sound

8:49:32:19

OK. My name is Etta Hauptman, and I was born September 13, 1907 and I had a nice family. (pause) I was born in a little village, in a farm village, and I had five brothers and a sister. My father's name was Michael Chaim, my mother's name was Carol, my sister's name was Yetl, she was the oldest one. Then the oldest from the brother was Eli, the next was Wolf; after Wolf was Moshe, after Moshe was Israel, and after Israel was Isaac. After Isaac, I come along. (Pause)

(8:50:51:15)

And then, we were very poor. That was a family, a big family, and we have anything, food or - and to feed such a big family, was very tight. So my father decided to go to United States to look for money, they told him that in the United States money grows on trees. So he went to America, and he finally he got very well in America, he ate well, he good lookin', and he wrote a letter to my mom: Don't worry, everything is gonna be all right. You eat and drink and don't worry about it. So my mom says, Yeah, eat and drink, its a lot of stones, and a lot of water, so I can eat and drink. What (laughs) what should I eat?

So, my mother used to send the kids to the forest to pick up berries, to sell the berries to buy a little salt or a little sugar. Nobody had a job, nobody could do anything, and we were growing hungry, really hungry.

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So, when my father come back from the United States, we had a little money saved up, and we bought a lot of ground, and we my father made a little grocery store. We bought two, two cows. So we lived up. We had milk, we had butter, we had cheese, everything from two cows. We had growing everything, potatoes and vegetables and all, and bread. And everything. We had everything. Was nice.

OPEN -
Shot -
Silent
ACT 4.

Jessie Williams

And then, the war broke out, the 1914 war. So, they Cossaks come in and destroyed everything. We got poor again.

(laughs) We were suffering all this year, till we moved from that village away from in a little town, called Podbush. My father was (sound interference 8:53:28:16) trying to get a few dollars, they was Zlotys, Zlotys in Poland, to make a living. And a little by little, the brothers got married and the family got lower, so - till we moved to another town to Borislav. Borislav, we bought, we had money a little, and we bought a little house in Borislav.

And we tried - my father was a butcher and we made a little living, but was hard. Because they buy everything, groceries, meat everything on credit. The people worked, they pay monthly, salaries was paid monthly. So, they didn't have every day money, they have to have that money that they get from that whole month's work to pay for the whole month. So, some people had to have something else, and they were short in paying, and short in paying, and we were broke again. (laughs) Till the war broke out in 1939, the Second World War.

8:54:54:01

So, here goes again with trouble. The first thing what they, what they come in, the German, the Ukrainian were happy because they had thought that's their life, that the German gave them everything that's going to be for them, everything. So - they asked the German to give them 24 hours, that they want to take care of the Jews. So, they give 'em 24 hours, there was a bunch of that hoodlums, they went from house to house, and kill, kill and that night they kill 500 Jewish people. All by themselves, not to shoot, not - just they come with knives and with hammers, and they just kill. There was no life. there was - There was a lot of people went away with the Russian army, what they still alive. My brother, they oldest one wanted to go too. Let's go away, let's go away because we heard what was going on, what the German do to the Jewish people. So, my sister in law said, I just bought

furniture, and we just fixed up everything and I spent so much money and I have to leave that, the whole thing and get away? So, we stuck with the Germans again.

8:56:43:17 Didn't have a piece of bread. We couldn't go to the Gentile's house, they wouldn't let in. They just - terrible. I had a friend, and she took a hatchet - I went to her, and I said, Let me in, just to stay with the baby for a few minutes. She said - she took a hatchet, she said, if you don't - get out, I'm gonna kill you, I'm going to chop it up in pieces. No where to go, nothing to do. Whatever we had in the house, a tablecloth, a sheet - whatever, everything give it away for a little milk for the baby. The baby was only three months, I didn't feed her.

J: Which baby was that?

G: Carol, your mother. Poor baby, didn't have a little milk to, to to drink. Huh. So, I had a Ukrainian woman, she was very nice to me. I said, I give you everything I have. I just need milk for the baby. She said, she said, I will give to you but I don't want you in my house. So she said, Tell you what I'm going to do. She had bushes around the house. She said, I'm going to take a bottle of milk every day. I'm going to put a bottle under the bushes, and you go and take it. And the empty bottle put it back, under the bushes. Which she did. She saved my life, and mom's life. I had the milk for the baby. 8:58:23:28,

And then, it didn't took long, we had to move from our house to move to the Ghetto. And in the Ghetto, the Jews all have to go to the Ghetto. They clean up Jews, every few weeks, every month they make a time for a day or two - killing, killing - killing the Jews, killing the Jews, till it stopped. So, we went to the Ghetto, and my husband, he was educated in Vienna, and he was very perfect in German language, so the Polaks, the Ukrainian, they couldn't understand each other. So, he was the translator. On the

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Shutzpolitz side. They were holding my husband because they need him for it. They was no other one that could speak German.

J: What's the Schutzpolitz?

G: Schutzpolitz, that's the Gestapo.

J: The Gestapo? The Jewish Gestapo?

G: NO! the German Gestapo, the German Gestapo. And its a matter of fact, when he was, he had that job, to translate that German language, to the Polish, Ukrainian, so they had, they called it El-Hadeh. I don't know what the El-Hadeh meant, it was a big building, they had nurses, and they had Ukrainian and Polaks, they were working for the German. Whatever they had to kill the people - they, they did the work.

So, they had two nurses. The nurses, they pitied me very much, why I stayed there. They hided me, they did everything to me, with the baby. They liked Carol very much. She was a little tiny baby. And one time I was sitting at the nurse in the room, all of a sudden, an inspection go. She said, What should I do with the baby, with me? So they put me and the baby under the bed, and covered with the bedspread. So, they open up the door, and they looked, everything is all right, and we got out. And when they left, at night they leave the El-Hadeh and go to where they have the Shutzpolitz side. So, that I could take out the baby, and she was running around between the people there and they play with her because, she was the only baby there, they had fun with her. (9:01:36:23) So, one time, I was in a man's room, he was working in the kitchen or whatever, and he said, Stay in my room with the baby. So, there was the Captain was looking in every room, he open up the door and look at every room, and then they know he's gonna open up the door in my room. So, one of that

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fellows went all around to the window, knocked on the window not to open up the door. He was knocking already, I thought its my husband, and I opened up the door, the baby in my — arms. He looked at me and I said, (laughs) I was stiff. He didn't say a word, he just turned around and closed the door.

J: This was the Gestapo?

G: The Gestapo, the the the Captain from the Gestapo. (laughs) It was, he he knocked up the door and I already opened it. He knocked on the window, not to open the door. He knocked the same knocking as my husband, gave me a signal, how he knocks. So, he knock the same knock as my husband, so I just opened up the door. (hand on head) Oh, what a big fellow, in a big German coat. Oh, I was stiff, I was numb. 9:03:05:06 He just turned back and walked away. And then, (3800) then from there, we had to move from the Gestapo in the Ghetto -

J: What was it like in the Ghetto?

G: In the Ghetto, there was one street, what they circled that street just for the Jewish people, no one could get in that, uh, Ghetto. But, my husband, they took care of him, they needed - They said, Hauptman, you're not going in the ghetto, stay in this side. In this side was the ghetto and in this side street was gentiles. So he said, you gonna stay in the Gentiles part, in the side where the Gentiles (sound interference) so they give us a room where the Genitiles. And we were living there, with the Gentiles, for a few days. And then one night, my brother was living with me, the youngest, Isaac, but they all gone, and that one was left. He was staying with me. And one night there was morning already. I had a dream. 9:04:51:10 My father wasn't living already. I had a dream that my father opened up the door and he was so excited, and he said (gestures with hands) Fast, run with the

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baby. Run away! I said, where should I run, where's mom, what's happened? He said, don't ask any questions, just run! I got up and I was so excited, I said, Oh, Mine God. My husband said, what is it? And I told him the dream. And he said, you know something, I don't like it. I don't like that dream. He got dressed real fast. We were on the first floor, he run down the stairs. And that's it. And I was excited. I just can't understand it. And then I got down the bed, and I look through the window, and I see - Uh - Oh, the Gestapo marching, the Ukrainian police marching. I said, that's it. I didn't wait a minute. I got dressed the baby. I dressed myself and I took off the star from my arm, the Mogen David star, and I run downstairs, I didn't wait for my husband, I run like my father told me, Run! Now, when I come down the stairs, there was a sidewalk on this side, and a sidewalk near the ghetto, and there was in one side walk the German gestapo, and on the other side, the Ukrainian Gestapo. (laughs) And they were catching Jews like somebody catch dogs! Screaming and yelling and running! (gestures) I took my baby, and I walked straight with it to the sidewalk. Believe or not, nobody touched me, nobody asked me anything. They let me through. That was just a miracle, I just don't understand, I just believe, that something in the dream, that my father saved my life and my baby's life. (9:07:22:19) And I just can't get over till now, it's fifty years ago and I just believe that it is something behind.

So, I run down to the El-Hadeh, where was the nursing, and they took me in and they hide me. And then, my husband come back. I left everything in the room. I had such a beautiful necklace, pearl necklace, the pearl necklace were worth a fortune, thousands of dollars if I would have it now. I had a necklace from corals, big. I left everything in the drawer. I said, (gestures) I don't want nothing I just want to run like my father told me. And when I come back, nothing was in the room. The Gentiles, fixed it up everything, took out from the room everything. They, they during the day they

used to go the room and take things, valuable things,
whatever: there were no, nobody say a word, just take it
and let me live. (9:08:40:13)

(pause)

So, we were. What to do now, from the ghetto we getting less
and less and we had to go to the labor camp. We went to a
labor camp. And its not allowed children in a labor camp.
So, what I do with Carol, what I do with the baby? That's a
problem! What I do? And she was so beautiful. My husband
come one time home. He say, I - the problem, what is it.
He got a friend in the drugstore, and he gave him poison.
He's gonna poison the baby. And I start crying. I said, you
not going do that. If we go, we all go. I'm not going leave
my baby killed and I should live. No! I would not let do it. 43 sec.
I said, look at the baby, how can you do it? You're gonna
kill your baby? No! He said, what we should do? I said,
whatever will be, will be. If we have to go, we all go.
That's all. Nothing to it. We convicted to die, and we have
to face it, that's all.] So, my husband used to be in the
Polish Army. He have, they call it Platza - like like over
here, they wear bags on the back, big bags -

J: Backpacks?

G: Yeah. So I had that bag. We put the baby in that bag,
and we put clothes on top of it, and we took her in to the
labor camp. Like, he put on his back and he walked in to the
labor camp. And that baby was (gestures) |- | just - She was
a baby, how could she everything understand. She didn't cry.
She didn't say a word. It was amazing. So we took her in to
that camp. And what we do now. We have to have a hiding
place for her. There was an attic, and she was, and we have
to go to work. My husband have to go to work. And how we
leave the baby alone? She was alone all day there in the
attic, with a piece of bread and a little water all day long,
alone. (9:11:36:04) And sometimes they have those holes for

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pipes - three (unclear) - three feet deep, and I was so nervous and I used to dig up that hole, till noon was done. And the gestapo saw its done, and he say, good work, good work, so he used to give me a pass to get home. And I run home to the baby to take the baby down.

So, one time I was diggin and diggin and the rest of the people were looking how I do it, and he saw far away that nobody's doing, they just standing there and talking. So he run over and he just started hitting every one of them. He hit me too, because he didn't know if I work or not. So he hit me here (gestures to head) and was bloody and I couldn't stand up on mine legs. There was time to go back to the camp and I couldn't walk back. I just stay there in the woods. So they, they come back to the camp. My husband say, where I am. They said, I was hit and was bleeding there in the woods so he run there and took me home. (9:13:08:00)

And then, in one time, the baby I put her under the bed. I was sick, I couldn't work, and I had the baby in the room, I was playing. And then the Jewish police come in and they told me that is going to be an inspection and to hide the baby. They knew, the Jewish people knew that I have the baby, to hide the baby. And there wasn't time to put the baby in the attic, so I wrapped her up in a blanket and put her under the bed. She was quiet. But they come with that dog. And that dog smelled something under the bed. And he pulled down the blanket from her, she started screaming. Oh, Mine God. I didn't have any choice, and I have to pull her out from the bed. They were so amazed. There was three gestapo, and two Jewish Gestapo. I think they were like a piece of wood. (gestures) They didn't know what's happened, they heard the scream from the baby, and I pulled the baby out and the baby hopped on to me, and she was shaking. They look at - was also a miracle that they didn't do anything. They didn't kill her, they didn't kill me. And I told them right away that if you have to do something to my, to the baby, Kill me first! So they, no answer, no word, nothing. They just turned

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around, and walked out. Now I believe, that - because when I was in that El-Hadeh with the nurses they loved her so much. They, they took the baby and they Christianed the baby. They said, that might help that she be alive. They want her to be alive. I said, I don't care if you Christianed, do whatever you want, I just want her alive. So, maybe that helped. That they didn't have, they didn't have the guts to do anything. That's a miracle.

So, the - (9:15:50:20) one time from that labor camp, there was a house, in this side, across the street, there was doctors in that house, and there was the dentists in that house, and there was lawyers in that house, the whole, the big (laughs) sour cream. So the gestapo said that my husband should live in that house. So they put me there. I was pregnant in that time and I was living with that doctors there. What we do, have the baby, and now I gonna have another baby. How can I survive with two children, with two babies? (increased background noise) So, I have to have the baby, and I give birth to the baby. The baby was maybe three, four days old. Also the gestapo come in and look around. The baby, was looking, I covered, they didn't see. And they killed the baby. They had to go in to inspect that whole thing. They took out people, took out the baby for a walk and they killed the baby. (shakes head) (9:17:27:20) My husband went out somewhere and people feel sorry for him, and give him a lot of vodka to drink, he come home drunk, he was lying like crazy, he was drunk, he was - you know, what's going on, people were confused. People, people killed themselves, they hung themselves. There was a doctor there where he was, he was with me when I gave birth to Carol, he was my doctor. He was - he had a wife and five daughters. (background noise) He poisoned the wife and the five daughters and himself. (gestures) Finished! People couldn't exist, without food, and every day in danger. You don't know if you get up in the morning and you get killed. (pause) So, somehow, I survived with the baby and my husband. And I'm

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thankful, but I'm sorry. I just miss the baby. (cries) It was such a beautiful boy. (cries - J's hand visible on her head) (9:18:58:29) (camera moves wider to include J seated on G's left) God will pay them for it. (G blows nose. J kisses G.)

So finally come after the war, it was the same thing. There was anything to buy, was anything to get. I didn't have - Willy was born, and we travelled from Poland to Germany, to Waldenburg. (G pats eyes with tissue - camera is still wide) Willy was born in Borislav, after they survived us.

J: (unclear)

G: Huh?

J: Was the war over?

G: The war was over - in in Poland. But they still were fighting in Germany. (camera moves to tight G 3/4 face)

J: When did you find out the war was over?

G: In Poland? Well, right away, when they backed out. All German backed out.

J: How was that?

G: They just -

J: One day were gone?

G: They were gone! they backed out. The whole army, they backed out and the Russian army backed in, so we were free. The Russian, the Russian (laughs) the other Gestapo! They terrible too. You know, they, we survived, we were happy. Mom got out; she was two and a half, maybe three years old,

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and she couldn't talk loud. And I said, now you can talk, you can say now you can talk, you can scream, you can do. She used to look to the window, kids were playing outside, and she asked me, why can't I go out and play a little? She couldn't. Now, I said now you can go out and you can play and you can talk loud and you can do what you want. But they find out that my husband is alive. Why is a Jew alive? He must done something wrong that they didn't kill him.

(9:21:28:09) So they arrest him, they took him away. He was sitting in the jail, maybe two months. I thought I'd never see him again because they right away, sent him to Siberia. Well, I had a lot of friends, they were working with the gestapo, and they were working out to let him out. Finally, they let him out. And then we went from Borislav to Waldenburg, and then we come to Waldenburg, that the Polish people took care of us already. We come to Waldenburg, there was a big house, they give us a big house, and there was Germans in the house, they told them to get out, and don't take a knife or a spoon or anything, don't touch anything from the house, get out! And they put us in. 9:22:36:19

J: Was this in Waldenburg?

G: Waldenburg. In Waldenburg, I had a brother, the older brother Moshe, met a girl, who she comes after the war, she got out from Auschwitz, and she come back to Borislav, and she had a little girl, before the war, and she give away that girl for adoption. She want to save her life that she wouldn't be killed. (blows nose) And a couple took that girl, and they loved that girl, was a beautiful girl. And when they, when they left Germany to Waldenburg, a lot of Polaks went also. And that couple, who had that baby, they went too to Waldenburg. So when they come to Waldenburg, my sister in law went to see the baby, and she talk to her, she would like to have the baby back. Well, they loved the baby, and the baby belong to them - they legally adopted the baby. So she,

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she had money, and she said, I give you 30 thousand mark and you give me the baby back. So she heard, 30 thousand mark, and she - and she grabbed it. She said, she thought she get the money and the baby is still hers. (9:24:29:20) So, she took the money and she bring the baby. The baby was crying after the mother, she didn't know the real mother, because she raised her, she know the other mother. Poor baby, didn't have any choice, she was with us, she was with mom, she was playing with mom. Next day, that woman comes with that 30 thousand mark, and she don't want the money, she is afraid to have so much money. And she don't want the money, she want the baby. My sister in law said look, forget it, you give me the baby and the baby's mine now. So, (laughs) she didn't have any choice, she want to give the money to me, I said, I don't want the money. She said, I'm afraid to keep the money. It's a lot of money. I said, its a lot of money to me too, I'm afraid to hold your money. Why should I be responsible for your money. So, I didn't take it. So, she walked away with the money. It took a few weeks. My brother took the baby for a walk, and they attacked him. A whole bunch of Polaks attacked him, they tried to get the baby away from him. And there was one fellow, a strong fellow, he saw the whole thing, fighting there, so he was stronger, and he took the baby from my brother's arms and he run away with the baby home. So, she didn't have the baby. So, it come to a court. She sued us, she sued us for the baby, because the baby was legally adopted, she was hers. And to the court, the judge tell us how it was, and he siad, Well, what you want? You sold the baby, you sold the baby. The baby's hers now. So, she didn't have a choice. The baby was so homesick for her mother, not the real mother, for the - that she took sick and died. (9:26:51:26) She lost the baby anyway, this way she lost the baby. (pause)

So, we come to Waldenburg, she got pregnant and she got another baby, Genya. She got another baby and it was nice, my brother made a little money, but it was dangerous. There

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was a lot of Russian people, there was a lot of Polaks, there was all the time killing, one killed here, one killed there - and my brother said, It's no, no - it's danger living here. They gonna attack us and kill us too, eventually. So, what we do now? He said, we have to find a way out. So there was people there, they know the border to Czechoslovakia, they took people through from Germany to Czechoslovakia. So, he paid a lot of money with that man to take us to the border to Czechoslovakia. (9:28:16:29) In the middle of the night, we got out the house, we left everything in the house, what I took, just the carriage for Willy, he was a baby, a little baby, he was in the carriage, and we took the baby to a place where we have to travel to Czechoslovakia. We left the carriage in the middle of the street, and then in the middle of the night, he took us to the border. We travel at night through the woods, all night. We walking the night, and mom was walking, she was a little baby, Willy couldn't because I have to carry him. He was very little, maybe two years old. I don't know, he was two years, maybe a year and a half. He was lying in my arms with the eyes open, didn't say nothing. (laughs) All night, till daylight, we finally got to Czechoslovakia. We find out where they have the concentration camp for the Jewish people, we got there, and there was American joined, they took us in, they took care of us, they got us food, they give us clothing -

J: It's not the concentration camp -

G: Well, no, what it was, they concentrate the people, whoever come, there was a camp they get all together, (9:29:55:08) -

J: The DP camp.

G: The DP? I don't know what it is, but they wait till all Jewish people come and take the people out from

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Czechoslovakia to Germany again. So we were maybe about two hundred, three hundred people, Jewish people, they took us out, they took us to restaurant, they feed us, and we walked miles and miles, we traveled till we got to Ulm, Germany. We got to Ulm, and the same thing, they have a camp there were all the Jewish people get there to that camp, and they got also, they give us rooms, the Germans had to go out, and we go in. And we stay in Ulm, about about maybe two years.

(9:31:07:03)

So we decided to travel away to Israel.

J: What was it like in Ulm?

G: It was a German town, was nice. And, um, Willy was already about two years old, and I bought him a tricycle, his was riding that all - where he was riding he used to put on my husband's shoes, riding on that tricycle. And he had a "hoolinoga", that was a two wheeler, then you stand up on the two wheelers and you go! He was running like crazy, I was afraid he'd get hit by a car. (laughs)

And finally, my husband took sick and I have to take him to the hospital, he couldn't walk on his legs, he couldn't stand up. He was in the hospital about two, three weeks. And finally, he come out. Then Willy took sick, with chicken pox, what - he got some kind of sick, I have to take him to the hospital. Was such a big problem to take him to the hospital, he wouldn't let me go! He hold on to me - the nurse pulled him from me. He was crying, I thought I'd die! I'd die! I couldn't stand it, they took him away from me. He was lying in the hospital maybe two, three weeks. And I used to - they have a streetcar, and I used to ride in the streetcar every day to see him, but I couldn't see him they just open up the door, and I saw him took out his head with the long hair and looked to me, and didn't say nothing.

J: (laughs) Oh.

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G: I used to bring him food. And, everything because the hospital they didn't have so much, so I used to have to bring him food. And, finally he gets well and I took him home. (9:33:25:27) And now what we do now, he wasn't circumcised. It's terrible! (laughs) My husband says, leave it alone! I said, No!

J: (laughs)

G: So, finally, come, and he looked at him, he said he's gonna arrange a circumsize and a medical office, is going to be a nurse and is going to be a doctor. And he was speaking Polish, he said "Ne cha! Ne cha!" Ne cha means "not necessary", no, no.

J: Willy was saying this?

G: Huh?

J: Willy said this?

G: Willy said, "Ne cha, ne cha, not necessary!" And he slapped that doctor in the face, he just opened up the eyes! (laughs) He slapped him in the face! So finally, they took him in to the room and he took a second and he was finished and my husband almost killed me, almost killed me.

J: (laughs)

G: (laughs) He didn't want to, he said "It's not necessary! It's not necessary! I don't want it! I don't want it!" Slapped the doctor in the face because he gave him an injection to calm him down. (9:34:51:01) No, he was about two years, two and a half years old. And from over there, we decided to go over to Israel, because I had two brothers

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already there, and my sister in law. And we had the visa, everything, we had just to go, I packed everything, I go. Because my husband wanted to go to the United States. He had Kurt here, he had Rose here, and finally they find out that we are alive, they correspond with him, they said they want us in the United States, and I visualized the United States, big buildings without trees, without greens, I said, I don't want that. I'm used to trees, and - I'm born on a farm. So, I was sick. When I got out from Borislav, when I got free, when Willy was born, I was very sick. Because I went to the doctor, and the doctor says I have blisters on my lungs. And if you go close to your baby cover your mouth. So, my husband said I probably have TB. So, they sent me, the Jewish (unclear) sent me to the German camp what they have for the TB people. There was, I was all day in the woods lying down in the winter. That was in the winter! They covered me in blankets, you couldn't see, just the mouth and the nose was, the rest was everything cover. And I had to lie down all night, all day in that woods. (9:37:18:05) And then, I was about four weeks there, and before I went there, I said, what I do with the baby. And there was near us a German woman, and she said she will take the baby, and take care of the baby. She took the crib, she took the carriage, she took the baby and she took care of him. And I was about four weeks in that Gebastov, and then the doctor examined me, he said, You're all right now. You're going home. If you not going home you get sick here because the whole camp was all TB. You go home, you're all right. So I come home. I took the baby back, Willy - and he didn't want to go to me. I take him and he turn his back. I cry -

J: Oh.

G: I said, (laughs) he doesn't know me. He knows that German woman! He got used to me. And then, from Ulm, (unclear) then we went, we had to go to Israel. My husband said, Look,

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people paying - he got a Visa from Kurt and Rose to come to the United States. I said, I'm not going. He said, Look, do me a favor. You have TB. And you a sick woman. They won't let you in. They won't let you into the United States. Let me know that I wouldn't let it, and then we go to Israel. (camera shifts to 3/4) (9:39:14:19) So, when I went to the doctor, I took off my clothes, he tried, he examined me, turned me that way, turned me that way, you're all right. Go! So, he said, Why shouldn't we try to go the United States? If we don't like it there, we always can travel from the United States to Israel. So, we went to United States. We come to United States, I don't know a word English, from yes or no. They rent an apartment for me, in Washington. Before we come to Washington, when we come to Braimen (sic) they let us out and we come to United States. We come to Braimen, I saw that ocean, (laughs) I got dark in my eyes, I never see a ocean in my life.

What I see is trees. So, we got on a ship, and I was so afraid on that ship. We were travel for about twelve days on the ship, there was a military ship. Was a Hanselman ship, they called it. Hanselman ship. I got sick on the ship. And Willy got sick on the ship. Carol got sick on the ship. (laughs) Ah, I don't want nothing! I don't want to live! I want to die! People crying, they want to die. They laying on the deck, crying. Terrible! Finally, Carol, mom, was a little girl. For the first time she saw a colored man. There was colored people on the ship. And she got attached to a colored man and she was follow him everywhere. He took pictures from her, and I don't know where the pictures - he sent the pictures to her.

J: I think she has them.

G: She has them? (9:41:39:15) They took pictures on the ship from me, and Willy. So, finally, we come to Washington, to New York. Got off the ship. And took a train, and there

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was ten dollars in the pocket. And go to Washington because Kurt had to pick us up from the train station. We sent them a telegram with that time, because they know we don't know where to go, and what - (laughs) not a word English. So, we come, we come to Washington to the train station, nobody's there to pick us up. In the meantime, my baby got sick. Willy go so sick, he got the measles. And he got high temperature. Poor baby couldn't sit up, and couldn't stand up, I had to hold him next to me. And finally, my husband find a man, that he was talking a few words Yiddish. He told him, he told him he's lost he don't know what to do. So, he said, you have an address from your nephew. He said, yes. So he took him to a cab and he said, show the cab the address and he will take you there. So he did, and I with the sick baby, and with Carol, and thirsty and hungry and it was terrible hot. This is the worst thing, this is the end of it. So, finally in couple hours they came to pick us up. And we have to take a doctor. And Willy had long hair, and doctor ask him, What is it? A boy or a girl? (laughs) He had such a beautiful long, curly hair. So, Kurt was angry. He said, people don't wear long hair here. In Germany, the kids wear long hair. So they cut it off.

(9:44:17:29) So, finally, little by little I come to Washington. I said to my husband, I go looking for a job. They give him a job, in a building, took care of the boards, and whatever, he couldn't understand. It was - it was trouble. So, they give him I think a fifty dollars a week or whatever. But, in a way, I was happy because I could walk to the store, and I could shop in the store, and there was a Jewish store, he was talking Jewish. And whatever I didn't know I asked him in Jewish and he answered me. And I told my husband, and I said I'm going to look for a job, and do something, because we went to Washington, we didn't have nothing in that apartment. People donated things for us. A crib for Mike - for Willy. And they donated, one donated a table, one donated a bed, dishes and everything. We didn't

have nothing. So, I told my husband, I'm going to get a job. We can't live on that like that. So, he said, look, you don't speak English. They have here people what they work, they have experience, they know everything. They not going hire you for a job. I said, Well, let me try. He said, Please don't try. Don't try. One time, he went with the kids downtown. (9:46:02:24) And I said, I'm going to ask Sonny. Sonny was the boss from the grocery store where I was shopping. So, I come to the store and I ask him, where is your mother. Because the mother was talking Jewish and she was a very nice woman. And she met me. He said, what you need my mother. And I told him, I said, We are very poor and we are hungry, and we need to survive, we need money and I need a job. He said, You need a job? I said, yes I need a job and I want a job. He said, what can you do? I said, I can do everything. Whatever you ask me to do I will do. I was lying a little - I said, we have a store, and I know a little bit about stores, and I will do everything. He said, do you have a telephone. Said I, yes, I have a telephone. He said, OK, give me your telephone number and I call you if I need you. If I need you I call you. So, I was happy. (laughs) My husband come home and I was happy, I said, I have a job! He said, How you have a job? I told him (laughs) he said, he laughed, well, that's what they do, he wants to get rid of you, give me your telephone number, I let you know, if I need you I call you. That's the way they do here. I said, Well (laughs) nothing I can do. So, the kids, the kids they picked them up to school, both of them. The taxi came every morning, picked up the kids. There was a Hebrew academy. I sent both kids to the Hebrew academy. Because Mom was talking a little Hebrew because I sent her in Germany to a Hebrew school. She was understand a little Hebrew so I sent her to the Hebrew academy. They picked them up and bringed them back. So the kids went to school, my husband went to work, I was alone in the house. The telephone rings, I answered. He said, can you come down? I said, Yes! I be

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right there! I come to the store, he put me in a white coat, and he said, go to the meat department and the girls will teach you how to wrap meat. Fine. He introduced me to the workers, to the girls there they were working. There were three girls and two butchers. And they told them that I don't speak English, and let them show me how to do it. So, it's a not a big deal, you take the package and a piece of cellophane and with a hot iron and you just seal it. And, its nothing to it. A kid can do it. And I sort of like that kind of work. And I do it so fast, in a few minutes everything was done. And the girls look at each other, they didn't have nothing to do. I ate up everything. (laughs) So, for a few weeks, he fired one girl. We work with two, and I am the third one. So, one time, the butchers put some meat on the table to weigh the meat. And I ask him, I'm going to weigh it, how much? He told me how much, and I started weighing. Sonny comes in and he - he got like that (covers face with hands). He said, What you doing? I said, I'm weighing the meat. He said, You cannot do that! I said, Why not? How you know the scale? How can you weigh the meat? I said, what's the big deal to weigh a piece of meat? He tried to take every piece of meat and re-weigh it, he said its right!

J: (laughs)

G: Its right! He said, look, I have girls to teach the scale, they, I have to teach them months till they get the scale to weigh the meat. Because its a very important job to weight the meat. Its got to be exactly, with the ounce. I weighed it. Then finally, he tried another girl, and I was just with one girl. I was maybe a year or two, I start picking up a little English, a little from the children. They was, they was start speaking English right away in school. (9:51:01:13) And I start talking a little, a few words. But from the beginning, I did everything, I didn't let it go.

12 A interview (part 1)

A woman comes in with a piece of round steak to tenderize, and I grind it up. She wants it grind up, I tenderize. (laughs)

J: (laughs)

G: I didn't - I do work and I didn't ask questions. So, finally, I start speaking a little English. There was a woman, she was a manager in the delicatessen, she had to go for a vacation. Sonny said, Etta, you have to take over her job. I said, Sonny, I don't know, I don't know - He said, she will show you, she will stay with you a week. She give you all the telephone numbers from the companies and she give you all instructions how and everything, she did and she went for her vacation. I start working. The first order what I did, is a bricks. Bricks company. (laughs) Never forget that. When I put in the first order. He put in - when he took the order from me, he put a tape recorder and took that order on a tape recorder the way I was talking from the beginning with a very high accent - (laughs) he liked the way I talked. So, little by little, he made me manager from the delicatessen. I had to order delicatessen, I had to slice the delicatessen, I had to put prices on the delicatessen. I have to figure out how much percentages, and everything and everything. I made him a lot of money. He was very satisfied, very satisfied. (laughs) And that apartment, where I was living. Cross the street there was a little girl, she was maybe eight years old. She used to come to the house, and she used to teach me English. She used to say to me, you see, this is a table. You see, this is a chair. She - little by little by little, she teached me English. And she was, she liked to talk to me because she said I talk funny. (laughs) Oh, God. I don't know how I can live, with all that I went through. (blows nose)

(9:53:54:29)

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Well, I think everything is just a miracle. Because, I had a sick mother. She was sick for seven years. She had diabetes and she was blind. From the diabetes she took blind. I took care of that mother like somebody takes care of a child. The neighbors saw how I take care of her. I wouldn't leave her for a moment, except my father was in the house or my brother, I wouldn't leave her for a moment because she was blind and she'd get hurt. I watched her so much and I loved her very much. And she was so good, and at that time in Poland there was a lot of beggars. There was a day for beggars, what they come one after other, they open the door you have to get them a penny or two, and my mother was so good she used to cook for the beggars. She used to go to the butcher store and pick up some pieces meat and cook for the beggars. Every beggar who come in didn't go out hungry. And when she took blind she couldn't do it. But one time a beggar come in and she wants to give him a cup of coffee. And there was a little water on the stove and she thought its coffee, and she poured the water on. She didn't know. She want to help the beggar, she want to do. And, my husband used to say, I don't know, God will pay you for that, what you do for your mother, because I never did go out, I never go to a movie. I never, I just worked hard. I was a seamstress, I had to help to make money a little. And to take care of a sick mother. And to wash clothes, and to clean the house. And my brother said, No, you can't do that all alone. You have enough at the machine all day. So we took a girl, a maid to help to take care of mom, and to wash clothes and cook and everything, there was a little help. She was to the very end till the Germans come in, was a very nice girl. (9:56:38:17:)

(CAMERA BREAKS)

14 A Interview

12 A interview continues on 14 A (same day)

(14:00:03:15)

G: It is took so many years all to get through that whole thing. Many, many years. (pause - blows nose)

J: Ah.

G: (pause) (J kisses G on the head - audible.)

G: (14:01:02:07) I hope it never happen again, to any kind of people - any kind. Never again, never again. (pause) I used to do to my mother - see I had hands like yours. My mother's hand was like that and I used to see it - see? (touches own arm) The skin doesn't stick to the meat. Look. See - the skin stays away from the meat.

J: (laughs)

G: (low) That's what you get the wrinkles. That's the wrinkles. (pause) That's what you get, old. Old, old skin. (pause) I used to have such a beautiful hands. (car sounds) They thick, they crooked. I used to have beautiful nails. I used to manicure the nails. And I used to have that nails, every nail white. I used to have such a beautiful hands, look what's happened to me. You get to mine age you get the same thing.

J: (laughs)

G: (14:03:49:25) (looks at watch)

J: It's eleven-twenty. Want to take a break?

G: I'm all right. (pause)

J: Can I ask you a question?

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G: Yeah.

J: Why - what happened to Granddaddy after the war? What happened to his spirit? Were you the same after the war with him? Was he a different man after the war?

G: Yeah, well if he would be all right, he took sick, he was sick. He couldn't stand it. He couldn't stand it he lost the whole family. He had a sister with five kids, he had that brother in Vienna with, two brothers in Vienna with kids. He lost everything. He lost it, he said, Why am I alive? Why am alive? He never stopped crying, he never stopped crying, and he took sick, he got a bad heart and he had couple times heart attacks. Any time you sit to the table to eat dinner, he cry. Why didn't my mother had a little soup? Why she had to get killed? Why? And why, and why, and always: why I am living and why they are died. He was a very sensitive, very sensitive, and he took that very seriously, and it attacked his heart.

J: (14:06:05:02) And you didn't think of it that way?

G: I was thinking all the time, I had sleepless nights, but I'm stronger than he was. (pause) A lot of people, a lot of survivors couldn't take it. And they died. They took sick and died, right after the war. They got out, free. And they didn't have any food, and after they free, they have a little to eat and they start eating, and they died. A lot of people got TB, a lot of people, they killed themselves. A lot of people can't take that whole crap. A lot of people can't take it. Like I told, that doctor he - what he was, he was with the born with Carol. [delivered Carol] He had five daughters. He couldn't take it. He killed himself, he killed his daughters, he killed his wife. He couldn't take it. And it was thousands and thousands of people like that! You know there was a man here, in this hotel, in the Fairfax. I knowed him very well. That was a very nice man, he lived in New York, and he come every season to Fairfax for six months. He was living in that room. He used to like me. He used to call me "meidelah".

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J: Um-hmm.

G: And last year, yeah, last year, after the season, he went home and everything he left in the house, he come and take it because I'm not going to leave in the room. And he left, I said goodbye to him. And that was it, the last time I saw him. He went home to New York, he got glaucoma in his eyes and he got blind. And he also have heart disease, he got heart trouble. He got blind, when he got blind, he couldn't take it no more. He took a rope, and he hung himself. So, you see. A lot of people can't take misery. Apparently, I was stronger than my husband. My husband couldn't survive, what he, any time you sit to the table: Why my family didn't have? Why, why should they die? Why should they die? Why should I live? Little by little, his heart got bad and - he gone. (14:09:49:23) (pause)

Everything is for people. Even here in the United States is all kind of hates, and people jealous of each other, and hates, and a lot of hate. They still, here, even in the United States, I think the people hate the Jewish people. There was one time in here in Florida, restaurants, what they had a sign: Jews and Negros not allowed.

J: In Miami?

G: In Miami. (pause) Now tell me one thing (coughs): What is the difference between a Jew and a Gentile? What the difference? It's just a religion, its nothing! The human being is the same! The same! When I was young, I didn't feel that way, that this is a Christian, I shouldn't go with, this is a Gentile, or whatever, or Catholic, or whatever. They're the same. They talk like I talk, they walk like I walk. These the same people. See, Mom told me one time, when she was in college, she met a fellow in college and he was from Texas. And he was talking to her and he told her that he never saw a Jew, he don't know how a Jew look like. And she said, You're talking to one! (laughs) He said, well, you're the same, like we are! I had a very good time Texas. They such a nice people in Texas. I was there

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about three months. And they, I had dinners every time in another place, with another people. They was so good to me. They would give me anything, they want to give me. I said , no, I don't want it.

J: Why do you think Mom never talked to me about the war?

(14:13:01:18)

G: Mamala, how should I know? I don't know. She dont know much, Mamala. She was a baby. She remember some facts, she remember some facts, what happened. I'm sure she remember.

One time she, I was home, and the baby was laying in the bed. She was sleeping. And the door closed. All of a sudden a knocking on the door. I open up the door. Gestapo! He look around, he ask me questions, he look at the baby, and he said, How old is the baby? And I told him. And I said, if you want to do anything to the baby, kill me first! He didn't say nothing, just walked out, walked into the kitchen. He said, that sick woman there. She has a beautiful baby! And he went to the telephone, to call the Shutzpoltiz side, to say its a baby in the camp. Aphold [German] to take her away! And the Jewish Gestapo heard that, heard him talking on the telephone about the baby. They come running to me and told me about it, so I didn't have any choice, but to take the baby and run! Where I sleep one night, I didn't sleep the other night. I was lucky that people let me in and let me sleep at night. There was a old woman, she was a (laughs) very old woman, and I got into her house, somehow, with the baby. And I come into the house, and I said, I don't know where to go. She said, you going to sleep here. She had a big bed, not a bed like that, not with mattress. She had straw in the bed, and covered like that, and that's how you sleep, on the straw. She give us the bed, and she slept on the floor. If I would know that she was still alive, I would do anything for her. She deserved it. She, she did such a things to do. Because the people was afraid to let in the Jewish people, because it wasn't allowed. They kill a lot of Gentiles because they tried to save the Jewish people, but was a lot of Gentiles what they save, they made a cellar or whatever they do, they made it to save some people. (14:16:16:00)

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My brother had, my brother married a cousin, and she had a sister - and she had two sisters and a little girl. So, whatever he had in the house, he find a fellow, a Ukrainian fellow, and he said, take everything out, take it, and take mine sister in law, and my baby and take care of them. So, he took it. He hold her maybe a month or two, he hold them and fed them, and then he come all the time to the labor camp to tell him to give messages to my brother. All of a sudden he stopped coming. He didn't come. He decided, what he have to feed Jewish people? What he need that whole thing to do? To hold Jewish people when the Germans find out, they kill him. So what he did, he took out one by one to the woods and killed, he killed, he killed every one them by himself. They laying somewhere in the woods, there, nobody knows where. After the war, my brother went there, he wasn't there, just the wife. She said, Go out! I don't know you! My husband didn't have nobody! But - the, the neighbors told us, they hear the crying, the hear the screaming. And they knew it about it, so they told him, he killed one by one by himself.

(14:18:23:06)

I think, animals has a heart. How can you take a child and kill? But, I guess they not themself. I don't believe the people are themself, that they killed. Look at that woman in North Carolina, what she killed her two children. A mother - so a mother can kill? So other people can kill too. (pause - traffic sounds) I know I wouldn't kill a fly. I can't stand it. I can't stand to kill anything, what's alive. (pause) Now what else you want to know. (14:19:45:15)

J: Um, I thnk that's - I think we can take a break.

G: OK. OK. I think mom remember when we were traveling to Chechoslovakia. She remember that. She was a big girl, already. And, the traveling and traveling and traveling, and Ulm. (blows nose, coughs) You want to go shopping or you want to go first? We have to get juice.

J: You want me to turn your thing off?

14 A Interview

[END INTERVIEW]

Next day. Interview Part II

Sound levels: better

J: (14:21:42:12) OK. You want to tell me the story about the cow, that you told this morning?

G: (laughs) She likes that story!

J: I actually like your stories about your childhood. A lot.

G: What you want to know about the story about the cow.

J: Well - just the way you told me this morning. It was great.

G: You see, ah, my father and my brother, the youngest brother, they were butchers. And if they have to butcher a cow they have to take to the slaughter house, and it costs a lot of money to pay for the slaughter. So he try to save up that money, and sometimes he didn't take to the slaughterhouse and he slaughtered - we had a little, a little, what we get in a little - a little hold that he brought two calves. And he slaughtered that two calves in that little house. So, people are nosy. And they spotted that he did that in the house. So they call the police. Next morning, the police came, and my brother and my father used to go out to the street, because farmers come in from far away, they bring meat, they bring everything - and so they look for business. In that time, my brothers was living with us. My mother died and I was living in two rooms and a kitchen. And I said to my brother, why you have to pay rent? Live with us. So, he lived with us. But we had a door to my room. I was living in one room with my father, and he had the big room with the kitchen. And he covered the door to my room with boards. The apartment was separate. So at that time, my sister in law give birth to a little boy, she was still in bed, was about three four days old. When the police come to look for that calves -

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J: Why did the police -

G: So, my brother locked the door and went to look for business. So they asked my brother to open up the door. So my brother said, he don't have the key, and my father has the key and he don't know where my father is. In the meantime, they were in my room, they were looking in my room everywhere, and they didn't find in my room nothing. So my brother comes in and he said, what I'm doing. Well, I'll see what I can do. So when my brother left I went and broke a board, the nail come off and the board come off. I went into my brother's room, I went into that little hole and took that half a calf from the hook and put in my sister in law bed, under the covers where she was laying in bed with the baby. And then I went for the rest of it. There was a calf, about a hundred and twenty pounds, at least, big calf, fat one, hanging on the hook. I took that calf like that, and pushed it up and took off the hook, and carried that calf to the room. And there was a window, they stood in the window and saw me carry that calf, the police. And they laughed, they said, they got her. So what I did, I pushed that calf through that board to my room. In my room I had a little cellar, down under the floor where we kept dairy, meat whatever to keep it cool. We didn't have refrigeration, nothing. So, I throwed that calf in that cellar and covered, covered with a little carpet, and put a table on that. And then my brother went and opened up the door. And they went into my brother's room, and they was looking, where she put that calf! I saw her carrying that calf! They looked in the closet, they looked under the bed, they looked whatever is a place in my brother's room, they looked everything, they didn't find. So they have to go back, they went out, ashamed. They didn't find it. (laughs) Then all the people came, I should tell them how I did that. And everybody was laughing. They was stupid Polaks! (laughs) (14:27:30:07) Everybody was laughing! Sometimes I think I keep on laughing, how they were stupid.

One time, like the farmers bringing all they slaughtered in the farmers - and they bring the meat to the town to sell it. So, my

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father bought one time a lamb. The lambs are not big. So. There was in the butcher's shop, and people come to buy some meat, and they also find out and they check and there was not stamp from the slaughterhouse, so they took that lamb and they put on the table. Tell my father to get some paper to wrap up that lamb. So my father come into the house, left the butcher shop and come into the house and he's white, he said, they got me with that meat. I said, let me see. He come for paper. Before my dad got the paper and everything, I was already in the butcher shop. I come in, I walked in, they didn't know who I was. I walked into the butcher shop. And the butcher shop was one front door, and a back door. So, I see that lamb lying on the table. What I did, I take that lamb and walked out on the back door. (laughs) And run away with it until, till a couple hours later I come home with the meat! It was fun! He said, what's happened? He was yelling at my father, what did you do with it! He said, you saw me walking out. I- I don't know what's happened! (laughs)

J: And you stole it.

G: Yeah, they - my father didn't know what I, my father didn't know what's happened to it. He didn't think that I took it and walked out with it. (14:29:51:19)

J: (laughs)

G: I was strong, I could do anything. So, what else you want me to tell you?

J: Well, how about, when the war ended, and you came on the boat, start talking about the boat, and just about America, about what it's like to be here. What you think about it. About the family, what it was like to leave your life there -

G: It was terrible.

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J: It was terrible -

G: I tell you one thing was very, very uncomfortable. And I didn't like it. And I didn't feel good, because I'm used to farmers. I was born on a farm. With trees, with fruit. We had trees, I want to eat cherries, I climb up the tree. And have cherries, have pears, have apples, have everything. And I come over here, I couldn't get used to, to that food. I couldn't eat. We used to make own butter, own cheese, and it taste delicious. Chicken taste different, everything taste different. It took me years to get used to that kind of living in America. And, and then without a language, till I caught up a little, that English. What, I can't get along with that English. It was terrible, I rather be back in Poland. (laughs) (14:31:31:04) Yeah, with the farmers. And to go dig potatoes.

I don't - I really, I don't have any choice. I have my family, then when my husband passed away, I went to Israel. I bought a little condominium there, and I live in Israel. There also, is no life there, nothing. The Arabs, killing. And, attacking, bombs. One time on Friday I was there, I heard such a bomb. I said, Uh-Oh, something happened. I turn on the television, and they have bombard in Jerusalem. They killed that time about twenty four people. And I was during the six day war there. It was terrible, was terrible. Mom called me, come right back home. She was afraid that I am there during the war. I said, no. What's happened to all the people will happen to me. I'm not running away. We couldn't have lights in the house. We couldn't have anything. It was - six days. Was terrible. So, finally, everything comes to a end. But, United States, for people what they were born in it, and they like it and they used to it and they don't know any other, other life. They don't know any other. (14:33:40:20)

But. We were happy, we were a happy family. Whatever we had, a piece of bread and butter and coffee, that was enough for us, and we were happy with it. We didn't need any luxury. We didn't have any electricity. (laughs) I remember when I was a kid we didn't have electricity, we used to chop up little tiny woods and light the wood for light, to have light in the room at night. The people were

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satisfied. They were satisfied with it. And now, all this luxury, I can't stand it. It's good to have, good to have a good family. And to love each other, its more important than luxury, believe me. I would be satisfied, satisfied with a piece of bread and butter for a whole day, nothing else. Just to be satisfied, to be with my family and to be loved. What can I tell you? That's - I grow up with it. With farmers. I used to have everything growing. Ours, vegetables and potatoes and bread. Our own. We didn't buy anything. We didn't go to buy flour, we had our flour. We had ours, everything. Used to stock in that cellar for the whole winter - onions and potatoes and carrots, beets and everything for the whole winter. And then, we buy milk and we make our own butter, our own cheese. A piece of homemade butter! Taste delicious. You never can get here any butter. The butter doesn't taste. When I come here to United States, I couldn't eat an egg! I said, what's this? It doesn't taste like a egg. It taste different! I grow up with it, and I'm still want it, and I hope I still - I wont be no more farmer. (laughs) Oh, Jessica.

(14:36:30:08) What can I tell you. What else, Jessica want to know from my life. (laughs) I was young, I was happy, I was lovely, and lively, and jumping and running and catching fish. And go to the woods and pick mushrooms, and pick berries. We had everything. Go every day to the woods for mushroom and berries. You could live on it, on berries and mushrooms. We had one time, we had a lot of poison mushrooms, a lot of people got poisoned, what they not know which mushroom were good.

What I had, when I was with mom and dad in Washington, when Dad was in the Army. I went into the garden, I see, Oh! Horseradish is growing. I dig it up, its a horseradish. I come into the room, I told Carol, I said, Look a horseradish is growing in the back yard. She said, well, fine, make horseradish. I made horseradish took beets, and I grate it up the horseradish, and made it with the beets, and put some sugar and vinegar. And I just took a little, maybe a little on the tip of the knife, just to taste the horseradish. And I taste it - I didn't swallow it. Doesn't taste like horseradish, because horseradish is sharp. A good thing I didn't give it to Michael to taste it. I said, well, when George come back from the hospital I give it to

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him to taste it, let him say what's wrong with the horseradish. Till he come back from the hospital I almost died. When I walked away from that fridgedaire when I taste that horseradish, I went blue. I was choking, I couldn't talk. My daughter saw me, she said, What's happened? I said, I dln't know, I'm choking. She said, You are blue! And she called George, and George come right home, and he start giving me a lot of milk. He was with me all night, said its poison. (laughs) I ate poison. He throw out the horseradish, he throw out the dishes, he throw out everything what I used for that horseradish. (laughs) (14:39:58:07) That's, that's I had the wrong horseradish. Mom told everybody about the horseradish. (laughs) Almost died. I was sick all night. And George kept giving me milk to drink, and I keep giving back, giving back until finally, I feel better. When I walked away from the Fridgedair, Mom saw me, she said, you are blue! I said, I'm choking! We had also, we had everything.

(CAMERA JUMPS)

(14:40:53:24)

J: You don't feel at home here, in this country? Or -

G: Well, I am a little used to it, but I still - the country grow in, in me. It's hard to forget it, that kind of life I had there. I grow up there, I was born there. Was living with it. And then, we come to a different life, a change of life, and change everything. The country - I used to, we had snow in the winter. And I loved it. We used to have about a meter snow, sometimeswe get up in themorning and the window is covered with snow, and I loved that, I used to take a sled and go sledding. Falling in the snow, come home with two red cheeks! Oh, it was fun. I loved it, I loved it. I wished I can go back, fifty, sixty years back. (14:42:11:09)

And we, when I come to Borislav, I met my husband. He was, he was a big fellow, and I was a little kid. And he used to bead me up, he used to pinch me. To lie down on his knee, and potch me, and I used to run home and cry. My mom used to go and said, What you want from the kid? What you want from her?

J: So, what do you think about -

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G: Give me a tissue, you have.

J: What was mom like as a teenager, when you were in America, when you first got there. What was it like with mama, how was she after the war?

G: (14:43:05:09) Well, we come here to the states. They, she and Willy didn't talk English.

J: (reaches over to wipe her eye) OK.

G: They didn't speak English. I sent them to the Hebrew Academy. So they taught them the language. They teach them Hebrew and everything. So, Carol got out, she graduate from High School, from the Hebrew Academy, and she start college. She wants to go live in a dormitory. And my husband said, How can a girl go away from home? She said, she have to ride an hour to college and an hour back, she wouldn't have time to study. So, he had to admit it, he didn't have any choice, so she went to dormitory and she lived with two friends, with Rachel, and -I forgot -

J: Greta?

G: Greta? Greta. And she was happy. She was happy. And then, she met in college, she met George. And right away he fall in love with her, and he got married. And right away she had the three children. Michael, you and Marissa. And then, the marriage fall apart.

J: What was it like when you met George? (14:44:49:21)

G: To me?

J: Yes.

G: I was looking for my daughter. I said, is my daughter blind?

J: (laughs)

G: What she sees in him? I said, I'm a little older. I wouldn't take that fellow. I wouldn't like him. I never liked him. Never liked him. But she said she loves him. What could a mother do? If she loves him, so. I never interfere for anything to her. Whatever she want, its OK with me.

J: You never said anything to her about Dad?

G: No. No.

J: Why?

G: No, I never said anything. I didn't want to, to that she would be feel bad about it that I don't like him. I didn't say anything, I didn't say a word.

J: What did your husband think about him?

G: My husband was thinking that he is an idiot. That's what my husband's thinking was. He said, he's an idiot and his father's an idiot. George's father, my husband took George's father for an idiot and he took George for an idiot too.

J: And neither one of you said anything to Mom about this?

G: No. No. No. She loved him, why should I interfere. No. Didn't say a word. But, my husband didn't like him, and I didn't like him. He find out that he's a stupid man. That he is an idiot. My husband was a very intelligent man, he could judge people. And you know what he called George?

J: No.

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I'm going to apply for unemployment. I didn't have a job, I didn't work and I need the money. My husband said, you not going to get any unemployment, because you quit it. I fyou would get fired, you get it. I said, I'm going to try it, I'm still unemployed. I applied for unemployemtne an dl got it, I got it maybe for three months. Three months, I don't remember. Three weeks, and every week a check, and by the forth check they stopped the payment, because my boss, who I was working in the grocery store he said, he refused to pay. He pay a part. He say, I didn't fire her. He say, if he come now I give her a job back. So, they stopped paying. In the meantime, my husband took sick and died. And there was a court. There was a court, they call me to a court and I was sitting shiva, couldn't go to the court. And Carol called them up, that - told them I cannot come to the court beacuse I'm sitting shiva. So, they made another time and I went another time to Hackensack to the court. I had to go to Washington to the court, but they put up a tape recorder, and take everything on the tape recorder, all the questions and all the answers that was on the tape recorder and they send the tape recorder to court, and I won. I won the rest of them. They pay me for thirty three, thirty three weeks I think. They pay unemployment. (14:51:33:19)

J: What was it like, living in the house with Dad and Mom?

G: There was an old house, and I didn't like it. And she paid for that old house three hundred dollars a month. And I told her, why don't you buy a house and pay three hundred dollars, and then with the time, your house be yours. Be pay off. She said, to buy a house I have to have a down payment. At least bout ten thousand dollars. And then, when my husband died, I had a few thousand dollars left, that my husband left me, and I said look, I don't need the money, and I give it to you, and buy a house. So, I give her the ten thousand dollars, and they went to look for a house. They find a house, in Teaneck that house, you remember that house. And it was thirty-three thousand dollars, that house. But, it was very damaged that house, and they hired a man to fix up the house. They moved into the house, and I was living in an apartment alone. Mom said, why you

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have to stay in your apartment, alone. I have a big house, take any room in the house, its yours and you can live with us. I said, as much I love you, I like to be alone, I like to go to sleep when I want it to, I like to eat when I want it to. I couldn't stay with nobody. So, I said, if you can give me a little of that land, there was a big back yard. I said, give me a little of that yard and I will build an addition. You remember, the addition? I build in that addition, was another thirteen thousand dollars, cost me. I was happy, I had a separate entrance, I had a door to her house. Was nice, I was happy. Till, what, George got moved to St. Louis. Had to sell the house. So, Mom said, if we sell the house, I give you the money back.

When we moved to St. Louis, we had to sell the house and buy a house there. They bought a house on a mortgage. So, they transfered the mortgage to St. Louis, they bought a big old house in St. Louis. So, I had the third floor, remember?

J: I can't believe they put you on the third floor. (14:54:53:07) You had to walk up and down all those stairs all the time.

G: I walked the stairs thirty times, up and down! I was running the stairs! Mom used to watch me. She said, mom, I don't know where you get your energy. (laughs)

J: (laughs)

G: She tell, one time, she was working in the hospital that time, she tell a doctor bout mom, how she runs the stairs, about thirty, thirty-five times a day up and down. He said, I would like to examine mom's legs. She come home, she said, Mom, would you do it? Would you go to the doctor to examine your legs? I said, I go if he pay me for a visit.

J: (laughs)

G: (laughs) Was, I loved it, I just come up a minute, oh, I forgot something in the kitchen, run down, run back up. Till they have to

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sell - till the marriage fall apart, she have to sell the house. He get, he get forty per cent, she got sixty per cent for the house. I said, well, where's my percentage? (laughs) I had ten, ten thousand, no twenty three thousand dollars in that house, in St. Louis. She said, Oy, Mom, I forgot it, I forgot it that you put in so much money in that house. So she called the lawyer, and somehow they made some kind of agreement, and George said he give me twenty - twelve thousand dollars. Twelve thousand dollars give me back. Because I didn't pay electricity, I didn't pay the water, I didn't pay taxes, I didn't pay anything, so. When I come to St. Louis, I call George, and I said, they were divorced already, I called him and I said, look George. I have in that house, twenty three thousand dollars. I don't want the money back. I want, I want to give you seven thousand dollars, make thirty thousand dollars, and I want to give every child, every grandchild ten thousand dollars. That's for your children. I want it for them, I don't want a penny from that money. He start yelling at me, I support my children. I give everything to my children, you don't have to give my children - I said, to hell with you. So, it decided, twelve thousand dollars. So I got the twelve thousand dollars, right away, I sent the check to mom. She bought that condominium in Columbia.

(14:58:00:10)

(pause) I did whatever I could for my children. I would give them, I would give my life for my children. My children is my life. And I just pray and thank God for my children, my children - that's all what I have, and that's all what I need, nothing else. That's my life, a miserable life. (laughs)

J: No.

G: Oh, yeah, I had a miserable life. I , I lost a husband. When you buy something, a valuable thing, and it's taken away from you, and it's so precious to you. And somebody take it away. No, you can not replace it no more. Never. (pause) And I wanted to be so much educated, and I want to go to school, and I want to - to be a mensch, but it was impossible. I couldn't afford to buy a notebook, or a book or anything. So poor, that life. But, you keep on living and you

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satisfied. A lot of people don't know how to write their name. Well, I - I made six classes. Six classes -that's mine education. Can write my name, nothing else. Now I can't see even to write my name. I write in the dark, I write it by heart. I look at here, I can't see my name, because I don't see. That's my sight. Well, I'm grateful to God that I can see, I can see people, I can see everything, but to read, not a word. So, I have to be, I have to face that. I have to be satisfied with that. And I thank God for that. So, I can hear the television, I hear the news, and I can see the television. It's like my father used to say, My child, if you go in the street and you fell, you break a leg, you have to thank God that you didn't break both legs. Did you understand what that means? Whatever happens you have to be thankful and satisfied. Because it could be worse. You always look outside what's going on. (15:01:35:13)

Now you can tell me something.

J: What?

G: (laughs) I don't know, how you feel about everything.

J: How I feel about everything, about your life?

G: Yeah. How you feel about it.

J: Well, I'm sad.

G: Hmm?

J: Makes me sad.

G: Sad? Nothing to be sad.

J: I'm just trying to figure out -

G: Figure out what?

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J: Where I fit into it?

G: Huh?

J: What I have to do with it. What it means to my life, your life.

G: (15:2:39:23) Oh, my life, my child, my life is almost over. It's almost over. And I think for no futures. For me, is no future no more. I can live another year or two or month or week or - Who knows? Who knows what can happen tomorrow? Nobody is secured, and nobody knows when can happen. (pause) So, I have my funeral arranged all by myself, all paid up. (laughs) When I die, I go to New Jersey, and be buried there. And that's the end of my life. Maybe sometimes I will be reborn.

J: Reborn?

G: (laughs) Think so? Think so I could be?

J: What would you like to be reborn as?

G: Then I would know how to live. (laughs) Well. Then, when I come here, I couldn't get mine education. And when Carol was born, and Willy, I said, I give them the best education there is. If it cost my life. I know education is very important, so. Carol want to go to college when she finish high school. She want to go to college. He said, What a girl need college? She has enough education, high school. That's enough for a girl. She gets married, she be a house wife. She will have children. I said, No. I said, let her go as far as she wants to go. And they were so good. She wants to learn. As much she learn, it wasn't enough for her. She, she so smart. She made a course in paralegal, she made a, whatever she could. And Willy too. Willy used to be very crazy, was twenty seven years in the school benches. (laughs) Well, finally he graduate from PhD. And he stopped. That's enough. But, she want to learn, she could. (pause) (15:06:01:07)

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Carol was a good kid, and Willy was a good kid. One time, Willy when we were living in Washington, Willy was in High School, there was New Years Eve. Willy, he didn't talk too much. He didn't say anything. He was so quiet. He didn't tell me anything. It was New Years, he was invited to a party. He went to that New Year's party, he didn't tell me that he was going to a New Year's party. We were waiting. It's eight o'clock, it's nine o'clock. Willy is not home. It's ten o'clock, it's twelve o'clock, we can't go to sleep. Willy's not home. I stood in one side window, my husband stood in the other side window, watching outside, maybe Willy will come. Where we going to look? What we doing? We nearly got crazy. Finally, it started daylight, and we still in the window. It's daylight, we still in the window, watching for Willy. Finally, he comes. It was daylight, about seven o'clock in the morning. He said, What you doing up? I give him hell -

J: (laughs)

G: I said, you could call, and tell us. He just didn't know that we were waiting for him. He just was free! Was terrible upset about it. And then he decided to move out from the house, because he was tied up: Where you going, what you doing, and he didn't like that. He didn't like it. He wants to be free to go where he wants to go and to do what he wants to do. And my husband was very sensitive. If he goes, where you going, give me the telephone number, give me the address. He wants to know everything, where he is. And Willy didn't like that, so he moved out the house. He took an apartment with a friend. He used to come home once or twice a week. One time he comes with a girlfriend. I accept her very nicely, I fixed her nicely, everything was nice. A good looking girl, OK. Then he told me that her father is Jewish but her mother not Jewish. But in Jewish religion, is if the mother is Jewish so the children are Jewish. If the mother is not Jewish, then the children not Jewish. So, I wanted Willy to marry a pure Jewish girl. And I said, no. I don't want her. Don't bring her in the house. I don't want her. So, he didn't bring her no more in the house. But a little later, maybe a few months later,

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my son comes home. He said, mom you have a little time for me? (laughs) So quietly! I said, sure I have all the time. I said uh-oh, something comes up, something comes up. He said to me, Mom, I want to marry Mary, and I want your blessing. And if you don't give me your blessing I will marry her anyway. So, I talked to my husband and he said to me, Look, my child, if you don't give to him your blessing, he will marry her anyway. You lose your son. Or, you don't give him the blessing you ruin his life. Because he's in love with her. You can ruin his life forever. So, I didn't have no choice, I agreed. So, they got married, they went to Penn State to study there. Willy graduate earlier than she, Willy got a job in Washington. And she was living still in college there in Penn state. And Carol said, see, he is in Washington and she is there, the marriage will fall apart, like she knew it. Sure enough when she graduate she move back, they start living together. The marriage is no good. So, he comes home, one time: Mom, I'm going to get a divorce. I said, Oh, Mine God, Willy what are you talking about. After the whole love, what you loved her so much, I went through with the whole thing, and now you going to divorce her? He said, Mom, people change. Were not in love no more. (laughs) I couldn't understand that. We not in love no more. People change! So, he divorced Mary, went to Switzerland. Find that woman who he married, Sonya, that a Jewish girl. That Sonya had a little boy from a first marriage. He adopted that little boy and they were living together. I come one time to Switzerland, stay ther a few weeks with them. I see, she don't care too much about Willy. She don't cook, she dont go out. She just feed the boy and feed herself, and dont feed him. She don't care for him. So, when I was there, I cooked, and Michael was with us, and we were together, and she was, somehow, she didn't like too much. One time, she left the boy with Willy, she went a week or two with another fellow. He said, that's it, that's the end of it. I'm going to divorce. He divorced her too. (laughs) So, he stay in Switzerland. And he met Jacqueline. Now, Jacqueline is a nice girl. He said, I want to marry her. I said, I don't care who you marry. You marry a Gypsy! Just marry and have a good life, and be happy! I don't care who you marry. So, he marry a Gentile girl and she is wonderful to

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him, and I am happy. If she like my son, if she cares for my son, that's all it means to me. And so you met them tomorrow. They have a little girl named Saskia. She is two years old. That's Willy.
(15:14:35:27)

So I think that's enough for today. Except you want to say anything?

J: Well, I want to thank you. Thank you.

G: Sure. Nothing else to say. That's all my life story.

J: You lived through a lot. What do you think about living through all that?

G: It's all in the past, my dear. It's all that I'm thinking. I feel sorry for the whole - I feel sorry that I lost the family. And I lost my husband. And I'm all alone, and it's a little uncomfortable, but people get used to that kind of life, too. It's no other choice. Whatever it is, you have to face it. That's all.

(pause) I jsut cant' figure it out. When Carol was a little girl, she was about two and a half years old. How did she know to tell me, hide me? (audible police sirens) How, I can't , I can't figure it out, how children have something on their minds. How she said to that, to that virgin Mary, Boshe, Boshe, ratou ta toushe, ratau mamousha. Please God, save my father, save my mother. How could she say that? (15:17:16:24) (pause)

And she is so good. You should be proud of your mother.

J: I am.

G: You should be very proud of your mother. That's a special person. (sirens louder in background) Very special. To me I would give her my life.

(Very loud firetruck sirens)

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G: So, what we going to do now. It's 11:30 -

J: Want to take a break?

END INTERVIEW

*Outing said Trocki
before gay Dan Steiss
before Wolf scene with -*