

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Michael Madejski
January 30, 2004
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Michael Madejski, conducted by Karen Michel on January 30, 2004 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

Interview with Michael Madejski
January 30, 2004

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: This is tape one, side A, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum interview on January 30th, 2004. My name is Karen Michel. I am the interviewer, and I'll have the interviewee say his own name so that it's pronounced correctly. Would you say your name for the tape?

Answer: This Mike Madejski, original my name is from Polish, Mieczyslaw, difficult to pronounce that I using the -- changed the first name for Michael, and Madejski. I was born in Warsaw, 26 of June, 1923. Finished.

Q: Thank you. [tape break] -- some things I want to ask you about that I didn't hear you talking about on the other tape, okay?

A: I see.

Q: So tell me about your family. Were you brought up in a religious family?

A: Yes, I'm religious family. I was born what I said, in Warsaw, in 1923, June of two -- 26th of June. I attend to the public school in Warsaw. I attend to gymnasium in Warsaw, and I da -- finish the full class of gymnasium in 1939, this mean I finish 16 years. This --

Q: What I -- what I want to know though, is about your family life. What -- what -
- what religious beliefs were you brought up with, political beliefs?

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A: My wa -- my put -- my -- my family was religion -- our family was religion, a- and my father was a businessman, a [indecipherable] practical businessman, he build the houses. He was architect, built the houses [indecipherable] the houses, it was his business.

Q: So wha -- were you in a pretty well-off family?

A: Middle class, but attend to the pretty good gymnasium. The story was this way, my wi -- my father didn't believe there will be -- Poland will be free very long time, and he taught me that if I will be survive, I have to s-study in the gymnasium will be the good s -- good language. It was the to -- different schools it we -- I attend to the fi -- first -- first of all he ask me which language I prefer, Russian or German, because it was [indecipherable] I preferred German. Th-The reason I attend to the private s -- g-gymnasium Mikoyrai, what was practically run by the evangeli -- og -- evangi -- no -- the li -- evangelism ch-church, you know? And most these people, the student would attend was from the German family, they speak home German. That what there is, on that I was a very poor student with the German. Every year I have a student, you know, which teach me during the vacation. Usually my parents with another parents, you know, hired the student from the Germany, and to -- during the two months we sent for vacation, two or three guys, and tal -- two or three months we talk German only. If we say between us one word Polish, the guy beat us because he thought [indecipherable] that we're

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st -- talking something against him. Th-The reason when I come home I start talk to my mother, you know, the German. And -- and this was -- was very good because this -- th-thanks to this I survive. It was many times this, during the German occupation that I survived. The first -- first day when the German arrived, you know, on the [indecipherable] place, you know, they stop me, the French gendarmerie did, was the French gendarmerie and I was so upset, you know, because W-Warsaw survived -- surrendered, it was the first or second day, and the ger -- the -- they [indecipherable] the people you know, to cover the holes, which was where -- was for the [indecipherable] the bombs. And he ca -- ask me. You have to work in [indecipherable] what for? And I -- very friendly German, I talk with him, what for? [indecipherable] and he told -- he told me [indecipherable] me this, I'm sorry for you. I was so surprised that this way. He think probably that I am German. It was the de -- the reason that many time during the action -- I remembered another time, during the German occupation, I have lot of friends, you know, what speaking for German [indecipherable] you know, and once during there was the people g -- wa -- catch the people to -- to German. We have -- we carry in the pocket, you know, the big sign, and [indecipherable] this was a sign [indecipherable] German member for the na-national [indecipherable] the national socialist [indecipherable], but I will put in the pocket and this way we -- we so like drunk, and to -- oh, you go away. It was the second time I survive, you know, like

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young people drink? Risk, make a lot of risk. How many times they dri -- they going with the, you know, with the guns during -- because we make a lot of sabotage, lot of working against th-the Nazis. We make many, many different action. The action -- the first my -- action was like in 19 -- 1940 or '41, we put the ha -- to -- German got out, the Polish got out, you put the -- no, it wasn't a bomb burst, it was like a material would make a fire, what would burn the German tr-tr-trucks and the Polish trucks. You -- it was my first action. And then later we blow that -- I was trained, and we bl-blow that train. The same time I attend to the Polytech Institute because in the m -- in the beginning the German close the old school, and later they opened the school only for the technician school, you know, they need -- they don't -- they need only the people to work, the working people that there is on that -- they opened the school for the technician and this -- this way we working with -- and I attend to this -- this Polytechnic Institute, I study mechanic engineering. It wa-was not engineering [indecipherable] engineering, they call it technical, the engineering was too high educated for the Polish people, the Polish like -- supposed to be slaves. But the same time wa -- working -- was al-always belong to the underground army, until I was trained like a miner, and my specialist was the blowing the train. I-It was during the action what we did few times, it was action, the -- one day, the same day or the same time was to blow out the train in many places, that's [indecipherable] it was this organization, and I was

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trained, you know, the blowing the train. We trained [indecipherable] the trains would bring supply for that -- wou-would bring supply to the east front, or we blow the train, which was most important, they could [indecipherable] special train would bring the German soldier from the east front to vaca -- for vacation to Germany. There was th -- it was most difficult because this train has a very strong -- very strong, you know, safety purpose. On the beginning, on the end of that train, there was a se -- se -- machines gun. Additional, this train has in the front of the machine gun, the locomotive, two cars who are loading with the -- with the sand, you know, to prevent the -- if they were blowing the -- preferred they would be blowing the empty -- the cars, not the -- not the locomotive. There was -- we find this, they will make a method that was special delayed, they will blow up not the empty train, but the train with the -- with the soldiers.

Q: Me -- Mr. Madejski, one of the things that strikes me, listening to you, and that I noticed watching the video of your previous interview --

A: Yes?

Q: -- is you talk about killing, blowing things up, with a smile on your face.

A: Smiling on my face, yes, because now I always, you know, always -- we didn't pay attention, you know, I was -- there were -- were -- risk our life. We didn't pay attention for this. In this age we didn't scare too much. We didn't scare too much.

Th-The -- the reason, you know, that we -- we fighting for the freedom, which was

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the fighting for the freedom, and that in this time, there was lot of jokes. The jokes which keep the people, you know, in good light. The jokes was, for instance, this way. They calculated the people they -- for if -- once a week fe -- if we kill -- if the Polish people kill one the German soldier, sometimes accidentally, sometimes the German soldier was drunk or something like this, was killed. For th -- anything, for this -- in this case, they s -- s -- we knew they ki-kill from the people, grab the people from the street and for one soldier they'd kill hundred Polish citizen, you know. The same di -- if somebody -- i-if somebody hide the Jewish people. This w -- immediately was -- was on the spot killed. Not -- not caught, nothing, just take a gun and kill the guy, both of them, th -- and if somebody -- if some house hide the joy -- Jewish people, the all people from the house was -- was kill -- sh-shoot on the spot. They immediately -- they bring all house for the yard and ki -- on the spot they kill all these people, they didn't fool around. You know, but we talking we calculated that in Warsaw this time was almost million people, you know, they calculate if they kill 100 people a day even, there is so many [indecipherable] we don't have to worry, it will take a long time to destroy completely, you know? It was the humor. Wi -- thi -- this humor, kill the pe -- keep the people, you know, alive. And th -- hi -- and it was, you know, the food, was no food at all because the food was only for the German. There were so many jokes about this, you know, we -- but the people smuggle -- smuggle -- they

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smuggle [indecipherable] smuggling was the same, but if they [indecipherable] the smuggler was -- sometimes was a Volksdeutsche. Volksdeutsche di -- I talking about the people which checking the -- the people who smuggle, was a different type of soldier, sometimes was a Volksdeutsche was -- Volksdeutsche was a Polish people which f-feeling they are -- they're German. They have a -- like a [indecipherable] like a half German. The 'nother -- this was the worst. The 'nother was a [indecipherable] the people which keep this -- usually most soldier which take care about the trains, you know, and the people be [indecipherable] by the train. These people rather was the not so very bad because they looking always they [indecipherable] to steal something. That mean those people smuggle in something, they always split something from these people because they send this back in spa -- back -- back to the German. This was not so very bad, but the worst was the Gestapo, because the Gestapo sometime -- this was -- this was terrible. This was kill on the spot, too.

Q: Do you remember any of the jokes about food?

A: Oh many, many, many.

Q: Can you tell a couple?

A: Man -- many food. What a -- one was very funny, foo -- joke was, they thought if -- if the -- that's what's -- the joke was this way, if the -- if the Hitler would like to win the -- England, they have to hire the Polish smuggler. But they can -- they

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can smuggle the ger -- all the German soldiers, but not alive, but like a -- like a -- like a pieces. You understand? You know th -- because they smuggle -- smuggle in the meat, like in pieces, you know, th -- they cut in the pieces. They cut under the food, they cut -- they can smuggle the whole German army to the England, but like in ma -- like in pieces, like in meat.

Q: Now, how was it that you came from, you know, a comfortable family, your father was a builder, to become a political activist?

A: It was not a political activist, was not politician. What was -- first of all, before w-was s-second, I was a -- a scout, and all scouts you know, was trained in many places. First of all, like a scout they have -- we have on the -- you know, during the vacation, we was do -- y-you know, we -- we t -- was trained in different place, and it was e-everybody from the scout has to know many, many things. Cooking, you know, repair cloth. I bet first of all I have in the night, you know, something, you know, the train, one t -- group against another and to another was most important, shooting. Everybody hears we have been going to the shoot -- to the tar -- the target, know how you call the place when you shooting the -- you know, and we was training, but everybody -- everybody has to have a [indecipherable] signed from the shooting, you know, the [indecipherable] sign has to shooting for hundred possible [indecipherable] 99. And I have -- you know, I have the shooting [indecipherable] doing very good, that there is on, you know, that we know how

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using the guns very, very well. [indecipherable] like young people, you know, shooting very well because was like a sport.

Q: But you were a teenager when you -- when you were killing, blowing up --

A: No, it was not o -- wh-when the war was start I was 16, but y-you see, when you start working, was after two years later, three years later I was 18 - 19, this year, was, you know, we was -- we d -- we -- we live in, you know, in this condition that we change our mind, because we have to start thinking about our future, about our freedom, a-about -- about our liv -- life in the future. We know if we not -- we'll be fighting, they would be -- they would kill us.

Q: What did your parents think of this?

A: The parents -- the parent thinking -- all parent thinking the same. All parent thinking the same. Father belong to some organization, and mother belong to the organization, and I have two younger brother, and everybody belong to -- to some organization.

Q: Hm. Was the -- the desire to resist slow in building, or did it -- it become immediately clear that you had to resist to live?

A: No, I do not understand here.

Q: You were saying that there was really no choice, it was fight or die.

A: Yes.

Q: Did that realization come slowly, or was it quick?

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A: Slowly, slowly. It come very, very slowly. In the beginning in the -- you know, in the beginning was not so very bad, but day after day we called, the German tight the screw. You know, it was expression, they start tightening stronger and stronger. In the beginning was not very bad, but every time was worse, and especially when they -- when they start winning, you know, the -- on the -- on the account that there was much aggressive built, much -- because they feel much, much stronger, much, much better. Only on the end of the war, but you say, talking 1943, '44 -- well, practically '44 -- this time they would be se -- a little bit weaker, a little bit weaker, because they saw that they start losing. But in the beginning those very strong and they tight the screws stronger because they feeling stronger. They win, you know, France, Belgium, Holland, you know, hey, and they feeling you know, like a kings of the world. And they treat all people like completely nothing, like completely slaves. And this the time, you know, like in the -- when they start with the ghetto, with the Jewish, it was 1940 -- 19 -- approximately 1942. This was start the worst. It was the worst time because they still -- it was the -- this was the time when they still the most strongest, you know, they -- they -- the time when they were winning in the Russia because in the beginning they win in the Russia, they got very quick to the Moscow.

Q: Now, you were -- you're not Jewish, correct?

A: No.

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Q: What were you brought up?

A: Pardon me?

Q: What religion were you brought up?

A: Catholic.

Q: S -- ver -- observant or just casually?

A: No -- no, observe -- no -- family, old family in Poland, in Poland most people was a Catholic, you know.

Q: Right.

A: Most people were grow up in Catholic, you know, was not the -- not the -- like a -- a fanatic fan -- not be fanatic, but a regular, you know, people, you know, [indecipherable] religion. They're fanatic or non-fanatical [indecipherable] 99 percent Polish were the Catholic that are non-fanatical, maybe one percent like in religion, sometimes, you know, they're fanatic, but for [indecipherable] relig -- Catholic religion not fanatic.

Q: So when you were growing up, were you aware that Jews were different from Catholics?

A: No, no, was not -- listen, in the -- before the World War second, it was not -- nobody pay attention Jewish or not Jewish, which was -- we have friends, you know, lot of friends, you know, we live together, you know, friends together. We have a -- you know, my have very good friend, I have, Jewish, we didn't pay

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attention, th-there's no -- was no -- like in the school. In the school was the [indecipherable] was religion, they taught religion class. The s -- the same -- or the same time they divided the student for different class, they want to go for the -- for the Protestant, another for the -- for the Hebrew [indecipherable] Jewish, then another go to the Catholic, at the same time, you know? And that -- then [indecipherable] the -- you know, the -- some -- some religion they going attend to the s -- to the church, you know, then -- Sunday going to this cr -- to this church, to th -- the 'nother to the 'nother church. Sa -- fra -- Saturday the Jewish people going to synagogue, but nobody pay attention, was nobody pay attention for this. Was no -- no -- nobody care what religion they are.

Q: And when did you become aware? Was it under the Germans, under the Nazis that the -- that the division became clear?

A: No. This time th-th-the German, they start clearing this. The story was this way, I tell you. Because it was a lot of Jewish people which -- it was Jewish religion, but they didn't feel th -- the -- nobody pay attention, you know, because in Polish army was a lot of [indecipherable] J-J-Je -- Jewish people, you know, y - - I have a friend here, who the doctor was a -- a ve-very high officer in the Polish army [indecipherable] two years ago he passed away, you know, he was a Jewish, and he was officer, he was a doctor in Polish army, what was many -- many

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people, many officer was in the Jewish arm -- the Jewish people was in the -- in the Polish army. Nobody pay attention, nobody care.

Q: So then, how did you perceive the creation of the ghetto, the separation of the Jews from [indecipherable]

A: Now this was very, very bad. We feel very, very upset, very bad upset. If we have a friend, we try to help these friends a different way, a different way, you know, this -- there is, I don't know if you know, in my family what I show you there, a Yad Vashem medal, this -- survived 12 people. Still these people -- still -- still up to today, practically -- probably two person alive. One for sure and another I don't know because women had the -- the last time when I talk with her was [indecipherable] years old in Jerusalem. And th -- another friend with [indecipherable] about my wife when she was sick in the -- Jerusalem, he passed away two years ago. He was professor on the University of Jerusalem. And these people were survive only thanks my family, what was 12 people, not one, but 12. Whole group of people, it was different, you know, different to a -- you know, survive.

Q: When you say you -- because of your family, what did your family do?

A: Th-They sen -- they sen -- they sen -- they send -- my family [indecipherable] help the Jewish people different way, different way, you know. The first, most important was because my father was a builder, has the houses, then ha -- he rent -

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- rent -- was rented [indecipherable] rent, you know, let -- hired the people you know in the -- in the houses, you know, they -- e-even this, they will know that for the ps -- the German find the one Jewish person in the house, the whole house was, everybody was shoot. You know the same, I have hid the friends, you know what they talking [indecipherable] like a kid from the ghetto, and they -- they keep, you know [indecipherable] after the war second, they find their parents, or if no parents, th-then the family. If not, was adopted by the -- another Jewish family.

Q: Was your father, your family, unusual? Did you feel that -- that you were doing good work and other people were not?

A: Th-This time was very difficult, you know, because we didn't have -- we didn't have -- see the people was being wrong, something wrong. We didn't pay attention, you know, therefore, these people we didn't pay attention practically was [indecipherable] everybody -- everybody was in the big trouble, you know, that everybody was very friendly one towards each other. Only the worst people what was -- this what was a Volksdeutsche which signed the list was German. But these people we know right away where they are and later the German, they move you different part they make like a -- like it was ghetto for the ger -- for the Jewish people. They start making, we call ghetto this time for the German, because they afraid living between the Polish people. They make, you know, they -- they take out -- evicted the people, the Polish people from the houses and they take the

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apartment for the -- for the German people. And was whole area in Warsaw, you know, when was only for the German. The same thing for the German was a -- the tram -- train -- you know, the -- not train, the str -- str [indecipherable] the strass -- the street trains, you know, what was the -- was especially for German only and -- and [indecipherable] which was not for the German. The first two -- the first two parts and the first -- first platform was for German only, nobody can come in there, no Polish people, because they afraid because they -- the people, the Polish people fighting different way. For instance, you know what the pickpocket, the thieves, it was a specialist. They coming and with the -- with the [indecipherable] with the -- something knife, got the guns, you know, and steal the German -- steal the German -- the -- the guns, you know, the -- the reason that nobody can for -- the Polish peoples stay on the fr-front platform, it is only for the German.

Q: Now you had said earlier that, you know, you've become fluent in German, and --

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah. Because I've heard stories, of course, for -- about Jews who could pass as Christians, and now you're saying you're a Pole who could pass as German.

A: I know. Th-The -- oh, no, y -- I don't understand what --

Q: You -- you're saying that -- that there were -- I'm saying that --

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A: Uh-huh, di -- y-yes -- no, no, this was -- this was that -- this was a Polish people which feeling that the German. They find something that was his father, grandfather, or the grandda -- somebody, you know, was comf -- arrive to the police -- Poland from the Germany. They sent the German a list, that's means they feeling -- they have a feeling they belong not to the Poland, they belong to the Herrfolke. That's meaning -- that's for the -- for the -- because they calling Herrfolkes, you know, the Herrfolke -- the -- the mens of the world, they're very important. They feeling [indecipherable] and they signed -- they were signed -- they signed [indecipherable] Volksdeutsche. That mean -- that's mean [indecipherable] are -- belong to the German.

Q: Because you were fluent in German, did you sometimes try to ride the special streetcars [indecipherable]

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yes, yes, yes, yes, yeah, we using the German, you know, German, we using this many, many times, you know? What I said -- when -- when was -- what the German doing what I telled you that they str -- closed the street and killed the people, you know, grabbed the people, load into the trucks and send to the German [indecipherable]. This time I use -- usually use the -- my German language. Now the 'nother story. For action. We need the -- for instance, we need the cars, that w-we find to go to the area with this -- where somebody park, because usually the cars have most the German. The people, Polish people cannot

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have a -- cars at all. We have -- we can have a cars, like a company, but has to be not on the gasoline but on the holzgas. That's mean they have a -- you know, built a special unit that the wood was burned and this wood car was [indecipherable]. We need the cars for action, you know [indecipherable] for -- we have to make some action that we need the car, that we go to the car. This time I using fluently my German. I come to the German guy, told, listen, do me a big favor, I show him the Colt which we got from the spy -- that's me -- from the sky, you know [indecipherable] supply, we have supply from the -- from the -- by -- by planes, you know? Show him the Colt we call the [indecipherable] you know, caliber 45, give me a key and go very slowly on the corner straight. Don't -- don't look [indecipherable] because you see the -- this will be shoot on the spot. It was very quick, you know? The fluently German [indecipherable] in the beginning what going on [indecipherable]. He saw something wrong, he get the key and stays -- listened, you know.

Q: Did you have an identification card that said you were German, too?

A: No, no. No, no, no, no, no. My identification card probably was kennekarte, you know, but always a counterfeit, I have only a counterfeit, it was not a -- never carry original with my name because if they catch me the -- my family could be [indecipherable] for, you know. Usually my documents which I carry with me was a different named, or usually it was original. The first name was original, the date

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of birth was original because they can check if you take, it was original, and the address was fr -- c-counterfeit. Usually address was so the house would go the street and how -- house on the street which not exist. You know, that's mean there was a street correct, but th -- on the street was, for instance, the last number was hundred, the house on my [indecipherable] 120. Tha-That's mean the house not exist. But not me, it was special organization, not -- the dib -- special division which make a counterfeit document, because was my original picture, my everything except, you know, the -- not name and not [indecipherable] and not address.

Q: When you were active in trying to help the Jews in the ghetto -- it sounds like you were quite active.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you see this as -- why did you do this?

A: For wi -- for the good will. For the regular good will. I feel that the people cannot be tortured, cannot be -- everybody help everybody. You have to understand that, in this Polish people, during this time, what happened wasn't the trouble. They was better than brother and sister, then one and then they helped another one, without nothing. This -- this em -- this exists in the Polish, I don't know, blood, I think, because I tell you even now when want to strike, you know, the people want people to have the 'nother one, you know this, even now, this

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time. And this -- this time, the people, you know, help one each other without thinking about this. Need the help, have to be help.

Q: Then why is it that there's this friction between Poles and Germans?

A: Well, they're Polish and German. What the friction? Was the friction just in the -- they -- wa-was free country, and they tried to make fr -- us the slaves. Was free country, would try to make u-us the slave. First of all, we have food, we have -- we have to eat, we can study, we have a future. And when the German come the -- everything was cut. No food, no future, no school. It was the -- it was the problem. And all we -- on the -- e-every -- every pla -- every moment you would be to shoot you, can -- you can -- you al-always was not sure that you come back home if you go on the street, because they can catch you and send you to Germany like a slave to work.

Q: Yeah, but nevertheless, your family wa-was among the minority to help others, to help Jews. It wasn't that all Polish people came together.

A: All p -- all Polish people was together. Almost all Polish people, a very small amount, a very, very small amount, but was -- there was -- the Polish people was not the worse. Only they -- some people afraid, they scared, they afraid. They did not helping, but was no -- no -- no -- no -- for instance, was not the spy. If somebody hide the Jewish people, and then other people know, very, very rare happened the spy. This was almost, almost very, very, very rare. Because if

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[indecipherable] the spy, then no, they would be, by the Polish organization, shoot. Because you know how the Germans shoot on the spot, the spying -- the people would spying to the German, the Polish organizations make the same -- the -- working the same, exactly the same way, exactly the same way.

Q: So when you were working to liberate people from the ghetto, did you see this as liberating Jews, or just libiti -- liberating other human beings?

A: Other human being, because we did not care about what the nationality, or if they would be -- doesn't matter who. They are hu-human beings, because you know, we know they have to help the people. We know -- we -- we know the what -- we know -- we know there was a concentration camp, we didn't in the beginning, I -- I didn't know, but some people maybe know, but I didn't know that there are Jewish people, but they -- it was a concentration camp, and later we find the Jewish -- there [indecipherable] the Jewish people from. This was last concentration camp, it was during the uprising, I talking this 1944, you know, because was two uprising in Warsaw, you know, about this one 1943 was in the ghetto, a very short time and another was 53 days, what was 63 days, what was in 1944, from September first to O-October, you know. And during this -- during this time we find, you know, there was a concentration camp and we released the -- it was be -- action was very, very quick, the Germans surprised that she didn't -- na - - even -- it was the [indecipherable] the lunchtime, they leave the -- the food in the

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-- leave on the table and run away, because fortunately was this way, they were at time -- this a whole story, but a -- very shortly I tell you we have a German tank and was prepare very good and the tank break the gate, Arbeit Macht Frei, you know, was break right away, and the German who supplied the German tank [indecipherable]. And we have a Polish sign, but on the si -- on the side of the tank, and they run away and th-then Jewish people, you know, the Jewish people, it was the -- they feel like babies, you know, they people which was -- because the German [indecipherable] keep the people -- the German which keep in the concentration camp, only not the terrorist people, but the -- there's an underhanded -- there's people always lose his mind. They -- they f -- didn't feel -- you don't know if you're free, they didn't ever expect they will be free again.

Q: I'm gonna turn the tape over.

A: Oh.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: Tape one, side B, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, January 30th, 2004, Mr. Mike Madejski.

A: Yes. What I can --

Q: Well, I'm just trying to -- to understand more your emotions an-and your feelings about being involved in something that could have cost your life.

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A: Listen, everybody would like to do something. E-Everybody would like to be in th -- his mind like a hero. Tho -- I -- this is almost true, and everybody would like to do something, do it -- help to somebody, you know, do something wrong for the Germany, you know that's mean? Everybody -- since the young -- the young boys, you know, everybody tried to do something, even if the sign they make, like young people make a V on the street, on the house, was victoria, he was proud that he did something against the Germans, you know. The German make a big victorious sign, you know, they start feeling when they start -- you know when the east -- the west [indecipherable] was get and when they start in -- in the Russian -- Russia, you know, they have a -- they have, you know, victory. They make a big sign from the wood, victory, what the people Polish doing. They use some kerosene and put on there, because the sign [indecipherable] which was big V from wood. They put some kerosene and burned this, this victory, you know, there was -- everybody feel that something -- everybody tried to do something against -- against the German. Even if it was some organization, but even not organization, some private person -- people tried to do something against -- wrong to the Germany. For instance, they have a transport from the -- from the trains. We blow the train, but the -- now the young people using the sand, put the sand when you have a oil for the -- for the -- for the wheels, you know? Was a different -- different method. There was no sugar, but somebody wh-when they find the sugar,

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they put -- they -- when they park the German trucks they put the sugar to the tank, you know, because the sugar go to the -- to the gasoline [indecipherable] and blow the engine, you know? And everybody have a different -- different method. We have lot of [indecipherable] from that -- from the, you know, from alliance, because we get the -- the supply from alliance. We get the guns, we get the material, the -- that on -- the material, you know, explosive material, we get many, many things for the -- fr-from the alliance. Some go -- most go to the partisan because was a big partisan. I was not a partisan because I was in Warsaw all the time, but some people what was in the field fighting, you know, the German, different way. Some people has to go to the partisan, from my friends, too. I-I was two weeks only, because everybody was two weeks, because in 1944 -- in 1944 in January was arrested by Gestapo, three of my friends, you know, from organization. The -- all other, which was another guys, he has the order, go out from Warsaw, because we di -- afraid that they s -- in the Gestapo [indecipherable] beating, torture, they already put the names. That this the reason we have to go away, they sent us for the parti -- for th-the partisan. That was only two weeks after, two weeks. This fr -- these people was executed in Gestapo, but nobody -- they didn't tell nothing about nobody, that's mean they [indecipherable] you know [indecipherable] inter -- you know, counter -- counterfeit, you know, ca -- the

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organization which [indecipherable] was the story, that's mean there was -- they didn't say nobody, they -- they was tortured for the dead, but they say nothing.

Q: What i --

A: The -- they're reason that I came back, like [indecipherable] again.

Q: What do you think of Germany and Germans now?

A: Listen, this is di -- very, very difficult. Practically you don't think about this too much. Still, I have, you know, I tell you true, I will not buy the German car. I don't buy nothing what is German, but is something difficult, do you know -- there is -- there may be different situation, but still in my mind is -- would be never friendly to the German and never will be trusting to German. [doorbell rings].

Sorry, there's my [indecipherable]

Q: Do you need to --

A: No, no. My wa -- sister-in-law open [indecipherable]

Q: When you were younger, did you believe in God?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you now?

A: Yes.

Q: Let me wait til this is over.

A: Pardon me?

Q: I'm going to wait til this sound is --

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A: Uh-huh, til sounds get over. There's friend of my s -- from [indecipherable] Social Security number what they [indecipherable] you know when they talking. We have a lot in our organization because I belong to the veteran's organization -- the veteran's organization, this Armia Krajowa, holy Polish army, we have six people and only s -- s -- alive is still two more. This one and one more, they spent few years in Auschwitz, because Auschwitz on the ar -- one -- one of concentration camp was Auschwitz which mo -- o -- put the numbers of the people on [indecipherable] the other concentration camp they did not, like my wife and my sister-in-law, they was in Ravensbrück.

Q: I want to ask you about that in just a second, because I'm -- I really want to know about that. But back to the believing in God. When the Germans came and tried to destroy your country and your people, what did you think God was doing?

A: Listen, this is -- this is difficult to say. Nobody think about this, you know, th- the people prayed to the God, you know, but [indecipherable]. This is difficult to say, you know, nobody think about this. Everybody pray, you know, I tell you only one th -- 'nother things that the church keep the people in these difficult times, all people together. The church keep -- very often they keep, and I tell you this -- this time, the -- to the church, during the o-occupation, during this time, when it was very difficult to the wa -- Catholic church, come the people from different religion, not only the Catholic, come to different religion because they

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thought God is one who have to pray to the God this way will -- probably will be -
- help us. And the religion keep the people very close, very close together.

Q: So you didn't feel that -- that there was a -- a -- a Jewish God and a Catholic
God, and a --

A: No, nobody -- God is one, you know. And this one, what they told you, thi --
thi -- before the war second, He is now -- many, many things He's changing. I old
man, you know, 80 years old, but th -- still I do not understand why is this dividing
between this -- this -- you know, religion. I understand the -- the -- some people
they are fanatic. You cannot talk about fanatic. This fanatic is very, very small
amount of the person, very -- in all religion what I said. Probably in Jewish
religion is very small amount of the fanatic. In the Catholic religion, in the -- in the
mo -- Moslem, may-maybe Moslem more because the problem is the additional
what I -- wa -- my -- this is my prop -- practical -- private feeling, that fanatics,
most fanatics ja -- are low educated people. I think that educated people they are
not fanatic, they thinking in the right way. And low educated people, if you take a
look, th-the people which -- the Arabs, which you know, fanatic, working, fighting
with the -- with Israel. Take a look these people, the level of these people is very,
very low. I only surprised that how -- big final thing they find this to any people
which make a -- a September 11, you know, blow the -- the -- after
[indecipherable] th-they make this terrorist action. I very surprised because these

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people was trained, and this was -- but it was not intelligent, this only was -- half a brainwash, I think, because th-the -- they was trained for the right way, was not simply training [indecipherable] like a pilot. But this th-the reason that I think this time was not too many fanatics and we fighting, we fighting, you know, with the -- with the -- wi -- against the ef -- to get -- to the same enemy.

Q: The Germans.

A: Germans. And later, and later after German come the communist, it was the 'nother -- was the 'nother story, but was not [indecipherable] up til 1945, it was not the -- this was a ma -- not so easy most -- most difficult that the Gestapo, the KGB.

Q: And how did you meet your wife?

A: I wi -- I met my wife in the f-fu -- to -- friend of my house, you know. It was 19 -- 1940 -- 1949 I was married, it was 1947 - 1946, someti -- '40 si -- end of '48, a friend of my house.

Q: Now, your wife was Jewish?

A: No.

Q: Not Jewish?

A: My wife not Jewish. My wife was Catholic. My wife was Catholic, was a Catholic.

Q: How did she come to be in Ravensbrück?

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A: Bi -- to -- to -- to Israel?

Q: How did she come to be in a camp? You said she was in a camp, no?

A: Di -- she was in the concentration camp, yes.

Q: Yes, how did that happen?

A: The [indecipherable] a lot of Polish peop -- lot of Catholic people was in that concent camp. But listen, first of all, he is friend of mine, he tell you that Auschwitz was built not for the Jewish people. Auschwitz wa-was built original for the -- for the Polish people. They didn't -- the German do not recognize the Jewish or the Catholic, they built for the Polish people, doesn't matter what religion, for the Polish people. For the Polish intelligentsia, for the Pole -- th-this was built for this, this was the purpose why they build the Auschwitz. And th-then -- then -- then built the -- the -- i-in this -- Jewish people to Auschwitz, I don't remember, but I think they started arriving 1942, I think, or '40 -- '41 or '42. Not in the beginning. The-Then later start -- maybe before they arrive, but was not [indecipherable] like a Jewish, like a Polish people, because la-later they start divided for the religion, for the -- for the Gypsy, for the Jewish, for the Catholic, for the -- for the different religion, for the homosexuals [indecipherable] you know. But in the beginning the -- all people, pole -- Polish people, doesn't matter what religion, what -- what viewpoint, has to go to the concentration camp.

Q: How wa -- how was she liberated?

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A: She was liberated by the Russian army. My sister-in-law tell you the cor -- exactly because they was all time together. They was -- they was catch up the -- the uprising in Warsaw, 1943, because this was in the old town, what the worst place, you know, because I was -- during the -- I was during the uprising, I was, you know, y -- organizing the Polish home army, you know, that I go through the whole town Warsaw, but some parts of the Warsaw was captured by the German [indecipherable] in the -- in the first so -- in the first beginning, they didn't take a - - prisoners, they kill everybody over there. They kill everybody, doesn't matter who was kill, put the gasoline and burn everybody was involved [indecipherable] later in the -- after approximately whole month, they start take the -- take the people to the concentration camp, and to the -- because they need the [indecipherable]. They took my wife, my sister and my mother-in-law, they took to the German, to the concentration camp, and later my sister and my wi -- my wife and my sister-in-law, they was young, they was to the mu-munition factory close to the Berlin, they was in Ravensbrück, and from Ravensbrück they gave to the radical commander. Just before their placement they was working for the German -- for the German industry.

Q: Oh. Were you involved in -- in any direct liberation of camp?

A: No, no, only -- only in Warsaw, this one. Only liberation the [indecipherable] Shufka they call -- they was a -- in Warsaw was a few concentration camp, but the

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-- the last one what was on the -- what we can liberated, it was liberated in [indecipherable] Shufka, you know, in Warsaw. It was there before this up -- before this action, our battalion, Zoska, get the Yad Vashem medal. We're very proud because only two organization what I told you, Zegota, which take care about ba -- kids -- babies, you know, and the 'nother organization is Zoska which get the Yad Vashem medal after a long time, because the guy who take care ba -- from our organization, they -- in the beginning they -- Yad Vashem organization told that we have to liberated this concentration camp because was on our way, and t-then we explain, no, we don't have to, because we have two different ways. We liberated because was a human be -- you know, always organiz -- and now, after the -- 60 years after the war, you see different viewpoints in many people there. Many people -- some people have a completely different viewpoint, you know, they thinking different way. We -- our -- my mentality, [indecipherable] is completely, slightly different. What I told you in the beginning, we was altogether how we say -- how -- how my friend there, we -- we fight together, we eat together, we die together. Doesn't matter what religion. How many people you know in partisans was th -- the -- the Jewish people, nobody take -- care was it. Wa -- if I had to [indecipherable] to a German, it was a friend.

Q: When did you get the medal?

A: Pardon me?

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Q: When did you get the medal?

A: Yad Vashem?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I don't have privately, I don't have a private. My family has and the -- the -- and my battalion to which I belong got the medal.

Q: When did you get it?

A: It was the -- oh, it was -- I don't remember exactly the day. With the memory is worse and worse. I got the copy, they sent me the copy. I think it was -- it was like in 19 -- 1994 - '95, something like this. Five years ago.

Q: And you went -- you went to Israel?

A: Pardon me?

Q: You went --

A: No, no, I was not. I was in Israel. I was in Israel, but I was what I tell you in ninet -- in 2000 with my wife, we in Israel.

Q: Why did you go to Israel?

A: We go to the Holy Land, first of all, and we was invited -- invited, but to -- like to see the people which still alive. And the women which was a hundred -- all -- all -- probably no -- no, '94 - '95. Her name is Irene, the same with my -- my wife Irene. And they was like very, very friendly. And the 'nother guy, which I met him in Israel, because I didn't met him before, when we got to the Israel my wife was

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sick and he come to there because they're coming -- every day there's people coming to the hospital, every day to see my wife, but she was unconscious. But he coming every day, every day spent with me, they told me -- they took me away from the hospital for a walk, and the guy, his name is Monek, I don't remember -- his name I have because have a nice medal over there, and he thought you know what, I have one feelings that something -- nothing tasting so good for me, like a apple which bring your wife to me when I was hired. And this guy still alive. He is the youngest, he's maybe now 75 - 76.

Q: So when you say that you wanted to get together with people from before, which people from before did you want to see in Israel?

A: Say -- this -- no, this was the -- this was the friend from my wife.

Q: Okay, but you said you went to Israel because you wanted to see --

A: My wife would love to see -- my wife went to see these people, and was after ou-our fi -- 50 years anniversary, would like to go to [indecipherable]. We go to [indecipherable] to Holy Land to thank the God for the 50 years anniversary that we're still alive, and from the other hand she would like to see the people which she knows so many, many years.

Q: So these were people she knew from Poland?

A: Those from -- from -- from -- from tho -- during the war. They survived during -- thanks to the -- my -- my wife's f -- parents, and to my wife, you know, they --

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and my brother-in-law, these people survive. It was 12 person who survive you know [indecipherable] to -- to the ghetto they took him -- anyway, this -- my brother-in-law know this [indecipherable] brother-in-law know this, so they took him away from the ghetto by the -- by the different -- by rickshaw, by different way, take him away from ghetto and hired him in someplace in Warsaw. They -- my father-in-law was -- have a good friend in the -- some embassy, you know, wha -- lithuin, or -- what is embassy -- no, Estonia embassy, and they bring these people to this Estonian embassy because this time the German treat him like a friend and didn't [indecipherable] you know, and they -- I was hired over there, and from this place [indecipherable] they was transport another place, you know. Anyway, this was the way first they -- my father-in-law take him away from ghetto, it was the -- the story that they survive.

Q: So did you -- when you met your wife, did you feel a common bond that both of you had families who had --

A: No, the -- we listen -- listen, we was both -- both Polish, always was the same - - the same mind and the same mind, you know, always during -- I -- the -- I was born in, like I say, in Poland. I was -- grew up like a good patriot and later, after 1940 fa -- four -- '45, when the ger -- war was over, when they -- they came the Russians, still this was for me still enemy for me was. And I never belong to any Polish organization, to the communist organization, I never belong to the

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communist party. I was th -- way from the univ -- from the Polytech Institute. I have to big trouble, big trouble because they told him that I'm too stupid, that I can -- I told to -- they told me you have to be -- I had to -- I am too stupid, you cannot tell me any help from you [indecipherable] be-belong to the par-party -- to the -- to the par-par-par -- to the par-par -- to the party, to the communist party. I'm too stupid, you don't need me. You don't -- need the smart people, not like me. They -- you know what, this story, that they put me to the prison and I sit in the prison, you know? And my w -- my -- I have two brothers, we will grow in the Polish family, all against -- we was all enemies, you know, and our brother, I have two brothers. My youngest brother was seven years in the prison [indecipherable]. It was the worst prison [indecipherable] run by the communists. It was -- see, it was young boys [indecipherable] seven years, they tried to -- they told him has to be re-educated for the different men. He has to believe in the -- but they -- they broke his life completely.

Q: Now tell me your experience, if you would -- this is now going to a happier experience, of getting the recognition from Yad Vashem.

A: The what, dear?

Q: The Yad Vashem, the recognition that you got.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you -- were you surprised, were you pleased, did it matter to you at all?

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A: N -- I'm very surprised, I'm very surprised that organization would -- would -- because everything what we did, we didn't expect there would be -- any time we'd be honored in this -- nobody would think about this. Nobody think about paying for this. Doesn't matter not -- I not talking the paying in the money, just talking about the honors. Nobody think about this. Nobody was in this i-i-interesting. And this I was surprised. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oho. Thank you God there's somebody thinks still about me, you know, and especially for the [indecipherable] you know, this is very surprised and very glad, that's at least somebody exists who think th -- what's happened. And from the 'nother hand, what they told me later, listen, you know that Yad Vashem, it do-doesn't for free, somebody who take -- would like to that you get this medal has to pay for this. I was very surprised [indecipherable] I didn't know that has to pay for this, you know? Something recognition.

Q: [Bell rings] Four o'clock. When did you leave Poland?

A: I leave Poland in 1968. I -- 19 -- 1968, it was the story because I have always problem, and not financing problem, because I'm pretty smart engineer and h-happy always do something, keep [indecipherable] not the -- like a blue collar job because sometimes was a difficult [indecipherable] I have a good pa -- you know, can make money different ways, did bel -- belong to the [indecipherable] to the [indecipherable] and my son was very br-bright man, bright boy. He has the same problems because the father was not too good. And fortunately, i-in Poland is like

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a -- a game [indecipherable] the game in the school, you know, the -- the testing from the school, they pu -- they call in Poland Olympic game in different science. And my son has the first place in whole Poland in -- from mathematic, and first place from the physics, too -- too, and sixth place from the Latin, you know, even this way. And this way I can get the passport, because seven years I tried to get the passport to go abroad, we cannot get the passport because I was enemy of the ci -- re-regime -- of the system and I was not belong, I don't want belong. I ha -- they -- I play different function in the factories, always all -- only pay [indecipherable] this function, but that's what that they [indecipherable] you know, like a position, because deposition has to bel-belong to the member of the parti -- to the member of the pa -- communistic party. I was never, you know, they always make a job for somebody, you know, and up to seven years when they -- my son win this Olympic game, it was the moment that he can go to the university without exam, without this, because if we -- if we not wiz -- pass this, he will go never to the -- any university, because when you go to the university, they need the points. First of all, I was the enemy of the system, there was a minus point. I was the intelligent, was a minus or zero point and so on. You know, that's mean son what was -- father belong to the communist party had a plus three or four or sometimes five, depend higher, more points, that my son will be maybe minus point or zero point, another guy have six point. Doesn't matter what the knowledge, wa -- how

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he smart is. And this way, because he can go to the university without test, then ha -- I stay in the -- in the [indecipherable], this Polish KGB, three times in [indecipherable] clock in the morning and that list -- after a few days I get that list, have interview with the -- the -- some officer, and he told me, why you'd like to go to United States? I told, because I would like to see my family, and what they doing over there, my family, you know? Then I had -- my son has a five mon vaca -- five month vaca -- five months vacation because he win this, and h-he -- da, you would like to go and stay probably in the United States? No, what for? In United States education is very, very expensive, and he has the free education. And no problem at all. Okay, after this I get the passport for three months only, which was my passport was valid only three months and this way I come to United States, but they told me, your wife cannot go over there, because you -- she has to stay like a hostage in the Poland. She cannot put a -- apply for the passport. Then I come with my son, and my son had the interview and get to the MIT and then ti -- I would like to come back because I don't have a future over there. I [indecipherable] the language very, very poor, the English, but the -- everybody thought me to be completely dumb and not stupid, but dumb, and completely if you go back to Poland [indecipherable] your son has this -- this, probably he got the full scholarship and -- and [indecipherable] everything. And I -- very difficult communicate with my wife because the -- all telephones or letter was, you know,

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checking by the ka -- KGB, like the Polish UBA. Then, through the fr -- my -- my friends was in Sweden, we go -- corresponded over there and my wife told, you stay over there, I find a way that I go away. She -- we have a small house. She sold this house -- sold this house for 1,000 -- 1,000 hundred dollars. And this whole money, she got the bribery to somebody who get the passport for three weeks to Austria, because we have -- in Austria she has a first cousin in Austria, and -- and my cousin from Austria sent a letter. The letter was this way. [indecipherable] is sick, she will passed away probably in three or four weeks and she is millionaire, and she will not -- if my wife will not come to the Austria, not take all -- all of the jewelry and the money what she has over there and bring it Poland [indecipherable] grab by the Austrian family -- that this was a -- this letter was written in the Polish, then i-it was si -- it was stamped wi -- from the Polish -- what [indecipherable] Austrian police only recognize they ha -- her signature, and signed the doctor, what the doctor was [indecipherable] they told him what was going on and somebody else signed this letter, and this letter was like a document because in Poland always you has to be bumaga. Bumaga, that's mean document. They bring this document and to this document [indecipherable] 1,000 dollars, you know, and passport for three weeks to Austria and she [indecipherable] three weeks to the Austria, she come after 10 months, because we come June -- July in 1968, and my wife come May '69, one year later she come to United State.

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Q: Now, you were in your 40's then, when you came to the United States, is that --

A: Yes, I was 40's.

Q: So, not a -- if you'll excuse me, not a very young man.

A: Not a young man, but I had profession, I got to do -- you know,

[indecipherable] know very good engineer, you know, and I start to working first in the phil -- Philips medical system because I engineer, and was working very short time in the medical industry, Philips medical system and [indecipherable] from this company I installed in Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan because I am specialist in the x-ray equipment, I installed the x-ray machine and I was surprised because the boss of this department was Dr. Wolfe [indecipherable] was very angry for me because always when he is -- when he thought white, everybody has wh -- thought white. When he was everysa -- when he thought black, everybody says black. And he told, Mike, when you say -- when I say black, you say no doctor, this is not black, this is gray. How come it's gray? Because you -- I have sometime different -- different viewpoints. And after few times this discussion, he thought I have enough discussion with you, you have to work for me, no more discussing. And [indecipherable] I thought I work for Philips, I have very good pay, I have a good -- a good job, I have a company car, I have everything I don't need. You -- I need you. And this way he called to the Philips, to the president of the Philip because he's a friend and one month later I was hired -- I was working

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for Mount Sinai Hospital. I was working 10 years for Mount Sinai Hospital, I was in charge x-ray department.

Q: When -- when you came here -- I'll check the tape -- how did people treat you?

A: Very good. I never had any kind of problem, you ba -- I have a problem with language because my language was not the greatest, and I feel always, you know, the people helped me, even in the language, that I feel very, very good. And first my job, when I was working with Philips, I was in the charge for s -- installation. This I remember very good, for it was first -- first time, you know, and was -- I was leader of the job, I have a -- a six -- it was union job, just [indecipherable] and do nothing [indecipherable] be leader and explain everybody what has to be done. And between these people was one letter, what letter this guy told me that he's a Jewish, he speak a little bit Polish. He was very friendly. He invited me to his home, you know, because he know that I from Poland and so on. And he help me lot, you know, in the translated. And I have a problem with one guy because one -- one guy was with this group with the 60 guys, was one guy was something of a problem with lot of trouble. He taught me listen, you in charge here. You don't have to fool around. Tell to the boss he has to take him away. And this guy, you know, for me was difficult take somebody -- take off from the job, throw away, you know? And he told, don't worry, if you not throw away him, they -- you will be more troubles. And this Jewish guy helped me, was very good, very good my

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friend. You know what I [indecipherable] we invited [indecipherable] money to what I have because I [indecipherable] too much money he gave me first, gave me money, too, you know? It was very, very friendly, but unfortunately passed away. Was not young fellow.

Q: Did he know what you had done for Jewish people in Poland?

A: I -- I didn't tell nobody what I have to wish -- what I have to -- I don't have to, you know, advertise my thing what for? What for? I don't have to. It was my -- my duty. I [indecipherable] that was my feeling. I did this not for the -- what I told you, not for the recognition, I tell you this like for my duty, what I do like I -- what I find for them -- country, for the Poland, against the German this was the same, you know -- it was [indecipherable] I told to my friends when I was working in Mount Sinai, was a problem, listen guys -- because I have two guys which are working for me, you know, I told, listen guys, we -- was a small cart in front of us. We have to push this cart together. That was my -- my expression, my feeling. They thought always -- one guy told, well, was Mike taught me always we have to put the cart together.

Q: Going to change the tape now.

End of Tape One, Side B

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Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: Okay, this is tape two, side A, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, January 30th, 2004. This is Karen Michel interviewing Mike Madejski. Now, Mike isn't really your first name.

A: Pardon me -- my first name, Mieczyslaw, very difficult to pronounce, that the reason that I change. Mieczyslaw.

Q: Mieczyslaw.

A: Mieczyslaw, yes.

Q: That's a beautiful name.

A: It was the name for the f-first Polish king, was fi-first Polish king was Mieczyslaw, it was very popular name and this name, because in Poland in this -- i-in most in the country the people celebrated the birthday. In Poland it's a different day, they celebrated names day, and my names day is January first. If you see the Polish calendar, th-the January first you see Mieczyslaw.

Q: Have you been back to Poland?

A: Yes, I was back in Poland [indecipherable] first and after 18 years because I cannot go during the communist time, because if I go to the communist time I go to the -- unfortunately to the jail that I don't want go. I was over there before there -- in the jail, you know, the -- the jail what I sitting was a very funny name because was to -- to -- two scientists was the [indecipherable] science and metal

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[indecipherable] and metal di -- the metal there which was [indecipherable] was not bad, but this metal di -- what they have for the metal, it's what they have over there was very, very difficult, not -- not very good because they know how doing the -- how threatening the people very big, very bi -- with a strong beating.

Q: So when di -- when were you back in Poland?

A: Of -- I was visiting the Poland after 18 years, it was when the communists fall down.

Q: So --

A: It was 19 -- 1989.

Q: What was that experience like?

A: No -- very -- experience, you know, very difficult to find because not too many people, not too many friends over there. Most my friend passed away. I have my mother, but my mother was coming to me very often during this time when it was United States, because my wi -- my mother was the same like myself. She was stayed to there to get -- they don't want get the passport, they thought, how you grow up your children, they -- your children was against the system, your sis -- your citi -- my -- your sons run away from Poland, they don't like this system, your fault, you grow up the people. Your children very, very bad. You probably would like to go to United States, stand with your children. My wife thought no, no -- my mother thought, no, no, no, I will not stay over there. You have to give

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me bread, you have to pay me an pension plan [indecipherable] make your life easy, don't worry. She was very, very aggressive you know, with the communist people. Very aggressive, you know. She passed away, was 98, and all the time she fight with this system, always have explanation for the communists. The same with -- during the German occupation, you know, she help people a-as much as she can. I remember in the house was hired the -- some people, you know, from different purpose, because hire people -- is not only the Jewish people was hired the people, you know, was looking for the Gestapo, was -- was the -- there was -- was the people which was -- the people what was come from -- from -- was sent by the Polish -- the Polish -- Polish government in exile from -- from -- from -- in eng -- was in England, they dropped the people on parachutes for different purpose, and these people, you know, they -- the German know there was a plane, the people was drop off, they know, but they looking for these people. They -- the people was hide, they was moving for one day from place to place you know, the - - they kind of -- cause these people coming has to be trained in many ways in the Poland, because they come from -- most from England, they have to be trained how they -- how they hide on the street, while working on the street. They have to have experience in living in the occupation town, occupation country, what -- in the beginning was not easy, but everybody learn and train himself every day, every day you have more experience.

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Q: I want to ask you about anti-Semitism.

A: Listen, this wa -- in the Poland we don't [indecipherable] does not exist. Did not exist before this time, I never feeling this, was not -- nobody pay attention, it was not exist, you know, it was a problem which not exist. What's a problem? The German enemy wa -- this was the problems. The problem was food, was supply, was no -- nothing to eat, but not the -- no -- no -- this was no problem, no, there's no -- no-nothing was -- nobody pay attention for this.

Q: How about in 1989?

A: In 1989, when --

Q: When you went back?

A: This time difficult to say because I was very short time over there, and I was a little bit scare, beca -- I tell you, because still there practically was not the -- practically was not the communist any more, but still -- still was not the -- I don't feel it too -- too good because additional, I was stripped from the Polish citizenship, first of all. I don't have a Polish citiz -- I was stri-stri-stripped for the citizenship. And in my American passport they told that the United States will not [indecipherable] about me in the country when I was born. In -- in all United States passport it said the same sign. The -- the country where you was born, if you have some problem over there will not take about you. It was my problem that I a little bit scare, that I, you know, that I suppose -- I don't remember, it's a very

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short time, maybe five or six days. At this time you have to pay something, dues for this time when you should be over there, it was not so simply, you know, that I just see my mother, I was on cemetery my father, cemetery because with my wife my wife [indecipherable] cemetery his parents, you know, because his parents -- her parents was in the cemetery, it was [indecipherable] few friends, and go back right away out to visit, when we go to Austria, to the cousins, one she was help her to get out from the Poland, stay over there, you know, free country, the [indecipherable]. But still over there was a lot of pressure, you know, this was the first time. Later -- I was later i-in the [indecipherable] because I belonged to the Polish -- or to the Polish organization, you know, th-the -- a veteran's organization, and I was second a few more times, but usually I am going to the -- that for the anniversary or to Warsaw uprising. This year, this is 19 -- 2004, this is 60 years anniversary and if my health, if I will be t -- able, if my health will be okay, that I would like to go see -- go to [indecipherable] not to my friends, because friends I have two or three maybe is left over, but would like to see the cemetery to the -- what is there, my friends, and go to the work, when I work in there during the uprising, when I -- because I was wounded [indecipherable] the uprising twice. Unfortunately, they would like to amputated my leg. Yes, was unfortunately, but fortunately there -- the -- the fellow which was student, medical student, he is still alive up to the -- this day, he didn't let them amputated my leg

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because that's -- he thought bullet is not the [indecipherable] the bone -- the bone is still okay, they -- you don't have to amputated his leg. And this way I stood -- have -- have a problem, I might fall [indecipherable] but now I can walk. Have a small problem when there's a change the weather. You know, that's is -- have a very, very good friend. This, you know, this is like a -- a [indecipherable] like a brother, you know, this is -- he is still live and they now, they have to -- they're both doctors and another friend was the -- the -- this st -- this time was all students, you know, [indecipherable] and his ni-nickname was Medic, because he attend to the medical school.

Q: Okay. What -- do you feel you -- that you are a citizen of anywhere?

A: Pardon me?

Q: Do you feel that you are a citizen of anywhere?

A: No. I'm feel like a citizen on this country.

Q: Of the United States?

A: Of United States. You say don't feel -- for me it's a difficult -- I tell you, if there's somebody tha -- strip you from the citizenship, you know, practically changed everything. They talking that I can still put application for the -- to get back th -- my Polish citizenship, but in this moment I told myself, I'm not interesting, my wife passed away, cemetery is here. When I go, I n -- maybe I go to visit, you know, for -- for a couple of days, go to the Poland to visit my friends,

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maybe to go to some, you know, [indecipherable] for a few days, because in Poland you -- very nice places, which I know when I was young boy, and nothing else. I'm not feeling that I would like to move any place.

Q: Yeah, but when did -- when were you stripped of your citizenship?

A: In 19 -- because when I get the passport for three we -- for three months, they let the -- they ask me to -- they have to come back for Poland because my passport expired. They sent me the letter if I am not back to the Poland th-they give me -- they would like to give me the passport one way, lets me go from the Poland -- from United States to the Poland and then in the Poland I have to put application for the emigration. I thought that I'm not interesting cause my son start attend to the school. My wife just -- and my wife already arrive. They thought i -- i -- tha-that's mean you have -- you would be [indecipherable] the Polish citizenship, yeah.

Q: So then how did you get U.S. citizenship?

A: I -- after five years -- after first of all, thi -- well, this time was very easy because -- when I arrive, because I have the high education, you now, diploma, that this time was a first preference, and I got the job, and I got in the few weeks I -- few months I think, three or four months, I've got the green cards, without -- without nobody sponsor, and after five years I-I have to find the people which know me that I arrive, you know, that I am not a communist, that can

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[indecipherable] for me after five year, what's the difference, after five years, I get the American citizenship.

Q: What citizenship is your son?

A: Amer -- United State. United State.

Q: Do you dream in Polish, German or English?

A: I'm dreaming in -- in -- sometime -- most in English. Most --

Q: You dream in English?

A: -- in English, most in English. It's still -- my English is not the greatest, you know, still the problem is, I tell you [indecipherable] old age, is I have a problem, sometimes I [indecipherable] I cannot find the word, doesn't matter, I would like to say something, I cannot find the word, even in the Polish, nor even the English, you know, sometime, you know the -- unfortunately, you know, I know about this, but this is what time is running, you know, you can do nothing, you cannot help yourself too much, you know? I tried to do everything what is possible, you know, but --

Q: And do you -- do you think of yourself as Polish? How do y -- what you th -- what -- how do you identify yourself?

A: How I can feel myself?

Q: Mm.

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A: [indecipherable] like United States man, yeah, I feel like -- like the people which was born here, because I am the patriot on this country now. I am the patriot on this country, you know, because I was born on this country -- not was born in this country, but this country gave me a freedom, this country gave me a freedom, give me a future, you know? And my son has a future here. In the Poland probably he wou -- he would be probably on the second -- second category citizen, what I was, what I was. Seconds category, maybe even third category.

Q: Now, when you came here, you came to this area when you came to the United States?

A: Yes, I came here because I have a brother-in-law here, my brother-in-law live in Glen Cove and I come here and live with him whole year, more than whole -- whole year. He is an investor and bi -- builder. He -- and he's build the houses in Glen Cove and Sea Cliff. He live in Sea Cliff. He is the -- my brother-in-law what he had the Yad Vashem medal, he has his. Because this Yad Vashem medal what you see in my home, this is belong to the parents of my wife, and he -- his own private Yad Vashem medal, you know? And I come to him and stay with his house and later my wife came and he help me, you know. I start working -- you know, the -- this time was grow up there a -- a [indecipherable] big prosperity for the x-ray equipment, you know, so they didn't have too many engineers, and I was engineer, I grabbed this job, you know, and [indecipherable] start working right

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away, even with my poor language, I was the leader of installation, what I told you in the beginning, you know, and this way --

Q: How mu -- how many years before you came did your brother come?

A: My brother-in-law?

Q: Oh, was it your brother-in-law?

A: My -- my brother-in-law, this not my br --

Q: Oh, I see.

A: -- my brother. He come six or seven years before. Six -- i-it -- it was the moment in Poland, I don't remember exactly this year, have -- cannot calculate the day. There was like a -- like a ge-gets -- some people -- it was -- the few people get a -- they start getting the passport and people apply for the passport and was to able get this passport and my brother catch this moment, you know, that he was to -- was so very lucky that he apply and he get this passport. Not too many people -- later they stop again, you know, because in the communist system was a -- sometimes better, sometimes worse, you know, like this not -- it's not equal, like it was no democracy [indecipherable] this -- you know, this dictatorship and sometime dictatorship, you know, changing for better, sometime for worse, but the -- it [indecipherable] th-this changing [indecipherable] very short time, sometimes few weeks, you know. Only th-the [indecipherable] changes for -- forever. But before they change for -- for a short time.

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Q: You -- you mentioned in your previous interview, and you brought it up today, the shortage of food.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you tend now to have a lot of food in the house?

A: He -- where, here?

Q: Yeah.

A: [indecipherable] is no problem at all, no. Listen, this was -- you don't even -- this is difficult to tell, I tell you. When you going to hungry sleep, you have to sometime [indecipherable] many time I go very hungry sleep, you have to had the warm water drink because if you were very hungry, you cannot close your eyes, you cannot sleep. If you drink the warm water, the hot water a little bit, you still can sl-sleep, you know, you ca -- you was able to sleep, not -- not so easy like -- like now. Now I -- you -- you -- you try to not eat because you don't want to get the weight. [indecipherable] when I was young was opposite way, you know? Sometime we have only potatoes, you know, this -- we -- that the most important was [indecipherable] onion because onion was a vitamin for everything, was a -- that the reason that you keep the people alive.

Q: What's your favorite food now?

A: Now? But now is not [indecipherable] now I try to eat just little, just a little bit.

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Q: How about when you first -- when food became available to you? When it was no longer so scarce? What did you really, really want to eat?

A: Difficult to say at this age, don't remember, you know? This I don't remember how it was, but hey, I remember -- I -- I half remember, you know, of many things I remember after the uprising, you know, came m-my aunt. She was a old man -- old woman, you know, and she bring a -- a soup, was potatoes, it was few pieces of meat, was so -- tasting so good, oh my God, was so tasty because she has whole bowl I can eat. It was so -- tasting so good. The people which never was hungry do not understand how the food can [indecipherable]. I was many, many times in my life hungry.

Q: You moved from a life where you didn't have very much, where yo -- as a young man you had -- had killed a lot of people, had taken a lot of risks, had helped a lot of people. You moved to a country with this image of guns, violence, the wild west, the gang warfare, all of this stuff. How did that strike you?

A: I tell you, I perl -- I tell you my first experience. When I came to this country, then I have to do something, I looking for a job. I didn't have documents, have nothing this time, I didn't now just -- apply for the -- for the -- for the permanent visa I apply, but this time I get the job. And it was a burned building, building was burned, and they needed somebody who can remove this old broken pieces, the burned pieces, you know, for the house. Was a very difficult job because was in

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July, it's 1968, very hot summer and I working on this building, remove this old broken pieces, and come the police. And I scare -- I was scare. I thought I didn't know what I have to with myself. I scared that I -- I was scare, and the police start smiling. She was [indecipherable] smiling because she -- for my dirty face, and she ask me, hey Buddy, there are dogs in this house? I understand dogs, I thought no dogs, and she left. I thought, oh my goodness, this guy didn't arrest me. They didn't ask me for nothing, only for the dogs. [indecipherable] didn't ask, di-didn't check my documents, he didn't say th -- what I am doing here. Was -- for me was something -- something what I cannot believe what is going on because of every time, you have to carry documents, you have to show your documents, like a German. During the German you have -- need the kennecarte, you know? Then later you need the, you know, some other documents. Still I have my kennecarte because during the uprising in Warsaw if I was -- I was -- when I was wounded in the leg, I was in the hospital [indecipherable] unfortunately only two days I was in the hospital and I was -- the bomb exploded, the bomb explode and I was with the debris covered completely. I was unconscious. I will -- don't know how th -- how long. The people find me later, then I -- draw me out from there -- from there -- from this debris, from this house. All -- all -- all people was [indecipherable] in this house there was killed except me, because the explosion throw away me, you know. And later, in the 1945, when the war was -- was up -- finished, you know,

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was exhumation on these people from this -- from this place. And I watch exhumation because was very good friend of mine was over this killed, and I ke -- I went to the exhumation. Was six caskets in the church on the -- in Warsaw. I go because was friend of mine and I come a little bit late that I didn't pay attention for this casket, because six caskets later when they call me, they grab me, one woman come grab me for the hand and bring me to the casket and so, hey Mike, take a look, this is your -- it was in the casket my name, my father's name, everything was mine. [indecipherable] my body was -- was not my body, I was alive. What happened, when was explosion, explodes me, take me away, they take off from me my whole -- all my clothes, my document, everything. When they exhumated the people they find the documents, they find somebody, you know, they put these documents to this body. It was the story, you know, that I was in my own funeral. And later I go to that -- I -- later I go to the Red Cross and told, no, listen, I am still alive, I'm not passed away. And they give me my document, what was with this -- what was, you know.

Q: Wow, you still have it. Amazing.

A: And this is from the [indecipherable] ausweis.

Q: Wow. Huh. Why do you keep these?

A: This wa -- what?

Q: Why do you keep it?

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A: Th -- bec -- keep the [indecipherable] like a photo, you know? Well, maybe if my son will be interested, but I have to keep this, you know, because this I get -- I get this, it was a big problem with this because -- [ah, it doesn't matter, this is --

Q: Little piece there.

A: -- but with the piece] -- you know, when I go to the Red Cross because the when di -- when I went to -- they told -- you have to go to the Red Cross because Red Cross has all document which was, you know, over there. I went to the Red Cross, I took this in. I was on my funeral today, but I am not dead. I was [indecipherable] because you have my documents. Well, they find my documents, but they [indecipherable] start my problem, the problem with KGB that th -- that there's something cheating because they tried to make a -- the people which alive, they ka -- tried to make a document with people [indecipherable] the people would like to change his name, his ma -- his personality. They afraid that they could try and go this way. I have another problem. You know, this was the -- I have a good experience with the [indecipherable] is difficult, it's the big, big, long story with this.

Q: When your son was growing up, did you tell him about your experiences?

A: Sure. He know -- he know very well and this the reason that he grow up in the same -- in the same like I grow up, in this patriotism, he grow in the same patriotism. This mean in the right way, and the reason, you know, that he right

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way, he has a problem when he attend to the school, he was a very, very good student and he have some problem but he was throw away once year from the school, you know, when it was [indecipherable]. I don't remember, the third or fourth grade, you know, very young. This time he was too stupid to lie, you know, and this he discuss with th -- his teacher, and explain to teacher that he -- that she is not right, and he bring encyclopedia and [indecipherable] history and tell her, this is document, this is document. You stupid, you cannot attend to this school, out. But then I talk to the director and director, listen, I can do nothing, you know, the time now don't belong to the [indecipherable] member of the party, of the communistic party what you can say. You have to take your son to the 'nother school.

Q: Do you ever speak German?

A: When?

Q: Now. I mean, given your experiences.

A: No, it i -- it is -- when I come to the United States, in the beginning I use the German a lot because I didn't speak too good English, you know, and all instruction the German -- the -- the books from the Philips when I went for -- for medical Philips [indecipherable] books in three languages. Was English, German and -- and -- and Dutch. The Dutch is difficult, English I didn't know too perfect, you know, that I use the German. And I speak -- but later, slowly, slowly,

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slow, I switch to -- to English, but when -- the first time I was in Poland, what I said, after this 18 years, from the Poland I go what I thought in the beginning to Austria to visit my cousin, my wife cousin, that in the a-airport I starts -- in the -- in the Vienna I start talk to the German. And after the while, it come back. But I don't think that would be able to now because I don't use any more.

Q: How do you feel now toward armed conflict in the world?

A: This is very, very difficult situation. This is very difficult situation, I don't know how this -- everything will be finish. Is very difficult situation because is too many terrorists, too many terrorists and this -- this terrorist is not terrorist problem. The ter -- the problem I think is the fanatics, and the -- the lot of leaders which you know, bring the young people to the -- to the fighting [indecipherable] I -- I feeling now how was the leader, we as young boy during the German -- during the German occupation and this young people was bring to this action b -- at home by the older people. But we're fighting, we're feeling, we -- we -- we're feeling we're trusting, we know what we're fighting for. In the same way I think lot of young people -- because if you take a look at these terrorists are young people, the same the youth, the brave -- we no [indecipherable] wars, because we was patriot, but these people, I think they -- like you [indecipherable] wars, and this the reason that the -- this the -- the reason that they fighting, they are fanatics. They are fighting maybe they did it or something, what about. I tell you the example, th-the

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very s -- the very simple example. In 1936, I think I was student, and this time was fight in the Spain between communist and Franco. And lot of people from Poland -- not a lot, but some young student, tried to run away from Poland, go to the Spain for fighting. One, oh, I will be fighting with the -- against the Franco, I go be -- are you going to Franco, fight against the communists, you know the people just would like to do something, you know? Have so much energy they tried to do something. And this is the same -- same situation here, and this, I think is similar situation because this terrorists what is coming, they're coming from different country, even if the Afghanistan, even if the -- in the Iraq, they coming the people, and not only the people which living over there, coming the -- the terrorist from different -- from different country. You know about this. And this is -- this is the problem. This is a very difficult situation, I don't know how [indecipherable] survive this is very, very difficult situation. Bush, my opinion going right way, but he is -- has very, very, very difficult job, because with the partisan, what is partisan is very difficult to win. I know how during the German occupation, the German and th -- cannot win the partisan, and the -- the Russian, which is a much stronger, much [indecipherable] would try -- try fighting with the Afghanistan and they go away from the Washingt -- Afghanistan they cannot win this, and th-the problem is he -- not simply -- not easy. United State have a good politic because they tried to involve in that -- to bring a de-democracy by the people which living

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over there, but still there's too many fanatics. This is a problem and the -- th-the problem, education over there, the level of education, the people [indecipherable] not very high. They know how reading and writing, but this -- this only everything, and this the reason that they still -- th-the reason that they still going to the -- to the order of [indecipherable], or this -- or the -- this own priest, you know, I talking priest, but [indecipherable] this little -- that priest, you know. And this [indecipherable] his own business, not the business the country, not the business nothing, so it's -- they know if there will be democracy, they lost the power, they lost everything, because of democracy will not accepted the -- the fanatics.

Q: So you think war is all right.

A: The -- listen, it's no -- is not another way, no. What -- what you can do another way with these people? You -- you not fighting, they would kill you to the end, what you -- will you wait -- you wait [indecipherable] when you waiting for the end? You can not waiting. You -- is coming the moment that you have to -- if somebody beat you there, you have to oh, thank you, beat me again, thank you, beat me again? You cannot stay like this, you have still go against this.

Q: Well, some people who were involved in warfare, people such as yourself, later on became pacifists, but sounds like you haven't.

A: I am not a pacifist, you know, the pacifists they don't like the war, but the war is -- sometime you have to -- you have to defend yourself, you have to defend

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yourself. And this war, what is -- what you make United States, this is not the war, this is -- my opinion, this is defending. This is defending. This is only defending.

Q: Have you ever owned a gun since you were in the liberation?

A: No. No. I using the gun, what for? I don't get the gun. I would like to -- someday I would like to go to range and shooting, because I like shooting. When you see you're going to some -- some -- you know the one, Orlando someday shooting, that I take a take a [indecipherable] because I shooting still excellent, you know? Maybe not like now because my eyes and my hands not so good like was for 60 years ago, you know, but this is -- I shooting to the people you know, but now if I have to shoot to the animal today -- today, I would not [indecipherable]. I would not [indecipherable].

Q: Turn this tape over and do --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: Tape two, side B, January 30th, 2004, Mike Madejski, here we go. You have two grandchildren now?

A: Two grandchildren, babies, two -- two -- twins.

Q: Boys or girls?

A: T-Two girls.

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Q: Two girls, okay. When these girls grow up, if they are in a situation similar to the situation you found yourself in as a young man, would you hope that they took up arms and they were part of the resistance?

A: I -- I believe there will be no war because there's -- fighting in the resistance is for the patriotist, but this is very difficult, is very, very risky. I would like there would be the peace of the world, and I would like that my granddaughters would have living not in the -- not in the -- world will be living in peace. I believe would be the world and this would go s -- if they -- we did -- I believe we be the peace. You know, I did not believe 30 years ago the communists would fall down. That the Berlin wall -- Berlin ga -- mu -- mu -- fall down. This everything happened, and I believe that th-these people growing up the smartest, and the peace will be on the world. I don't want be -- I would do -- like to be [indecipherable] but from the 'nother hand, my son grow up in the patriotist and I believe you know was -- was -- was young, what I said, he started eventually, in the beginning he did not understand, but still now, you know, in this communist system which he grow up, you know that my son was -- was a young, they always try to teach young people will be spying his parents. My son was enough smart he understand what is going on, and then he [indecipherable] and believe that he -- my son grow up [indecipherable] his daughters in the same condition, in the patriotism.

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Q: If the world doesn't turn out the way you would like it, would you want them to fight?

A: If we be there -- if we be the right way for the freedom, for the liberator, for the freedom, yes. But if we be the fight, you know, for the somebody business or somebody, you know, no. You know, it's a different in the fighting, is sometime big difference, sometime the -- if you take Russia when they fighting, what they're fighting for the freedom, they setting the people for the -- for the [indecipherable] you know. They -- if you take I-I-I-I-Iran -- not [indecipherable] but Iran, what they fighting, they [indecipherable] people and fighting for what they put him the sign on the -- on the forehead and taught, you fighting for this, but they didn't fighting for freedom, they was -- you know, that the leaders need the -- some business make. It was a business fight, not the freedom fight.

Q: Is there anything else you want to say?

A: Pardon me?

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

A: No, thanks. There's, I think, everything I can tell you if you interesting, you know, this is my si -- daughter -- my sister-in-law and this friend of mine which was in Auschwitz, was Auschwitz prisoner many, many years.

Q: So do you find that you have many friends now who had similar experience?

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A: Yes, I have -- no, I will have organization. We have veteran's organization here, and this organization what is -- what for this organization? Organization helping one each other. For instance, here we have a people which in my -- at sometimes, so they cannot drive. We ha -- I have a very good friend, he was a -- a hero from Monte Cassino, if -- I don't know if you know what Monte Cassino? Was a fight in Monte Cassino, have you heard? No. In a -- during the World War second, it was a -- where the American invaded England -- Italy, go to the Italy. It was a monastery on Monte Cassino and was a German, you know. And this Monte Cassino was lot of people fighting about this, cannot win. And [indecipherable] the Polish army, you know, take care about this [indecipherable] friend of mine was hero from Monte Cassino, he had a highest o-o-oh -- you know, orders for this, for these medals, and now he passed away, six months -- four months ago. But he couldn't drive like already from two years, and now his wife, which is the same age, he has the ca -- breast cancer. He has to go to the, you know, treatment. He can -- he can drive, but only locally, he has to go to the hospital that I drive her, you know. Not -- not only me, but this way one can help each other, you know? This wa -- I'm very, very involved in this organization. We have two organization which I belong, one is a Aspika, this is a Polish veterans -- Polish corps army, the 'nother is Armia Krajowa, this is Polish Home Army, you know, and we belong to this organization and to this organization help one each other,

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help people. We don't pay for the nationality -- pay for the -- for the religion, we not care, we not interesting because to this organization belong Jewish people and Polish people and the re -- Christian, we don't care about -- we have our friends, Dr. Oris, which is very famous doctor working in the VA hospital, he is a Jewish, but we don't [indecipherable] Jewish, he's [indecipherable] my friend, you know. He was a partisan and he thought -- helped the people like we helped one each other, you know? We don't care. That's mean this -- another doctor passed away [indecipherable] and I thought like we need the -- I need the help, I have [indecipherable] the guy who sent on this time, you know, will be nobody saved, taking -- I give him prescription, if not money. I organize there's some medicine for him. This is -- you know, this is -- this is friendship. These people are still friendship, they were working on the same friendship level.

Q: So it sounds like those values have stayed with you.

A: No, that's not only me, the same people for me like [indecipherable] the people, this is exactly same. This is exactly same way. Exactly same.

Q: That's wonderful. Thank you so much.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Conclusion of Interview