United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Lucille Eichengreen
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PREFACE

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LUCILLE EICHENGREEN
November 7, 2001

Tape 1

Question: Good morning.

Answer: Good morning.

Q: It's finally nice to see you here in Washington, after all these months of waiting. So, thank you for coming. Lucille, let's just start very simply tell me when you were born.

A: February 1st, 1925.

Q: And where were you born?

A: I was born in Hamburg, Germany.

Q: And your name at the time of your birth.

A: Cecilia Landau.

Q: So, it was Cecilia all through your childhood. When did it become Lucille?

A: When I came to New York, and the abbreviation for Cecilia was Cillie, and in English it sounds "Cillie". So, somebody talked – talked me into changing the name to Lucille, Cecilia, and I should have just left it Cecilia, but it was too late.

Q: So, do you think of yourself as Cecilia when you think about yourself?

A: No, not really, but sometimes when somebody says, "Lucille, come here." I don't hear it. If somebody would say, "Cecilia" I would hear.

Q: So, should I call you Lucille?

A: No, Lucille is fine.

Q: Okay.

A: That's fine.

Q: Lucille, let's talk a little bit about your family. Tell me about you're growing up. So, first I want to know what was your father's name and your mother's name?

A: My father's name was Benno Landau, short for Benjamin. My mother name was Sala Landau before that it was actually Sala Baumwollspinner.

Q: Very long name.

A: Yes.

Q: And where did they meet?

A: They met shortly after the First World War, in Cottbus, Germany, where my mother's older brother had established a wine import-export business and was very successful. And, my mother – my father was already in Vienna and in Germany. My mother came from Sambor, Poland, because she was already in her late 20s, and there was no suitable suitor who came knocking. So, my grandmother sent her – she was the youngest of eight or ten children – to Cottbus hoping she would find a husband.

Q: And she did?

A: She did, because my father worked for her older brother as a salesman.

Q: Tell me what growing up with them was like. I know you were born in 1925. So, you don't have to talk about the first couple of years unless you actually have a memory. What was home life like for you?

A: It was very predictable. It was very middle class. It was very secure. It was very unpretentious, although there was a maid for the children and a maid for the house, and we went on nice vacation. There were music lessons and English lessons and dancing lessons. But we took it for granted. My parents were rather strict – strict in terms of schooling, of grades, strict when I didn't practice violin. Children had to be seen but not heard. When my

parents discussed personal things or business events, they would speak Polish. I did not understand. When they talked to me and later on to my sister, it was in German. Occasionally, they would speak French, but not very often. It was – it was a nice childhood. The memories I have until 1933, when I was eight, are warm and they are loving. I really could not fault my parents for anything other than that were really very, very strict and very demanding. It was very important that a report card had an "A", maybe a "B", but anything below that was not acceptable.

Q: What would happen to you if…?

A: Nothing would happen, but there would be reprimand, there would be a conference with the teacher, and after '33, when the grades slipped considerably, then there was a different tutor every afternoon – one for German, one for Math, one for English, one for French, and the grades did improve. What my parents did not consider was that the outside world had an influence on children. They told us that things would change. It would not remain this way. The neighbor's children would begin to play with us again. The boys would no longer beat us up on the way to school. It would – life would normalize. They didn't say exactly when, but they were very reassuring and very convinced that there would be a political change. And my parents, of course, could not vote in German elections. They never became naturalized German citizens. They didn't want to. We went to Poland quite frequently to see the family, to see Grandmother, and what I heard in Poland as a very young child was that you, in Germany, are complaining about anti-Semitism. You don't know what it's like in Poland. Your economic conditions do not compare to ours. To me, it did not make sense.

Q: You didn't understand what they were saying?

A: No. I could not comprehend. My grandmother spoke Polish. She spoke Yiddish to me, and I answered in German, but I really did not comprehend. The family in Poland was well-off, but nothing compared to life in Germany. For instance, the streets in this little town were not – the streets were dirt streets, and when the peasants were pushing their wagons through the main street of the town, they took their shoes off because it was muddy, and I could see their feet with the – with the mud oozing through the toes. When we arrived by train in Poland, we were picked up by a cousin with a horse and buggy. Well, I would not go into the buggy – not with a horse in front of it that was moving. I was used to a black taxi with white stripes. So, these things I remember. I remember them warmly. I – I remember that, and I appreciate that, I had a part of that culture, because it ended too soon.

Q: Your father remained – he was in the wine business. He was a wine importer. Was he home a great deal, or did he travel?

A: No, he didn't travel at all.

Q: He didn't travel?

A: No, no. He had traveling salesman, and he was home continually. He came home for lunch time. He went with us on vacations every summer. It was usually a month or six weeks. How well the business did, I never knew. I was never told. I had a small allowance, probably of 50 cents a month. I didn't need anything, and I was not allowed to buy frivolous items. The clothing for the kids was custom made.

Q: Was that unusual? The middle class that you were-

A: Middle class and upper-middle class it was custom made, yes. In those days, a man did not buy ready-made suits. There were hardly any. I went to a private Jewish school. The teachers were – at that time – in their late 50s, and to me terribly old. They were very strict and they

were very orthodox. You had to adhere to the rules and regulations. On Saturday, you didn't take a streetcar. You didn't write. You did not carry a purse. You pinned your handkerchief to your jacket. You learned Hebrew, post-modern Hebrew. You learned *Humash and Gemora* and you had to translate. It was mandatory, five days a week. School was not a happy experience. It was very rigid, very regimented, very German in spite of the fact that the teachers were all Jewish, very demanding and it lacked compassion, understanding for the children. We were told going home on the streetcar to stand in the back, to be quiet, not to talk loudly, not to draw attention, and I remember saying one day, "They want us to become invisible. How does one do that?"

Q: And who did you say this to?

A: I said it both to my parents and to some friends, because I could not understand the restrictions. I could not understand what I had done to deserve the punishment of being beaten up on the street or having stones thrown at me or obscene names. I did not – I did not realize the impact, and I believed at that point, that it would change.

Q: So, is your memory that 1933 creates a real change for you, when you're eight years old? Is that how your memory-

A: It's between '33 and '36. It was over a three-year period.

Q: Let me go back to your parents for just a moment. Did you feel closer to one parent more than another? Or were they both very similar for you?

A: They were very similar both in background, in education, in upbringing. I would say my mother was more reserved. She never contradicted my father. She agreed with all of his decisions. I think I can only recall two times when she disagreed. She came home one day and had cut off her long black hair which was tied to the top of her head, and she came home

with a fashionable bob. And the other thing she did – which was before I was born, but I heard the story – during the inflation, under the inflation of 1922, she pawned her silver to keep the business afloat, and she did not ask permission. After the business prospered, she of course got it back, but I think during the middle ’30s, early ’30s, she deferred him in all other decisions. I did not know at that time that my father bought commercial real estate. It was never mentioned. The decision was made between my father and my mother’s brother, younger brother, who was an associate, but we had no idea about it. We might have picked up a word or two, but we would have never asked. That wasn’t done.

Q: So, when you would sit at lunch – I assume you ate lunch together with your parents.

A: At two o’clock.

Q: At two o’clock, or dinner, would you – and after your sister was born and she became a little bit older, she was born in 1930, I think-

A: Right.

Q: Were you supposed to sit there very quietly and they would carry on the conversation, or would people ask you questions about what had happened at school?

A: There were very few questions at the dinner table. The maid would sometimes bring in a dish or plates, and then the language would immediately switch to Polish. We were asked questions about school, but not necessarily at the dinner table. It was when it came time to do homework, or when you wanted to postpone homework and the answer was, “No, homework first.” It was a typical education of the ’30s when you had to be within the role of a child, not have the freedom of being light-hearted or joking or tell funny stories. It wasn’t done.

Q: But you seem to remember it very fondly.

A: Yes.

Q: In spite of the restrictions.

A: Yes because it was very secure. It was very predictable, and it gave us a sense of belonging. It gave us a sense of being cared for. It gave us a sense of never missing anything. Anything that was necessary for a normal life or a satisfactory life was provided. You didn't have to ask for it.

Q: Were you happy when Karin was born?

A: Yes, I was delighted.

Q: Did that mean that you had a place, even though she was so much younger, to laugh and be liked? I mean, did it give you something that you hadn't had?

A: Well, I wanted a sister, and I put a cube of sugar on the windowsill so the stork would come and take the sugar and bring a sister. Yes, we played, even though there was a five-year difference. She was very fast, very bright, and very pretty, and when she started school, I had to listen, "Why can't you behave like your sister? Why can't you be as intelligent as your sister? Why do you have to talk out of turn? Why can't you bring home A's like your sister?" And that was a little difficult.

Q: So, were you a little bit rebellious in that household?

A: Maybe not in the household, but definitely at school. At school, I got into trouble here and there.

Q: How so?

A: I would talk out of turn and we organized some pranks for teacher. I could think of putting thumb tacks some place, or put some glue on the chair. Or, when it's later on, when the physics professor said, "Turn the Bunsen burner on low," I turned it on high, and all the windows blew out, and my dad had to pay for new windows. So, I had my share of troubles.

Q: Did your parents explain about the Nazis, or simply said there was a change of government? Did you see things in the street?

A: Yes, I saw the uniforms - first the brown uniforms with the red arm bands and the hats, which was called the SA. We saw the children in uniform, young children – white shirts, brown skirts or trousers, and sort of a brownish necktie. We did not see many other uniforms at that point. The green uniforms came much later. The local police wore greenish uniforms.

Q: Wait one second. The noise is really too much. Okay, I'm sorry, go ahead.

A: The precinct police wore green uniforms and those silly helmets, but they were separate. Each precinct had a – each living area had a precinct and it was mandatory that when you moved into an apartment or into a house that you register at the precinct – name, address, occupation, tax id number, and religion. When you decided to move from A Street to B Street, you went back to the precinct. You told them where you're moving to. You went to the new precinct, and you went through the procedure again. This system still exists in Germany and in France, and this was probably one of the reasons that you could keep tabs on people.

Q: But you clearly experienced a difference in terms of when you said that you felt, on the one hand, you're invisible, on the other hand, people know you're Jewish, and you're receiving all sorts of punishment of one sort or another. So, you're both invisible and not invisible at the same time.

A: Well, I was visible, but the adults wanted me to be invisible, not to draw any attention. While, on the other hand, we took the punishment regardless of where we stood, where we walked or what we did.

Q: And when you would come home having been taunted or beaten up, your parents would know this?

A: Yes, and could tell it by the dirty clothing because it was soiled from the stones and from the dirt that they threw at us. Sometimes, it would be a black eye.

Q: So, it was really bad.

A: It got progressively worse. At first it was taunts and remarks, and then it became physical. But they tried to comfort us, but I think, as children, or as growing children, we were afraid and became subsequently more so.

Q: So, you became much more afraid?

A: Yes.

Q: Of a lot of things, right?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: So, did you then retreat into yourself? Did you stay at home more than you used to?

A: I stayed at home more, or somebody had to bring me to a friend's house or pick me up. I started to draw and paint a great deal. My grades slipped terribly, and that's when most of my spare time was occupied with tutors. The grades improved, but I don't think the happiness changed or the unhappiness changed. I would have like to leave the country like many of my school friends, but my parents saw no reason to leave because, in their eyes, we were former nationals. We had the protection of another government and we were untouchable.

Q: Did they say this to you?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Now, how was Karin, your younger sister, responding? Equally fearfully, or was she-

A: No.

Q: She wasn't?

A: She was not. She was somehow able to ignore it, to shut it out, and she was probably less molested because she was blond and curly-haired at times. I had dark hair. I was older. It did not seem to bother her, or maybe she was so much younger that she did not get the impact from the beginning. She grew into it. When she started school in '35, this is the way it was. It hadn't just changed overnight.

Q: Did you talk with her, once she started school? Did you talk about what was happening?

A: No, I never did. We talked about the teachers. We talked about grades. We did silly things. We would hide things or play tricks on our parents, or when my mother was looking for a pair of shoes, and one shoe was missing. We shared a room. The two beds were divided. In the middle was a big wardrobe. We had dolls and dolls' carriages, and we played like normal children in a home. She had her friends. I had mine. But as we grew older, there was less interaction.

Q: How did your fears affect you, besides the grades? Were you able to sleep? Was it disturbed sleep?

A: I was dreaming a great deal. When my parents would go in the evening to a concert or to the theater, to the opera, and the maid would stay with us, they normally took a streetcar or taxi. I would not sleep until they got home, and it was sometimes one o'clock in the morning. I couldn't. It was just fear – fear of something that I could not verbalize. I thought maybe the streetcar would crash, or the taxi would have an accident. There was no coherent explanation of why this terrible fear.

Q: Did it affect your eating?

A: Yes, I was a very poor eater, and the school doctor recommended that I go for summer vacation to a children's home so I could recuperate a little bit, and my father had to convince them that we went on vacation every year, and it was, you know, there was no shortage of food, and they didn't have to worry. And I never did go. I would not go away from home alone.

Q: Do you think your personality changed as you were by yourself a little bit more and you're painting?

A: No, I don't think at that point, not at that point, probably later, but not at that point. The change that I remember took place in 1938.

Q: When your father is-

A: No.

Q: Was taken?

A: Yes, when my father was taken to Poland, and then, of course, when I walked to school on November 10th, after the Night of the Broken Glass, and I saw the synagogues burning. I saw the stores vandalized, and we turned around and went back home. That's when it really became clear to me that this was not a place to stay or to live, but since I had no influence, there was nothing I could do.

Q: And, you're over 13 then, 13 and a half or something right?

A: Yes, right. I could have gone on a children's boat to England, but I would not go alone, not without -

Q: Not without your sister?

A: No.

Q: No, just alone, and you wouldn't do it?

A: No.

Q: Tell me about your nightmares.

A: Then or now?

Q: Then. Now we'll do later.

A: My nightmares then were of accidents, of vehicles crashing, of streetcars derailing, of trains catching fire, because they had old-fashioned locomotives, of catastrophes. I was worried in a thunderstorm. I was petrified of lightening and these were the nightmares.

Q: And you're in these situations all the time?

A: Right, right, I was there.

Q: Do you survive them or you don't survive them in the dreams? Do you remember?

A: I know that I talked in my dreams and I know that I screamed in my dreams, and I know I woke.

Q: Now, before your father is sent to Poland, in 1937, you leave the place where you've been living all your life. Am I correct?

A: In 1937, my father voluntarily closed the business. I assumed the reasons to be because we were Jewish, but it really wasn't the main reason. The main reason was that he didn't need the business. There was enough money. There was enough income. There was sufficient real estate. So, why bother?

Q: So, he was getting sufficient income from the real estate.

A: Right.

Q: I see.

A: And he just voluntarily liquated in '37, and his brother in Palestine, who left from Berlin in '34, asked that we come, and they said, "No, we are not coming." And the letter that my

father wrote to my uncle, which was lost but I know of the letter, was if he can eat doves in this country, why should we come with a Bunsen burner to Palestine? So, that was never a consideration of leaving the country.

Q: Although you had it in your head?

A: Yes, because my classmates left, and it was an adventure. I did not know what it meant to go to Palestine, or to the USA. It was a change. It was an adventure. Everybody was doing it. Why shouldn't I do it?

Q: Did you say this to your parents? Did you say-

A: I said, "Why can't we leave? Everybody else is leaving." And they said, "Don't worry, don't worry. It'll be – it'll be okay."

Q: So, in '37, you don't leave the apartment, you stay there.

A: Towards the end of '37, we lived in a condominium, and the whole complex – and the street is still standing – made it clear that the six or seven Jewish families who occupied I would say a total of probably a hundred condominiums, they were no longer desired, and would we please sell our interest and move. And we moved to another apartment that was owned by a Jewish attorney in a not-so-nice area, but acceptable area, and all I remember of that apartment is that it had a tiny little orthodox synagogue in the backyard. We never went there, but there was one, probably a hundred members at the most. The other thing I remember is that on November 10th or 11th, we had a knock on the door at four in the morning, and there was my mother's brother and his son and his wife, and they had spent the night in a train from Cottbus to come to Hamburg to escape the arrest of all males which took place on the 10th of November. So, they were hiding out in that apartment for a couple of weeks.

Q: But that's after your father's gone.

A: My father was already in Poland.

Q: Now, let me ask you something that I forgot to ask you about. Was yours a religious home in any way?

A: Yes. It was religious because both my families came from an orthodox home. All the laws were observed. There were some rabbis in the family on my mother's side. My grandmother wore a wig, and I found that very amusing because she would lift it like you lift a cover on a pot of potatoes, and then she'd put it back. And – but when my parents came to Germany, they somewhat – they became somewhat more liberal. The congregation they belonged to we would call today "conservative" rather than "orthodox". The home had separate dishes. *Kashrut* was observed, but I would say looking back probably not a hundred percent, only 80 percent, but as far as school was concerned, it was very orthodox. So, they tried not to upset me with giving me two sets of values – the more liberal value at home and the orthodox value at school, but yes, it was a religious household.

Q: And that was comfortable for you?

A: I never questioned it. It was customary.

Q: And were most of your friends orthodox, as well?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, let's go back up to '37-'38. How is it that your father is taken? Does he receive a notice? Does someone come to the door and say, "You're a Polish national"? And why aren't you all sent out, why only your father?

A: The Polish Consul in Hamburg was supplied – was supposed to supply a stamp or a validation on all Polish passports, those of Jews and non-Jews, except there happened to be

no non-Jews. But, for some reason, he refused. Whether the reasons were anti-Semitic or not, he refused, and I only know of one or two cases where bribery worked, which was very unusual. The moment he refused to validate the passports, the Germans said, “You’re no longer a valid foreign national living on German ground.” At five-of-one in the morning, they rounded up – they came to our door. They rang the bell, and it was local police. And they said, “You have to come with me because of the matter of the stamps, and we take you to a schoolyard downtown.” And my father said, “My wife just had surgery three months ago. Can she stay with the children?” And my sister and I stood in the hallway and listened, and since he was a local policeman, he said, “All right. You come with me, and I let the family stay.” By afternoon, we heard by phone that this was done throughout the city, and they had rounded up several thousand people, or maybe in Hamburg alone it was not quite as much, and that they were held in a schoolyard, and somebody suggested that we bring my father a suitcase with some clothing. But they also said for my mother not to go because they would keep her. She packed a suitcase and I insisted to take it down. It was heavy. I took public transportation. I took the subway – the underground and the above-ground, and I dragged that suitcase all the way down to the schoolyard. The gate was open and I started looking for my father, but there were a great many people – men, women and children, and he found me. I gave him the suitcase, and I remember distinctly saying to him, “Come home with me. The gate is open. There is no guard. There are no people. Just come home and we’ll hide, or something.” And my father looked at me and he said, “That wouldn’t be the honorable thing to do.” I did not understand what he meant, but my father played by the rules. When the law was published that you were not allowed to have foreign currency or to have currency in a foreign country, my father took the money that was in Holland and

brought it back to Germany. So, you played by the rules, which I learned many years later that you don't have to. He could have just walked out. Nobody would have said a thing, and some people did, but very few. He was pushed over the border. The Poles pushed back, and the Germans pushed him in. They got to Zbaszyn, from Zbaszyn he went to Posen. He stayed there two months. He tried to come back to Germany. He couldn't get an entry visa, and he went to Sambor, to mother's family, and he stayed there until May 1940, no 1939, excuse me, when he got permission to come back for four weeks. In the meantime, my mother decided to liquidate the household and to ship all that was contained in an eight-room apartment in huge containers to Palestine, to my father's brother. She handled the shipping. She handled the packing. She handled the Gestapo who came to watch, and tried to approve every single item that went out of the country. She put a bottle of wine and two glasses on the table, and she refilled it with two or three more bottles, and they drank a great deal and we packed fast.

Q: Who drank?

A: The two Gestapo.

Q: The two Gestapo, not your mother?

A: No, no, no. She just talked to the packers, "Hurry up, pack." We did not take anything of any particular value, just the furniture, clothing, linens and silverware, jewelry – whatever we normally had in the apartment, but the faster the better. The two crates were packed. They were picked-up, and they were shipped to Trieste. We, in the meantime, had to give up under new German laws the apartment and we were assigned to a room on Werder Street Five. In the meantime, my father was granted permission and he came back. I think the permission partly was through the intervention of my mother who hounded the Gestapo in the *Staathaus*

in Hamburg. She wrote. She went in. She talked to them. They threatened with arrest. She didn't give up. I never thought that a quiet, reserved woman would do what she did, and it absolutely amazed me. When my father came back, we started to work on an affidavit for the United States, and it certificate for Palestine. The four weeks ran out. My mother got an extension for another four weeks, and another four weeks, and one morning, on September 1st, the doorbell rang at five in the morning, six in the morning, and two men appeared with hats and long, black leather coats, and it was September. It was warm. And they asked for my father, and they said that Germany is at war with Poland. We have invaded Poland. You are an enemy alien, and you have to come with us. And that was the first day of the Second World War. He was first sent to a prison in Fuhlsbüttel, which later became a concentration camp, and we were still allowed to bring every week a briefcase with laundry and take home a briefcase with dirty laundry for about two or three weeks, but Poland lost the war for all intents and purposes within two weeks. They had pockets of resistance, but not of war, and the moment that became a fact, my father was transported to Berlin to Oranienburg, to Sachsenhausen, and the mail stopped coming. It was sort of an aerogram with one sentence: "I'm fine. I hope you are fine. Love, Ben." These letters became less and less frequent, until one arrived from Dachau. We had never heard of the place. My mother made, I would say, twice monthly trips to the Gestapo in Hamburg, in the *Stathaus*, pleading for release, trying to work for an exit visa, trying to work towards immigration papers, anyplace, writing a letter every week to the head of the Gestapo. The end result was that they brought my father to Gestapo headquarters for an hour's visit. He had on a grey and blue striped prison uniform and matching cap. We were sitting on opposite sides of the table, no touching. We talked but nobody could talk. My mother assured him she would try. It was a Catch-22. To go to

Shanghai, you had to have 400 American dollars, but you weren't allowed to have American currencies, and we had nobody who would give it to us. Our accounts had been blocked. Our money had been confiscated. We got a hundred dollars a month allowance to live on, no more. We had to move to the apartment next door, number seven. I still went to school. My sister still went to school. We went to the Jewish Community Council, who was headed at that time by a Doctor Plaut (ph). Doctor Plaut at that time was a man in his early 50s. He was unmarried. You had to wait for an audience, like you wait for the pope. We pleaded for papers because it was an emergency because somebody was sitting in a concentration camp, and he shrugged his shoulders and he said there was nothing he could do, but he became very well known for the fact that you could buy favors, but that was 1939, 1940. We heard rumors. He married a very much younger woman with two young children, and he remained, as I'm told, in Germany and was exchanged for a German I believe in Yugoslavia, pretty much into the war '43-'44. He ended up in Palestine. My father remained in Dachau and one man was released, and he had papers, first for Italy and then for Palestine, and my mother and I went to see him one evening after curfew, and we saw this six foot tall man who was a skeleton – no front teeth, shaven head – and when my mother asked him, "How is Benno?" He said, "Fine." He managed to leave Germany with his wife and two children, and he promised to help once he would be outside. Going back to '39, when my father returned from Poland, he talked to the Italian Consul and they were on friendly terms, and he offered my father a three-day visa to Italy, and my father said, "And what do I do after the three days?" And being Italian the man said, "Go, and worry later." My father wouldn't go. He was murdered in Dachau in February 1941. The Gestapo did something that the very rarely did. They brought us a cigar boxes with ashes. Whose ashes? We will never know.

Q: Who was at the door when they - ?

A: I opened the door.

Q: You opened the door.

A: And, they said, "Mrs. Landau?" And I took them to the kitchen, and they threw the box on the table, and they said, "Ashes, Benjamin Landau." And my mother screamed, and something on the stove was burning, and they left, and that was February '41. I went to school in the daytime. I did homework, sewing at night because we needed the money desperately, and we had to move to another furnished room.

Q: Let me ask you something. When these men come in and they throw this cigar box on the table and your mother screams, what do you do?

A: Nothing. I stood frozen.

Q: You just stood there.

A: I just – I couldn't comprehend. First of all, I didn't know what cremation was. I had never been to a cemetery. I didn't know what ashes meant at this point. It was a concept that was not within the Jewish religion. So, it took minutes or – I don't know how long it took to really comprehend what it was. Somebody called the chief rabbi, which was Josef Carlebach, and it was an orthodox burial although it was not in accordance with law. And we never found out whether those are really his ashes. The body – the ashes were buried in the Jewish cemetery in Hamburg, and we managed to save some money and give it to a non-Jewish business acquaintance to set a stone, and the stone still stands. We lived in this apartment until Fall '41, when we received notification for resettlement, and all it said was "East" nothing else.

Q: Okay, I want to come back a little bit. I'm assuming that the luggage, when you went down the first time, when your father was taken in '38, was a fairly piece of luggage.

A: It was actually a big suitcase.

Q: You, who talk about being so frightened through this period, all of a sudden, you're going to take this luggage because you know it's too dangerous for your mother. Were you frightened when you went?

A: I didn't think. I knew I had to deliver it, one way or another, and I just – I couldn't carry it, either. I dragged it, and luggage didn't have wheels in those days. No, I wasn't – I was probably apprehensive, but not frightened. I knew I had to take it someplace, and that was all that mattered.

Q: And when you saw your father, did you hug each other?

A: Yes.

Q: You did?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you annoyed with him, angered with him?

A: No, I cried.

Q: Frustrated with him that he – you cried.

A: I cried.

Q: And he cried?

A: No.

Q: No? And when he wouldn't come with you?

A: Well, he pushed me towards the gate. He turned me around and said, "Please go." And I went.

Q: And did you cry all the way home?

A: I tried not to.

Q: Did you walk or did you take the subway?

A: It was too much to walk. I took the subway again.

Q: You said you were surprised at how your mother behaved. That she seemed to change from the woman you had known, so that once her husband was gone, she took over as the head of the household.

A: Right, right.

Q: And fairly easily I gather from what you-

A: Well, she felt driven. She felt if she didn't do it, who would do it? And she believed truly that she could get my father released.

Q: Now, when you came home that day, did you want to fall into your mother's arms crying, or did you go to your room? Do you have any recollection?

A: I think that night we – my sister and I – slept in the big bed in my parents' bedroom.

Q: With your mother?

A: Yes.

Q: Did your mother cry?

A: Yes.

Q: So, that must have been very hard on both of you.

A: Very hard.

Q: Did you know what to do? I mean, there's nothing.

A: There was nothing. There was nothing to say or nothing to do.

Q: Did friends come over? Other women who had also lost their husbands, or who hadn't but were friends with your mother?

A: No, because everybody stayed at home by the phone hoping. So, nobody came over, but the phone lines went back and forth, "Have you heard?" "What do you know?" "Will we get the stamp in the passport?" "Will they let them come back next week?" It was conjecture, nobody really knew.

Q: Right. Now, during this period, before your father returns for that month and then another four weeks and another four weeks, the money that you have as far as you know is the same amount that you have had before. They haven't confiscated the money yet.

A: No, they didn't get around to that yet. That only happened after the 1st of September when Poland was invaded. Until that time, we had free access to bank accounts, to anything within Germany.

Q: Right, and your mother didn't move money some place.

A: No, it was unthinkable.

Q: Unthinkable to do?

A: It was unthinkable. I know sufficient people moved it to Switzerland or to Holland or – no, it just was illegal, and you didn't do things illegal.

Q: Right, and you're smiling. When your father is taken the second time, does this feel more ominous to you? You're older now of course and you do-

A: No, it did not, because he was treated for the first two weeks under the Geneva Conventions as an enemy alien, and believing, or having learned about the Geneva Conventions, I mean, after all it couldn't be bad. You could bring laundry once a week, and pick up laundry once a week, and do the same over again. And I don't think we even contemplated the end of the

war or Poland losing the war. I think we naively anticipated a settlement, international intervention, or something of that sort.

Q: So, when did you start to worry? When he's taken out to Oranienburg?

A: Yes. Once they shipped him to Sachsenhausen, Oranienburg, and Dachau, then we began to realize that there is a concentration camp.

Q: Did you expect him to return in your head or were you pessimistic?

A: My mother did. I did not.

Q: And how do you know she did? She said it?

A: She talked about it.

Q: And you never said to her…?

A: No, because there were other men taken at the same time, I either knew their sons or their daughters, and several of them perished or were murdered, and I did not believe that there was escaping Dachau.

Q: And now the money is…?

A: Blocked.

Q: Blocked. And you get a hundred dollars a month from where?

A: Out of our account administered by the Deutsche Bank.

Q: I see.

A: And by the Gestapo, under supervision of the Gestapo.

Q: So, life is getting narrower and tighter and harder for everyone.

A: Very hard.

Q: We should take a break now, the tape is running out.

End of Tape 1

Tape 2

Q: Once your father is taken away and ends up in Dachau, and your mother is now again the head of the household, because I imagine when he returned even for those 12 weeks, he became head of the household again?

A: Right.

Q: So, then it comes back to her.

A: Yes.

Q: And her spirits keep up because she's fighting to try to get him back.

A: Yes, because our neighbor next door had a typewriter, Mr. Berman, and he would write the weekly letters to the Gestapo to release my father.

Q: And she would dictate them?

A: Well, she would tell him what to write, and she would sign them and either deliver them or mail them week after week.

Q: Now, you're old enough to notice some changes. When your father comes back, does she change? Does her personality seem to change?

A: A little bit. Not entirely to what it was before. She was very reassuring that the certificate from Palestine would come. She was very supportive. But any initiation, any discussion, any plans were made by my father, and she agreed.

Q: She agreed?

A: Yes.

Q: So, he didn't change very much.

A: No.

Q: That you noticed.

A: No.

Q: When you saw him when he had been taken the second time, you saw him in the prison, and then you saw him later, did he change significantly?

A: He lost a lot of weight. He was always slim, but not gaunt, and he was gray. His skin was gray and gaunt.

Q: Did that frighten you?

A: Yes.

Q: So, it must have been tough when you folks left him and you go back with the memory of what he was looking like and where it was.

A: Yes, but we still believed there was a chance to get him released.

Q: Would little Karin go with you, too?

A: Yes.

Q: She was by then eight, nine – nine years old.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Right, so you would all go together?

A: Yes. Yes. The building where we saw him still stands. And when I come to the corner, I cross the street. I just don't want to walk past it.

Q: What was the funeral like?

A: The funeral was small because there were few people left. It was like all the orthodox funerals. It was a plain, pine coffin. The rabbi cut the lapels of the coat, and I really don't remember much. It was an open grave. There was a seven-day shiva.

Q: There was?

A: Oh, yes. There was really nothing to say because there were so few Jews left or so few Jews willing to come out to the cemetery. There was a minion. There were some visitors to the house during the week. It didn't seem real. It seemed like you had seen a film, but it really didn't happen.

Q: Did you notice a change in your mother?

A: Yes, she was very withdrawn, very quiet, very disinterested in the daily routine. We had to shop in special stores, food stores. The food coupons had a "J" on them. The rations were, of course, smaller. And she, in a way, sent me out to do the errands.

Q: So, did you then have to take more responsibility in the family?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Did you understand that?

A: Yes, I understood it to the extent that I went to the largest department store who, before the 9th of November was Jewish but no longer, and I said I could sew. Could they give me dresses to sew at night? And they said, "Yes." And they gave me the design – a plain shirt top with a pleated skirt. And I was sewing at night after school. I was sewing on Saturdays, and my mother didn't say a word that you don't sew on Saturdays. And I got paid once a week in a little brown envelope, and after six weeks the lady in charge said, "The skirts are crooked and the sleeves are backwards and the collar doesn't close. I'm sorry. We can't use you." I mean, I was – I had taken a course in school, but I was not a seamstress. I was 16 years old.

Q: But, you certainly were trying, weren't you?

A: I was trying.

Q: Were you disappointed?

A: Yes, I was heartbroken. I was later on told by a lady that I should have tried in the infants department. It would have been so much easier, but that of course had never dawned on me, and by then you couldn't get jobs for anything.

Q: And how was Karin during this period? Did she understand that your father is gone forever?

A: She understood, but on a different level. She also came with Scarlet Fever during that time, and she had to be put into a public hospital behind a fence. We could talk to her through the fence, but it was highly contagious. In those days, there was no medication. And after six weeks she came back home. She understood that he was gone, but she didn't understand for how long, or why, or how permanent it would be. That came later.

Q: And did she ask you where he was?

A: No, she didn't ask because she was at the funeral.

Q: So, she knew in some ways?

A: She knew on some level that there was a grave and there was something in the grave. She did not understand about the ashes. Why would a human being become ashes? That did not make sense at all, and I couldn't explain it. I just couldn't.

Q: This is a strange question I just thought of, but I'm going to ask it anyway – did they put the cigar box into the coffin?

A: Yes.

Q: Just as it was?

A: That's Hallakik (ph) Law, yes. I mean, cremation is not Jewish. You don't do it. And they did not know how to handle it because I don't think the rabbi, who was probably in his 60s, had ever had any experience. He was a very learned man, and he made the decision and he

said he would defend it and _____ if necessary, and the box, the way we received it with a rubber band, was put into the coffin.

Q: So, that was-

A: That was February 1941.

Q: So, you go from February '41 until October 21st when you get the notification. So, you're not working.

A: No.

Q: Your mother's not working.

A: But I'm going to school.

Q: But you're going to school the whole time.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And your mother gets more and more reserved and withdrawn.

A: Withdrawn, quiet, resigned probably is the proper word for it. She still talked to people. We still occasionally saw an old family friend, but there was no – no joy. There was no laughter. There was no – there was no plan for any kind of a future.

Q: So, when you would eat together whatever the very small amounts of food you had, conversation?

A: No.

Q: It was always quiet.

A: Quiet.

Q: And did you play with friends still?

A: Yes, I still had friends. There was still a youth organization. There was still a so-called "House of Culture" for Jews, and there were films; sometimes there were ping- pong games.

I belonged to Bar Kochba. There were even dance classes. And I went dancing with the son of Rabbi Callabah (sp) who was a Hassidic Jew in New York.

Q: Right.

A: But he used to dance, when we were 13.

Q: So, do you recall any moments of pleasure during that period. I mean, were these kinds of things in some sense a relief?

A: No, they were a relief, and there were moments when you just lived that moment. You did not think about it, but when you went to them, you felt guilty, and yet the following week, you went back again. You probably – I probably knew that this was not the thing to do, but I did it. There were light moments. They were cheering when Bar Kochba won the ping-pong game. I remember my old fashioned record player the Andrew Sisters. I remember some American jazz, which was not permitted, but for five dollars you could have a copy made on a wax platter. So, we learned to dance swing, which was the latest rage. There were even fashion trends. The boys would wear trench coats and those sloppy hats with the wide brim. The girls would wear pleated skirts and thick rubber soles, white or beige rubber soles. That was the style. Stockings were no longer available so you painted your legs and you put a black line on the back. Silk stockings were unobtainable. And if you had a pair, you had them forever repaired. Clothing coupons Jews did not get. If there was clothing available in the store, we couldn't buy it. The children or the young people did not mind. It wasn't that important. What was important was to be with other young people.

Q: Did your mother not want you to go, or she didn't say anything?

A: She didn't say anything, but they – I had the impression that she felt that it showed disrespect.

Q: That it would show disrespect to go?

A: To the year of mourning for my father.

Q: I see, but you obviously were not going to respond to that somehow.

A: She did not say so. She did request that we observe the first 30 days, and after that she did not say anything.

Q: And, when you were with young people, I imagine you talked about what was going on in some way, or am I wrong?

A: We talked about those people that had good chances of leaving – how, when, where, by what means. Do you take a boat to Shanghai or do you take the overland railroad? We talked about Palestine. We talked about the small groups that were smuggled into Yugoslavia and that made it as far as the Mediterranean and then swam into Haifa, and they were put in Turkey prison. We knew of course that England was heavily involved in the war. We were being bombed during that time. We had to go into air raid shelters, and Jews had to be in one corner. Not that there were many. But I think we were fairly aware of the fact that England couldn't possibly win the war. It was too small a country, too far away, and there was no more Czechoslovakia. There was no more Austria. There was no more Poland. Holland was overrun. We did not see any hope. There was talk of Madagascar, of settling us in Madagascar, and then it turned out it was a joke.

Q: And how did you hear about Madagascar? From the other kids?

A: Yes. I remember my mother going to Berlin when Molotov was in Berlin and signed the agreement with Hitler. The reason for my mother going was that the city of Sombor became Russia. It was the first town on the Russian border. And she thought that by going to Berlin

maybe she could get a temporary passport, or maybe there would be a possibility to go there – all sorts of unreal schemes, but you tried anything. And I remember the visit to Berlin.

Q: You went with her or no?

A: I went along and we had to stay with a girlfriend of an old acquaintance of the family because you couldn't stay in a hotel.

Q: Was that an expensive trip?

A: No, you went by rail. It took four hours. We went third class because a) we didn't have the money, and b) you're less conspicuous. I remember when we used to travel to Poland, we traveled first class and the upholstery was red plush and it itched when you sat on it, and at night the porter would make our beds. So, the Berlin trip was quite different.

Q: Do you still have a radio in your house?

A: There was a radio in the apartment and a telephone, and I think the radio and the telephone belonged to Mr. Berman because he had privileges by reason of an intermarriage, and two sons – I think they even were on the *Wehrmacht*, if I'm not mistaken, later in the war, and so he had the privilege of radio, but it was not a short wave. It was just local stations. And I think he had a telephone.

Q: Did you ever hear Hitler speaking on the radio?

A: Yes, many times.

Q: Many times.

A: I even saw him once.

Q: Where did you see him?

A: We went downtown, and that was in the mid '30s, into the district where all the department stores were like a small Fifth Avenue. And all of a sudden, the SS and the SR were pushing

the people from the sidewalk facing the street on both sides, and a motorcade appeared, open, and Hitler was standing with his right arm raised, looking right, looking left, and everybody raised their right arm. And I stood in front of my mother –she was a little bit taller than I – and she put her right arm on my head instead of raising it over me. She put it on my head. We were afraid.

Q: And what did you do?

A: I just sort of squeezed in between the other young people. I just, nothing. I was petrified. I heard him speak many times, or rave, it was not speaking, but that's the only time I saw him.

Q: And what did you think or feel when you – I gather you heard him on the radio?

A: Yeah, right.

Q: Did he make you nervous? Did you think he was just crazy and this couldn't last?

A: I –I just couldn't understand this ranting and raving because even to a young person, it made so little sense. And then when he talked about race and Jews and the international conspiracy, and Jews own all the money and all the banks. I once asked in school, and the man who taught history was Professor Eunice, and I said, "What is the percentage of the Jews living in Germany?" And it was less than one percent or something, and I said, "But we can't own all that they say that we do own." It didn't make sense. I could not comprehend.

Q: Did you have non-Jewish friends at all?

A: No.

Q: For childhood?

A: No.

Q: None.

A: I had neighbor kids, upstairs, downstairs, and we would play before '33, but that was it.

Q: But that was it?

A: Yeah.

Q: So, you actually never had a conversation…

A: No.

Q: …after ’33…

A: No

Q: …with someone who wasn’t Jewish?

A: No, my mother occasionally with a neighbor. My father occasionally over the phone with business associate of some sort, but very cautiously, very carefully, and not really detailed.

Q: And when you would walk on the street, you would see police, soldiers – would people move away from you? I mean, you didn’t have any -

A: If I went by myself, I could pass. If the SS walked by – mainly the SR, the brown shirts, I could just sort of blend in, so to speak. If I was walking with somebody else, I was out of luck. I mean, it was immediate. I don’t know how the Poles today can tell that I’m a Jew. When I go today to Poland, they say, “Oh, a Jew from America.” How they can tell I don’t know, but the Germans could, too.

Q: The Germans could?

A: Yes.

Q: How would you hear about restrictions? Were there curfews, places where you couldn’t go? Were their notices in Jewish newspapers?

A: There were notices on the movies, on the park benches. It was in newspapers, “Jews are no longer permitted on the street after dark.” There was a newspaper called *Der Stuermer*, which was the official organ of the Nazi party, with distorted pictures of Jews. One of them had my

uncle in it, the one who had the big business in Cottbus. No, the restrictions were publicized mainly in newspapers or, for instance, on stores. Early on, "Don't Buy Here. It's a Jew." Later on, when they were taken over by non-Jews, it was no longer an issue because the names were changed. We went to a park in winter and people would slide down the hill, and that was no longer permitted, "Jews No Entrance." In summer, in that park on every bench, "Jews Forbidden." I don't think you could hire a taxi as a Jew. It was no longer possible. It was dangerous.

Q: And could you ride on the subway or the train?

A: We did during day hours, but towards the last year that we lived in Germany, we did not ride together. We would take the train, but everybody would take a different compartment or a different train. Not that two or three people would sit next to each other. I would take the first train. My mother would take the second train, and we would know where we get out. We went out once after curfew, one time only, and we almost got caught.

Q: Why did you ride separate trains? Were you already conscious that you could just be picked up?

A: Yeah. And later on trains were no longer allowed for Jews, and Jews had to turn in cars, those who had cars. The Jews who were German nationals had to hand in their gold and silver after the Kristall Night, to pay for the damages. It was strange going into a store where you had gone all your life to buy some material for a dress, and all of a sudden you felt like everybody was looking at you. Or you were afraid they would call the police.

Q: Because you weren't allowed there or because…?

A: We were not supposed to be there.

Q: I see. At this period, did you begin to regret that you had not gone to England alone? Did you think of that?

A: No.

Q: You didn't think of that.

A: I regretted that we did not go when we could have gone to Palestine in '34. That I regretted. But going away alone, I never regretted. I would have never done it. And while all of the children – 10,000 of them – that did go from Austria and Germany survived, except my girlfriend who was hit by a bomb in mid-town London, they came out very bitter and very resentful elderly people. There's now the organization of *Kindertransport* and they're very angry.

Q: Why?

A: They feel there is compensation due them which they never received. They feel they were used as maids or taken out of school at age 14, and sent to learn a trade rather than study at a university, and they feel that they suffered unjustly and they never received an apology. They never received compensation. It's a very vocal organization, at least in California. And I can fully understand where they come from and why they feel this way, but it is now the year 2001. They left in '39. Most of them lost their parents, not all, but a great many. What are they trying to accomplish with the bitterness and with the publicity?

Q: So, are you glad that you didn't become one of them?

A: No, the only reason I'm not one of them because I was just fearful of leaving. It had nothing to do with that. I was in Washington once for the meeting of Hidden Children, and they are very, very angry, and very bitter, and very – I would say almost – for them, it's almost impossible to cope with these two or three years in which they were hidden in France, or

Belgium, Poland, wherever. So, there is a lot of damage. It's a matter of degree. I think we all sustained some, more or less, but it's strange that it took 60 years to surface. There were no social workers. There was no psychiatric help. There's help given now, but what good will it do an 80 year old person? Too little, too late.

Q: Your furniture was packed up and went to Trieste in order to go to Palestine?

A: Yeah.

Q: And did it get there?

A: No.

Q: No. So, why didn't it get there?

A: It got stuck in the harbor in Trieste until 1945. In 1945, my uncle from Haifa paid the storage and had it shipped to Haifa. One of the crates – well, it was a container, it wasn't a crate – was broken into, and it was the one container that contained my mother's silver and jewelry. While they didn't empty it out, I don't have one place setting. I'll have one fork and I'll have two spoons, but I won't have any knives. My uncle received it into '45 or '46 in Haifa. He asked me what he should send me – oriental rugs or silverware, whatever. I said, "I want the pictures that were in the crate. And if there's any jewelry of my mother's, I would like it, and everything else please do whatever you think you want to do with it. I don't wish to."

Q: So, your understanding of what's happening, once your father dies when there's this period of a number of months before you get the notice, do you expect to be deported?

A: No. There was no rumor.

Q: Nothing?

A: Nothing.

Q: So, when -

A: We assumed they would use us for workers in factories.

Q: In Germany?

A: Yes. Especially the young men.

Q: So, is your fear level gone down some? Are you getting used to it, or is it very high?

A: You get used to fear. You get used to looking over your shoulder. You get used to limitations such as rationed food and living in a small room. You adjust. You accept whatever is given you, but then there was a war, and there was a glimmer of hope that maybe Germany would lose the war, even in '41.

Q: Okay. So, October 21st, 1941, you get a relocation notice.

A: Yes, we each had a suitcase.

Q: Well, what happened? You got something in the mail?

A: Yes – no, it didn't come in the mail.

Q: They delivered it?

A: Some came delivered and some came registered.

Q: And who delivered it. Do you remember?

A: Gestapo.

Q: Gestapo delivered it? And how did it come to you? Someone delivered it to the door?

A: Yes, I believe somebody delivered it. I don't know who took the notice because there were about eight families living in that one apartment.

Q: I see.

A: And we read the notice, and everybody said, "There's nothing you can do. Pack what you can. Take three suitcases, and the rest just leave. We'll give it away or whatever." There wasn't much.

Q: Left anyway. Right.

A: No. No. And we reported.

Q: So, what did you take?

A: I took a coat. I took some clothing, but there wasn't much. I took what little I had. And I had a little small briefcase, and I put some stationary into it, and some addresses, and some letters I had received from friends in Palestine, and that I carried with me and everything else was checked. And after two days or a day and a half, then it was called Lódz, and it still stands and I was inside in September, and I asked the director, "Do you know what this place was?" in 1941, and he knew. There were 1,100 of us – men, women and children. The Jewish Community sent some representatives to tell us that it would be okay and not to worry. There were some prominent leaders of the community on that particular list. It was the first transport. We were put into cars, railroad cars, with wooden benches. And after two days, two and a half days, we arrived in a very sunny, dusty place – no railroad station, no personnel, nothing.

Q: Excuse me, what was the trip like?

A: The trip was quiet except for whimpering children. There was more children on there or young people on that train.

Q: This wasn't a cattle car with nothing in it.

A: No.

Q: This had benches?

A: Benches.

Q: On the sides of the cars?

A: No, the way – regular wooden benches – the way you have them now in an upholstered train.

Q: And was there a toilet?

A: Not that I recall.

Q: Did you remember how one…?

A: I don't know. I think they had buckets in the hallway, and each compartment had a sliding door. The windows were locked from the outside. So were the doors, and on the outside were German soldiers riding along the guns.

Q: And did you bring food as well? Or did they feed you?

A: No, no. We brought little candy, a few pieces of bread. It was a custom in Europe anyway, when you went on a train, you packed your own food. You never went to the dining car. So, we did take some food, and the lady next to us gave us some candy. And that's all I remember – I remember about the ride. Nobody really spoke because the uncertainty and the bewilderment was still strong that you couldn't put it into words.

Q: Did you meet somebody named Julie and Julius?

A: Yes, they sat next to us.

Q: On the train. This couple sat next to you.

A: Next to us on the train. We started to talk, and she asked me, "Do you know the Rosenbergs in Hamburg?" I said, "Yes, Latti went to school with me. We were good friends." She said, "Did you know her ten year older brother, Howard?" I said, "Yes, I've met Howard once, but he didn't talk to little girls ten years younger." She said, "Oh, my husband was a friend of Howard's." I said, "That's nice."

Q: And that was it?

A: That was it.

Q: Did you like her?

A: Yes, she had red hair that was turning gray. She was chubby. She had a wonderful smile. She had teeth that had never been corrected that were spaced too far apart. It was said later on that she was called as a young girl "Red Fox" and she supposedly was a beauty. And her husband was small, bald, chubby, and a little bit crumpy (ph) and quiet, but nice.

Q: And was she the age of your mother?

A: No, much older.

Q: Much older.

A: My mother was born in '92. She must have been born at least six, seven years earlier. Maybe ten years earlier.

Q: I'm going to suggest that we take a break now, and when we come back we will begin with the entrance into Lódz. Okay?

A: Okay, fine.

Q: Lucille, there's one piece of the earlier story that we neglected. There may be many pieces, but one piece that I know about that we neglected. Namely the putting on of the Jewish star. And you do have a story of taking it off and going somewhere.

A: Well, we were ordered to wear the star – left-hand side, not on the back, just in front, and it was 1941. I think it was September. And you were very conspicuous, more so than ever, which was not a happy situation. And we had a neighbor in the apartment in which we lived who was half Jewish. She had some privileges that we did not have, but she was kind. She was quite elderly probably in her late '60s, and very plain-looking, almost like a woman from the country, and she didn't have to wear a star. And since I loved opera since I was about 10 years old, she suggested one evening that we go to the *Staats* Opera in Hamburg, and I told her that I could not with my star. I was not permitted. And she said, "Just take it off. You go

with me, and we stand in the last row, standing room only, and nobody will know the difference." It didn't make a difference. We enjoyed the opera, but I really worried a great deal.

Q: And what was the opera?

A: It was a German opera. I think it could have been the *Freischutz* by Karl Maria Von Weber, but I wouldn't swear to it.

Q: You've liked opera since you were 10?

A: Yes, my parents took my first to the easy ones – Magic Flute, La Boheme – the French and the Italians. And since I played music, it – I was not fond of a concert, but I loved opera.

Q: Really?

A: Yes, and I still do.

Q: So do I. Why didn't you like concerts?

A: Because when I grew up, a lot of the concerts were composers that I was not too fond of, and I preferred chamber music. It's more intimate. You get more out of the music. I like baroque music. I recently listened to Malas (ph) Symphony, and I enjoyed it, but it was – it was hard work to listen.

Q: It's interesting because chamber music is often a taste for somebody who's much older.

A: I grew up with it. I grew up with it. Both my kids play woodwinds, or used to play woodwinds, baroque flute, piccolo, clarinet. So, chamber music was very much taken for granted. My husband loved chamber music. He loved Telemann, and I never asked why or how come, it just was natural.

Q: And did you continue to play violin?

A: No. I gave it up with the deportation to Poland.

Q: Okay.

A: And I never touched another-

Q: Another instrument?

A: Another instrument, no. I would never go back to it.

Q: Why do you think?

A: Well, first of all, I had to give up the instrument itself, which was not a Stradivarius, but it was a good instrument. And something about the orchestra – two of my friends played in it in Auschwitz – made me decide not to go back to it. I also would never buy a pair of boots. Boots became very fashionable a few years ago. I can't buy a pair of boots, but that's another story.

Q: We'll come back to that.

A: All right.

Q: So, now we're going to enter Lódz.

A: Yes.

Q: When you think of the first moment that you got off the train, what did you see?

A: I saw the German soldiers lined up. The railroad cars were opened. We were ordered to come out. We were ordered to line up in rows of five, and we saw a whole group of men in black jackets, black trouser, a black hat with an orange band, an orange arm band with the Star of David, and on their jackets were also yellow stars. The Germans handed us over to these men. The name given to them was "ghetto police". The ground was sandy. It was dirty. It was not a railroad station. We saw a wagon drawn by two horses and our suitcases were thrown on that wagon. The Germans went back into the trains, and the ghetto police explained to us – mostly in Polish, and hardly anybody spoke Polish – that we had to walk

into the ghetto. My mother, who stood next to me, asked the first available policeman in Polish, “Where are we? What is the ghetto? What’s going on?” And on the hour and a half or two-hour walk, and it was very warm and there were many elderly people, he explained to my mother that it was the city of Lódz, which was familiar to her. It was the ghetto, which was an area that was totally enclosed. And as we kept on walking, we saw people that didn’t look at us. They looked ragged. They looked tired. They looked ill-fed and ill-dressed. And we saw buildings that were dilapidated. Some were – some streets were paved; others were not. We saw no vehicles. We saw no automobiles. We saw no trucks. But he explained to my mother, and she translated, that the ghetto was an area that was fenced in and guarded by Germans. There was no into the ghetto; there was no out of the ghetto. And my mother made a very flippant remark, “Well, if you want to get out of this situation, you always can.” And he said, “Hardly.” They walked us to a school on Mlynarska Street. This school evidently had been abandoned, and they housed all 1,100 of us on two, possibly three, stories in what used to be classrooms, lecture rooms. We eventually got our suitcases. We put our coats or whoever had a blanket on the floor, and that’s how we lived for six weeks. The Jewish ghetto administration sent in a kitchen detail once a day to bring soup. This soup was mainly water, very little else. In the mornings, we received sometimes a slice of bread and a liquid that was bitter tasting and supposed to look like coffee, but it had a grainy substance. It had no coffee. And at that point, most of us still had some money, which we had brought from Germany. Some of it sewn into shoulder pads, into belts, into shoes. And those of us who had some money – some more, others less – you could go into the courtyard and the people who had lived in the ghetto since 1940 when it was first closed would sell out of newspaper a little piece of bread, a chunk of margarine, anything edible, and we would buy it with this German

money, not realizing that the currency in the ghetto was not German money. It was special ghetto-printed money similar to Monopoly money, and that we were by far overpaying. When we ran out of the money, we would sell some of our so-called "western" belongings – a silk blouse, a silk scarf, an alligator purse – whatever any family had brought along and it was deemed no longer necessary, superfluous, and it brought in some food. These things were not sold for money. They were bartered for food. I remember seeing my mother in the courtyard bartering for bread and margarine against a silk blouse.

Q: How big of a – like a small piece of bread?

A: Oh, I would say maybe 200 grams – a small piece of bread. The ghetto bread was about – it was a round loaf of bread. It had to last at that point a week, and we cut it into seven or eight wedges once we got our permanent food rations. And I took my mother's example, and I had a purse. And when she did not realize it, I did the same thing. I traded the purse for some bread. It was traded to a young woman a little older than I was, who came with a very good-looking gentleman probably ten years older who had a briefcase, and he wanted to give me one piece of bread and I said, "It's too little." And they laughed. They didn't speak German and I didn't speak Polish, but we managed. And I stood there for two hours and eventually they came back and I got two pieces of bread. But even that had limitation because you ran out of tradable goods. Nobody had jewelry. That had to be left for the Germans. And what was left was really the bare essentials, not more than that. After six weeks, we were assigned to various rooms.

Q: Stop for a minute. What happens to washing and sanitary conditions? There's no bathrooms in the place. There's no showers, bathtubs, nothing. So, what happens to you physically?

A: There was a pump in the courtyard, and if you knew somebody with either a bowl or a bucket, you would borrow it. In the beginning, we had some soap, but you use up soap and then you make do without soap. This school had outhouses in the backyard. The outhouses were used by 1,100 people. They were filthy. They were unsanitary. People got sick. There were accidents. You washed and we used to call it a cat's wash because you really couldn't wash. There was no privacy. There was no place. There was no room. I remember standing in a corner holding up a blanket. My mother was behind the blanket washing and vice versa. So, sanitary conditions didn't exist. At night, we slept on the floor. In the daytime, we sat on the floor. Crowded, one body next to the other. And eventually, six weeks later, we were assigned to various rooms throughout the ghetto on both sides of the bridges. The older part of the ghetto was the Balut, the former slum of the city. It used to house Jews and non-Jews, but had been vacated for Jews only. We were fortunate enough to be settled in the little newer section on the front side of the bridge. We shared a probably 10 by 10 foot room with four other people. We had two or three wooden cots. My mother brought a little wardrobe so we didn't have to hang the clothing on the damp walls. The view out of the window was a barbed wire and the red century house with a German marching up and down. So, we did not go near the window. At night, you had to put a black sheet over the window so no light could come out because it was wartime. And the room had a little cast iron stove, but there was no lumber. We slowly took out of the wooden cots one board at a time, cut it up for heat and for cooking. We were issued ration cards, and the food distribution centers were throughout the ghettos. The intervals of the spaces between them were several kilometers. When a food ration was announced or posted on the walls, it gave a date when it would be available, and how much, and what items. You had to bring your own containers, and during the first week,

you stood in line for about three hours until you got your food. If you waited beyond that, there were no more lines but sometimes the food ran out.

Q: And this was hot food.

A: No.

Q: No, this was-

A: This was a little bit of brown sugar at a time, a little bit of what they called ground coffee, a loaf of bread for a certain period of time, sometimes there was flour. Once I got horsemeat, but only once. And it was not really enough to sustain a human being. And the conversation wherever you went centered around food. The houses had no running water. You had to carry a bucket up and a bucket down with dirty water. There were no bathrooms. The toilets were outhouses in the backyard. There were no showers. There were no bathtubs. There was no transportation within the ghetto to get from one place to another. There was an internal police force. There was a fire brigade. I don't think it was ever used, and aside from the police force there was a *Sonder* force, that meant special police with special orders, with more difficult tasks which larger, with larger food allotments, and some of these men were decent, and some were brutal.

Q: Lucille, let's stop now and change the tape.

End of Tape 2

Tape 3

Q: Lucille, I usually don't do this, but I wanted to give a sense to those people who will watch the interview that, as far as I know, there were over 31,000 departments in the Lódz ghetto, and a little over 700 had running water. Just for a people to get a sense of this population of over 200,000 people, what you were living in, in terms of the sheer physical conditions let alone everything else.

A: None of my friends or acquaintances had running water. I had one friend that I did not know until after the war who lived in the parsonage of a church and there was running water, but nobody knew. There were houses out in Marysin, where Rumkowski lived, they had running water. It was the slum of a city. Running water was not the customary thing to have. The city also didn't have a sewer system. The sewage ran between the street and the sidewalk, raw sewage, and you jumped over it as you crossed the street. There was no underground canalization like for instance in Warsaw or in Paris or in Rome. It didn't exist.

Q: So, the stench must have been unbelievable.

A: So, was the typhus – the stench, the typhus, the summers, the snow and frost in the winter, and people just dumped their buckets and it didn't matter. It – you had ceased to care, to observe sanitary conditions or laws. There was really no way one could solve this problem. It was – it was not solvable.

Q: So, I'm just trying to get a sense of time. Those first six weeks, this is the most shocking thing that happens to you – I mean, other than the shock of the death of your father, but that's a different kind of a shock. This is a physical as well as a psychological shock to you to be taken to Lódz and to be living under conditions that you've never come – you've never lived like this.

A: Nope. It was a shock, and yet we believed, in the first six weeks, that once we get housing, once we get a room in a building, be it wood or concrete, conditions would be more normalized. It never really occurred to us that most buildings would not have a bathroom. I thought there would be maybe a bathroom on each floor or a shower. The ghetto did have a bathhouse, but you needed a coupon to get in. The ghetto had a laundry. Once I had a coupon and I bought some sheets, and it took me six months to get them back. They were sort of washed, but six months because the laundry did work for the Germans and for the higher-ups within the ghetto. So, while some of the civilized amenities were within the ghetto, they were far and in between.

Q: And, during this, before you moved to Pawia Street, these first four to six weeks, do you see – you're living with 1,100 people in a very small building. Do people change a lot? Do people start fighting with each other? Do you see things even amongst the three of you where there are changes and it's difficult?

A: It was stressful. People did argue. "This was my space and why did you take my space?" And "take this away and put this there." It was community living at its worst. It brought out the very best in very few people. It brought out the worst in most of us. And I don't think anybody was really to blame because to come out of the normal life into conditions of deprivation, of inhumanity, dehumanization – it's indescribable.

Q: How'd your mother change?

A: She became very quiet. When we first came into the ghetto, she thought, because she spoke Polish, she had lived among Poles, she had lived among Jews in Poland, she was educated in Lwow, she thought it would be manageable. It would be possibly a little bit the way her life

had been before the first World War. But I don't think she fully expected the hunger, and the filth, and the sickness within the ghetto. That was something that was incomprehensible.

Q: Your sister is 11, and you're 16. So, what is it for her? Is it harder for her because she's so much younger? Or is it not harder?

A: No, it wasn't harder for her. She just took it more or less in stride. She didn't quite understand what this was all about. She once asked about the barbed wires or the soldiers with guns. She remarked once on the lack of a playground. Or she wanted a little roll with butter and there were no rolls in the ghetto. But she did not – it did not have a full impact on her, not at that point.

Q: Did she have friends?

A: No, nobody.

Q: Nobody had them.

A: Nobody.

Q: So, the kids did not play.

A: There were very few kids. There were mainly elderly people. There were quite a few teenagers, but kids eight or 10 far in between.

Q: What about you? What happened to you during those first couple of months?

A: Well, I went throughout the building to see if there was anybody I knew. I met a couple of classmates, schoolmates. I looked at the young people who brought the soup, and laid out the portions. And I was guessing or thinking how does one get a job like that, but I had trouble with the language. I could understand some of the Yiddish, and Polish I had probably a dozen words, no more. So, there was no communication. There was no possibility to make any connection.

Q: But, there are, I don't know, at least a few thousand Germans who went into the Lódz ghetto, am I right?

A: Over a period of time.

Q: But not when you came?

A: Not when we came. Later on, there were transports – several from Berlin, several from Vienna, five from Prague, one from Frankfurt. I think there were in excess of 20,000 people brought in from what was called "Western Europe." At that time, we were told we didn't read it and we didn't hear it, of a speech made by Rumkowski that 20,000 Jews had been brought in from the West and there was neither enough housing for them, and the Germans would make no allowances for it, and there was not enough food for them. It was considered a tremendous burden on the already existing ghetto population. And we were very unwelcome. We were made fun of. We were the ones from the West, the spoiled ones, the arrogant ones. And in a way, it was true. The majority of the German Jews especially, not so much the Czechs, came with the idea, or at least if they didn't come with it, it started within the ghetto, "We will teach them how to do things here, and we will change things in the ghetto. And we will run the ghetto the way we are used to running things in Germany." And that turned out to be a big mistake.

Q: Because there was a lot of hostility?

A: There was a lot of hostility, and you can't walk into somebody else's house and turn it upside-down. And of course, the Polish Jews would not hold still for it, which resulted in the fact that there was no employment for us. We were by and large disliked. We were called names, not nasty names, but not flattering names either. You felt almost like an outcast among your own people.

Q: So, you were in – it's not the same situation you were in Germany with the Nazis or the German non-Jews against you. But there's somewhat of a similarity within the context of this horrible situation.

A: Yes, but I was used to this situation. I went to a German-Jewish school. And the school had about ten children who had Polish parents. And when this became known, the parents of the – of all those students said, "Don't play with those Polish Jews." So, it was Jew against Jew on the one side. It was the same again now. And that, at that very beginning, something told me that you were sitting again between two chairs. If you want to live here in any way and get work, you have to learn the language - Yiddish and Polish. And it was hard; there was no school.

Q: So, how did you learn?

A: By listening and by talking. And I made horrible mistakes but people smiled. They thought it was very cute that a 16 year old would at least try. It took me six months and I spoke Polish grammatically incorrect. I didn't know if two houses were male or female, but it didn't matter. People found it amusing, and it helped. It gave me a chance at communication.

Q: And, your mother could speak.

A: My mother was educated and she spoke Polish, and French, and German.

Q: Did she try to get a job or was she – or did she not even try?

A: She tried at very first, but nobody would hire in 1941. There was not enough work within the ghetto to fully employ everybody. Work was not mandatory; it was not considered forced labor. You worked and you received the noontime soup. But you didn't have to work if you didn't want to. It afforded you no other privileges.

Q: Except the noontime soup.

A: Right, because money was very little and worthless. So, she tried for a while in the felt shoe factory and in the hat factory, but they wouldn't hire her.

Q: So, the people who are working are getting noontime soup plus the rations that you are all getting. And you would cook these rations in your little room – or try to.

A: If we had enough material to hit the little stove because sometimes you got items that weren't even combinable or cookable, but we would try in the evening. And if you shared a room, and you had a corner for your food supplies or a shelf, it very often happened that by evening something had disappeared. Somebody in the room was so hungry, they couldn't resist. That was very, very common.

Q: So, how quickly did you feel that you were starving?

A: I think with – within two months, maybe two and a half months. We were definitely starving by the end of the year, before Christmastime.

Q: And thirsty, I would imagine, or not?

A: We did drink the water.

Q: You did?

A: Yes, that's why we got typhus. It was really not much else to drink because it was difficult to heat up water, to bring it to a boil, and to make this so-called coffee that we were distributed. I remember one ration and it was four pounds of salt. I remember a ration of a half a pound of citric acid. Citric acid thrown into a pot of raw vegetables makes it boil faster, but what are you going to do with that quantity. It was a senseless type of distribution, but the food was distributed the way it came into the ghetto from Germany. There were, we heard, other items, but they were in small supply and they went to the elite of the ghetto administration, not to us.

Q: I'm worried about the sound. Is that going to be all right?

[Break in tape]

Q: Could you take some of these rations and go to this market – there was an outdoor market, and try to get some food of some kind, or was there very little?

A: Again, during the first six months there was an outside area where you could buy a rotten apple or frozen potato, or whatever anybody else would like to sell. You could trade. You could barter, but it was pretty senseless. You didn't gain much by it. And the market eventually just closed down for lack of interest and for lack of supplies.

Q: So, let me ask you something. So, you're in Pawia Street, in the end of November, beginning of December? Something like that?

A: Yes.

Q: Now, your mother's 50th birthday is January 5th.

A: Right.

Q: 1942.

A: Yes.

Q: And she's beginning to deteriorate at this point.

A: Yes.

Q: With a disease or by starvation, her body is…?

A: Well, starvation takes a strange form. Your body swells. Your legs and your feet become double its normal size. It is difficult to walk. You can't get into a pair of shoes. Those are the first signs of starvation. It does ultimately affect you in other ways, as well. It is just that the body responds to lack of nourishment.

Q: And this is what was happening to her?

A: This was happening to her and thousands of others.

Q: So, what could you do for her? Was there anything that could be done? Did you try with some desperation to get food, to get more food, rather?

A: The only thing that I could try is sell whatever of my clothing I did not need or I did not want. And that I gradually sold for food, but I didn't have much clothing to start out with, and I only had two pair of shoes in not very good condition. Shoes would have brought a lot of money. The stockings were in such disrepair that the repairs on the back of the heel reached halfway up to the knee. We kept repairing it with thread because you couldn't buy new ones. But you could buy a lipstick.

Q: What?

A: The ghetto had a little cosmetic store half a block from Balutaring. And I guess the lady must have had a cosmetic store before the war, and you could go and buy powder or lipstick, and on the corner was a hairdresser and you could get a permanent if you had the right currency or enough food.

Q: And there were enough people to keep open this cosmetic store who would buy things?

A: I do not how much rent they paid. I don't know who owned the building. It was a little shack. There was demand. The ladies or women who were in fact within the ghetto were well-dressed. They wore hats. They wore decent boots or shoes, and they wore cosmetics. The ghetto had several tiny little holes in the wall and you could get a manicure for one Mark. But you had to have the Mark.

Q: And I gather you never did that.

A: I did it once.

Q: Did you?

A: Yes. I once had a Mark. I just wanted to now what it was like.

Q: Because you had never had one before?

A: No.

Q: And what did you think?

A: I think – I thought it was totally superfluous. It was ridiculous, but I liked to see people with that bright red nail polish, which I've never worn since. And it was very fashionable because women, Jewish women in Lódz, were very elegant, emancipated, very Western, very anti-religious customs, and quite different from what I had expected.

Q: So, they were more modern in some ways than where you came from.

A: Yes.

Q: If one wants to use that kind of terminology.

A: But, then, I also was older than – than I observed the same circumstances as a child. So, I was more aware.

Q: Did you ever buy lipstick?

A: My mother had a lipstick that she had bought in Paris during the World's Fair. I think it was '36 or something like that, and I used that lipstick.

Q: So, you did use lipstick.

A: Later on, not right away, later on as I got older.

Q: Did your mother make-up herself so you would look better?

A: Before the war, she used lipstick but then she rubbed it off so it wouldn't be so obvious. She had her hair done once a week.

Q: You're talking about Germany now.

A: Yes, and she used powder and other cosmetics, but it was of no interest to me.

Q: So, when your mother begins to take on the symptoms of what one might call the disease of starvation, the diseases that come with starvation, do you kids sit in the house – the apartment with her?

A: We did at first, and then one evening we had knock at the door. It must have been around January. And in walked a short little man by the name of Adolf Goetz, and he had lived around the corner from us in Hamburg on Holle Street. We lived on Braumsen Way (ph). We didn't know him but we'd wave from the back window. He had a short little wife with very curly hair and she used to shake out her rugs off the balcony. And he came in with another man and he used to be a dentist in Hamburg. I think it was Rosenblum. And he had remembered us and he said to my mother, "I have been given permission to open an office. Would you allow your daughter to work in that office?" My mother said, "Sure." "Well, she doesn't get much money. You know how it is, but she'll get a daily soup." Adolph Goetz had a terrific sense of humor. He was probably not even five foot tall. He wore glasses, and he had a funny face that you would expect to see in a cartoon, a very pinched little face. He had been a playwright. He had been an engineer. He had a son in South America some place, and he convinced Rumkowski that the ghetto needed improvement and beautification. And he hired probably a dozen architects and engineers that had come from Prague on this so-called *Intelligenz* transport, as they called themselves because everybody had a college degree, among them the general director of Schoda (ph), which was Dr. Reich. And they were supposed to draw up blue prints with parks, with schools, with trees, with playgrounds. And I was supposed to do some typing, but I couldn't type very well, and write the explanations to these blueprints. And every once in a while Adolph Goetz would take the blueprints to Balutaring, to Rumkowski, and Rumkowski seemed enthused. And we got the midday soup.

The office was on Rybn, 8. And oh, Adolph must have been in his late ’60s at a guess, and for fun he wrote poems and he wrote stories. And he would make little airplanes out of them, and just sort of fly them over the office onto my desk. That went on for several months. I didn’t know what to make it, but it was sort of funny. But he complained bitterly about the lack of food, but the office remained for about six months, and then he was summoned by Rumkowski, and he was told, “I’m terminating the office. I’m closing down the office. And all of you can look for other jobs.” In the meantime, he had gotten double rations, which of course I didn’t know. And he was really unhappy for himself and for us, as well. And everybody tried to get a job someplace else. Dr. Reich went to work for the lumber department for Goodman. Some others found employment some place else, and by then it was July. And my mother died on the 30th of July 1942 of hunger.

Q: Were you with her?

A: No, I was not at home. It happened in the afternoon, and the next day the black little wagon with the white horse came and picked up the dead bodies throughout the ghetto. We did not hear. My sister and I walked to the Jewish cemetery in Marysin, about a two-hour walk. And in the burial hall, we went through hundreds of bodies. And most bodies were between two boards, wooden boards, tied together with a string and a name tag. We found my mother’s body. And we took two shovels. And we looked for a plot and there were no more plots left on the cemetery. So, we found a walkway, and we spent that July day digging a grave until it was deep enough to bury her. We put a wooden marker on it. We scratched the name with a stone on the marker, and we walked back. From that day on, I think, my sister stopped talking.

Q: Stopped?

A: Talking. I couldn't get through to her. I looked around for a school for her. I couldn't find a school. But I heard that one of the factories in the back room employed children, but it actually was a school. I tried several. And I was asked by the directors of the factories, "If I give you a place for your sister, what will you give me in return?" And I explained that I had no jewelry nor did I have money. And the answer was laughter. I did not comprehend. In the end, I did find her a place. I asked her if she enjoyed it, if she learned Polish, if there were other children – she wouldn't answer. And, I, in the meantime, looked for work. I found some work in the factory sewing ladies' dresses, but it was a two hour walk to Marysin. And I worked at a machine for a while. And the interesting part in that factory was that it employed young people my age, a little older, and they were very intent on striking, on asking for more food. One young woman named Fajga made us walk, those willing to walk, around the courtyard, "No food. No work." It took an hour, and the police – the Jewish ghetto police – came into the courtyard and took her away. She returned the next day a little bit black and blue, and she laughed.

Q: She laughed?

A: She laughed. She had a boyfriend and she said, "We're not going to give up. We're going to organize for food." By that time, I got afraid. But there were brave souls who still marched, "No Food, no soup, no work." "No food, no work" in Yiddish and Polish, and she was taken away a second time. The first time she was warned to cease and desist, not by Rumkowski, but by someone who was sent by him. And when she was taken the second time, she didn't return for a week. She came back in very bad shape: black and blue, a missing tooth, and she no longer demonstrated. By then it was September, and the announcements were of the

ghetto – No, first Rumkowski made a speech that the Germans had demanded that the old and the very young be deported from the ghetto, and he had to comply with German orders.

Q: Can I - because these are the big deportations – can I go back a little bit?

A: Yes, there was one in May that I had skipped.

Q: May of ’42, before your mother died.

A: Yes, and that took out most of the elderly Jews that had come from the West, most of them with very few exceptions. We were on the list. And I took our three Polish passports. And I went from one administration to the other to convince them that we were not German. And somebody in the administration who worked for Neftalin, his name was Kaplan, finally, after two days agreed to delete our names and we stayed. That was in May before my mother died.

Q: And did you have an instinct that another deportation couldn’t possibly be better?

A: We had the instinct – here we knew of the misery. If you go someplace else, what is going to await us? We had no idea. And I would say by an old Jewish saying, “What you have you have. You know, you know your enemy. If you go someplace else, what will you have?” We did not know. So, the instinct – our instinct was – I don’t know how other people felt because we had very, very little contact with other Jews that had come from the West except for the Eichengreens, who really didn’t care. They thought it couldn’t be worse.

Q: This is Jules and Julius.

A: Right, and – but, we decided, my mother and I, that it would be better to stay.

Q: And your mother by then is not very well, anyway.

A: No, she was not well. It was my doing that we were permitted to stay, because I ran around with these Polish passports speaking German. And people just looked at me. They just

laughed. It was a joke. It couldn't be for real. Somebody who has a nationality can speak the language, but in the end, they agreed. We could stay. After my mother died…

Q: I want to ask you a question. It's very unusual, I think, for two children to not metaphorically bury their mother but to really bury…

A: Yes.

Q: …one of their parents.

A: You never forget.

Q: I would imagine. It must have been one of the worst days of your life in your memory.

A: I have not been back to a funeral for 50 years. And I've had friends and relatives die, and I could not go. I could not go to my father's grave. I couldn't go in a cemetery. It was not feasible.

Q: How did you do it, the two of you? You carried your mother's body?

A: Yes, with those two boards. How did we do it? I really can't answer that.

Q: And did you say to each other, "We have to bury her."

A: We didn't speak.

Q: You just did it.

A: We just did it.

Q: Did you see anyone else doing that?

A: No. It was a hot July, on the 20th of July, maybe 21st. We didn't see a soul. There was no caretaker. There were no gravediggers. There was nobody.

Q: Were you crying when you were digging?

A: No.

Q: You were just digging.

A: No tears.

Q: And did you say prayers?

A: No, no prayers.

Q: You just finished and left?

A: And left.

Q: And did you and Karin hold hands walking back to hold on to each other.

A: I think we did because it was a long walk.

Q: And did you go back home?

A: We went back to the room.

Q: Home.

A: Yeah.

Q: And clearly you did not whatever sitting shiva would be, you did not.

A: No.

Q: So, there's no – you can't mourn, you just have to-

A: No, there was – whether you shut out the feelings consciously or whether there just were no more feelings left, I will never know.

Q: So, you never cried.

A: Not then.

Q: Not then. And Karin simply stops talking.

A: Yes.

Q: I mean, really physically-

A: Really physically stopped talking. "Yes" and "no" was about the most I got out of her.

Q: And do you know whether she was talking when she went to school, or did she…?

A: I assume not, but I never went to the school because I had to go to work. I assumed she didn't talk.

Q: And of course in that circumstance so many people were suffering, who's going to take care of this little kid?

A: Right, and then there were other little kids. She wasn't the only one.

Q: Now, you tell this story about this person who says, "What will you give in exchange?" You did not understand. What do you understand now? What was he doing?

A: Well, I learned in three years in the ghetto, that you pay for sex – you pay with sex for a favor, but I did not understand it then.

Q: So, you came to understand that this was not an unusual feature of the ghetto for women?

A: Not within the next – within the following two years.

Q: You learned that.

A: That I learned, but not in 1942. In '43 and '44, yes.

Q: Okay, so September comes…

A: And the first I heard from a young messenger who delivered messages from the administration. She was a dwarf – crippled, Jewish, grew up in the orphanage.

Q: In the old orphanage?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Where was it?

A: Helenowek.

Q: Helenowek.

A: She was very, very poor. They lived in one room in a little suburb. She had a brother and a sister older, no mother, and a father, and she told me that Rumkowski had made a speech that morning, or would make a speech the next morning.

Q: Now, this is Branya.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: The essence of the speech was that the Germans had demanded 20,000 sick, elderly, and children, most of them children to be sent out of the ghetto. And the wording of the speech was, and that I think is a matter of record, "Mothers and fathers, give me your children so that the rest of us may live and survive." There were outcries, maybe a stone or two were thrown, but police was present. He tried to explain that he tried to negotiate that they wouldn't take children over 11 years of age, but they would have to take the sick. He got the number decreased by a thousand and various other justifications. Those who heard the speech and those who found about it were appalled. It was – the concept was unthinkable. During the process, that the deportation was announced by Rumkowski, and by the time he had the lists on the streets of the people written up, the Germans got angry and impatient. They enforced a curfew of seven days starting in September, I believe it was the 7th. We were not supposed to be out on the street for seven days and seven nights. The Germans came into the ghetto with trucks, with dogs and with guns. They went from street to street and from house to house, and the square area of the ghetto was not very large. And it went house by house. They came to our street. We had a neighbor sit on the roof and look out. And when they entered the courtyard, they shouted for everybody to assemble in the courtyard. And then they went into the building and found those who had hidden. They beat them and put them on

the truck. And then the looked at the remainder of those standing in the courtyard, probably 60 people, and within five minutes, they separated the old and the young from the more fit human beings. My sister, although she was 11 years old, not 10, was taken. I tried to go onto the truck with her. The guns stopped me. The truck drove off. My neighbor's mother was taken – many people out of the building. He was a policeman. He couldn't get his mother released. We never found out where they were taken, what was done with them, where they supposedly were resettled, in what labor camp they might have been sent. But eventually, a few packages of clothing came back into the ghetto. And supposedly – I did not see it – some of the clothing was blood-stained. Actual notes or actual letters I don't believe were found. Nobody could give us an answer. We hoped that they were alive – someplace, somewhere. And the curfew was lifted after seven days, and life continued for the rest of us. It was almost as if we had been hypnotized, as if we just – we just went on. We went to work. We collected the soup. We collected the food ration. It continued. We had been robbed not of our children, but of our feelings, of our compassion. Some children were hidden, but very few. How he could have asked to hand over the children, I did not understand at 16. I don't understand it now. Did he have a choice? I would say so. Czerniakow had a choice. I mean, his life was not so precious that he could not have said no. He could have refused to obey the orders. He would have paid the price, but to ask this of the community is unthinkable. I was fired from the dress factory. I don't know for what reason, probably incompetence. I did not sew very well. And I went back to the office on Rybna, 8 because I knew a woman there from Vienna. And by then it was October, and it was cold, and we stood around the stove and I said, "I need a job desperately." And her boss, who sat a desk in the corner, came over. He started talking to me, and by then I spoke Polish and Yiddish, and he said, "I'll give you a job." I

said, “Doing what?” And he said, “We have received truckloads of forms to be completed for the Germans in Germany for their coal rations. And the forms have to be figured and completed. And you’ll sit in the office. I need 300 people. You write down the names. People will tell you they’ll work here. You just get their addresses, and you just do it.” I said, “Okay, I’ll do it. A job is a job.” His boss was Henryk Neftalin, the attorney, who was in his late 30s. A very fair man. A very able man. I had met his mother when I was running around with those passports a year earlier. And he was much admired. The strange thing was that he had Rumkowski’s ear. When he would go to Rumkowski, he might take some abuse, but in the end, he would argue. And half the time, Rumkowski would listen. So, he was much admired. His girlfriend worked in one of the administrative offices. Her name was Klatalka (ph). And I worked in that office, I would say, until ’43, end of ’43. And one day Bernard Fuchs decided – he was the head of the Department of Labor – that too many people worked in that office, and he needed people in the straw shoe factory for the Russian front. And the commission of several dignitaries came, among them Rumkowski. And it was again a selection of who goes and who stays. And I hid pretty much to the bitter end until I was called, because they had my name on the list. And Rumkowski sat on a chair. He had taken off his hat and his coat, and he had his cane in his right hand. And for a minute, he reminded me of a fairy tale – a king sitting on a throne. He spoke to me in Yiddish and he asked me my name, whether I had family, where I had come from, and in the end he said, “Little German, you may stay, and you’ll hear from me.” He took a lot of people out of that office at that particular time. Bernard Fuchs threw out the list as he had drawn up previous deportation lists. I had gone to his office when I was jobless and asked him for employment because he was born in Hannover, Germany, and he spoke German. And after my third visit, he lost his temper, and

he said that he had not jobs, that I was a pest, or the equivalent in Polish. He opened the door and he yelled like a German, "*Raus!*"

Q: And when did this happen?

A: Before I got the job-

Q: With Goetz?

A: -with Goetz, and then again after I lost the job with Goetz, twice. And then there was a third time when I lost the job in the clothing factory. I saw him throughout the ghetto, sometimes in a carriage, sometimes not. He knew me because there were not many people who came from Hamburg who had been to Hannover, who could speak German. I also went for an interview to Balutaring with his sister Dora Brooks. She wouldn't hire me, no reason given.

Q: She was the executive secretary to Rumkowski, so she had a very high position.

A: She was more than that. She was his ears and his mouth because Rumkowski could not speak to the Germans in any language. She could speak. She could speak Polish, and by then, with the same accent I had, and she could speak German. I went to Walchovna (ph). I went to a whole variety of women who were in factories. And there were many that were capable, that were intelligent, but they wouldn't hire a woman. That was competition – a man, yes – a woman, no. So, I went back to work, and a few weeks later, my boss Henryk Neftalin called me into his office and he said, "I'm transferring you to the Statistical Department on Plac Koscielny, 4." I didn't want to leave because I'd become very friendly with Spiegel and I did not like the unknown. But you didn't argue with Henryk Neftalin. He was fair. He was decent. What his reasons were, I never knew. They could have been several. It could have been that he wanted me out of Rumkowski's reach. It could have been the fact that I came to work one day with a very bloody face when I had been sent to the Kripo because somebody

said I had a radio, and I never did have a radio. And he saw my bloody scars, my bloody face, my bruised eyes. He transferred me because in essence he was the actual head of the Statistical Department. He had the first word and the last word. It was a long way to work over the bridge. And in winter it was hard to walk, so they unshoveled snow on the bridge. You slid back rather than forward. Hundreds of people cross the bridge every morning, and you were afraid that somebody would carry lice and they would jump over on your clothing. That was the greatest fear because they carried typhus. The office…

Q: I want to stop. I don't like doing this, but I want to go back because you're now moving much too fast, and I really don't have much time. So, I'll tell you what we're going to do. We're going to stop the tape. And then, I'm going to come back and we'll go a little bit more slowly.

A: Okay.

End of Tape 3

Tape 4

Q: Lucille, I want to bring us back because you moved much too quickly for me.

A: I'm sorry.

Q: Don't be sorry, it's fine. You said when Karin was taken away, you all – and Karin is, well, she's going with children. There's also 70,000 people, I think who's in these deportations during this couple of months. Am I not right?

A: No, I don't think 70. I think it was in May around 15 or 20, and then again in September, there were a lot of smaller deportations in between a thousand or 2,000. The actual numbers I don't know, but the ghetto at any one time had roughly 160,000 people.

Q: But, it was a few thousand people over the course-

A: Over the course, yes.

Q: You said that people went on, and what you lost in some ways was your feelings. So, in order to go on, you clearly didn't forget Karin, but you couldn't respond to her going, I gather, in some way.

A: Well, I reached out for her. I tried to go with her. I was not allowed, but life in the overall ghetto went on. People even went so far as to use, at least for a week or two, the ration card of a person who was deported. So, there was no – there was no feeling. There was no – there was a sadness, but there was not a deep desperation and there should have been, and that, I think two or three years of ghetto life killed that within us.

Q: Did you use Karin's ration card? Did she have one even?

A: Yes, she had one.

Q: She had one. Did you use it?

A: No, I did not. My neighbor asked whether she could pick up the bread on her card, and I said, "No." And I handed it into the coupon department and let it go at that. I just couldn't because I had read a story, and supposedly it was fiction of children looking across a barbed wire at the Fehk Etta (ph) bread store and there was one across our street on the other side, and they looked from the attic down into the bakery and they were talking about the bread and how good it smelled, and it went on for quite awhile, and then came the deportations. And, just for the deportation, the father was so hungry that he stole a piece of the children's bread. And the father was deported. The mother and the two children hid and remained in the ghetto. The mother kept the card. She collected the father's bread. I don't know for how long. She gave it to the children, and she says, "Children, eat your father's bread." And that's the end of the story, and the story was written by Spiegel in the ghetto. It has been translated into English.

Q: And you knew this story.

A: He read this story to me when he wrote the first draft.

Q: And that was later?

A: That was after the – it was 1943.

Q: So, what was it that made you not use the coupon? Was there something immoral about it to you?

A: It was like robbing a grave, maybe. I don't know. I don't know – it wasn't mine to use. It wasn't mine to give. It was hers. I can't give you the reason. I do not know.

Q: So, she's taken away in September.

A: Yeah.

Q: You work for Goetz ends when in October?

A: No, it ended before deportation.

Q: Before deportation. So, you're four to six weeks without a job before you get the job – before Spiegel meets you.

A: No, I first go to the clothing factory in between and then I go back to Rybna,8 , and Spiegel gives me a job. That was pretty much the end of '42.

Q: So, you start working there, working on these forms.

A: Yes.

Q: You're filling in forms.

A: The coal rations for the German population.

Q: And, these coal rations from the Jews-

A: No.

Q: How does this work?

A: This is paperwork. It has nothing to do with Jews. It's like an audit at the Internal Revenue. He goes over the figures. We got forms, let's say, from the city of Berlin, and Mr. Smith lives in an apartment with four other people. He was entitled to a hundred kilo of coal, and we had to figure that out. Four times 50 or four times 25 is 100. Then there is Mr. Joe who has eight people living in his apartment. Each person gets 25 kilos. So, we had to come up with the figures, and there were thousands of these forms brought into the ghetto in containers, and we went through box after box doing the clerical work and having them shipped out of the ghetto again to Germany, so they could take the forms, give them to their people, and have them collect the coal. All we did was clerical work.

Q: I see. So, this had to be a fairly quick turnaround, so people could get there…

A: Yes, it had to be a few months, or it was for the following year. That I cannot say.

Q: So, who are you actually working for? Spiegel works for Neftalin.

A: I work for Spiegel.

Q: And, you work for Spiegel, and are there other people working for Spiegel, or just you?

A: The office had about three or four people, one of whom was Pushovsky (ph), one was – the other one was Spiegel, I think there was one more man. I'm not sure. But there were 300 people in the office.

Q: In the whole office?

A: In the whole office doing nothing but these forms. And while they did the forms, there were supervisors, but they all directly worked for Spiegel.

Q: So, what did you think of Spiegel when you first met him?

A: Well, he wore glasses. He had slicked-back black hair. He walked very deliberately, very slowly. He always carried a briefcase. He was very absent-minded, and he was always writing, in Yiddish, because I peeked and I couldn't read because he wrote very fast. He was also quite sure of himself. He had published already at the age of 22 in the Yiddish *Bletter* in Warsaw. He had taught school for awhile. What did I think of him?

Q: What did you notice him? Did you know that he was a published person?

A: Yes, but I did not pay much attention. He was – you would call him today a little stuffy, and he wore these little black horn-rimmed glasses or wire glasses – medium height, medium built, wore a suit unpressed. The shirts were a little rumpled. I mean, it wasn't somebody who would particularly strike you in a crowd, not in a ghetto.

Q: So, does he begin when you first start working there, to come over to you and ask you read or he's going to read to you? How – because you begin a relationship together, how does it begin for you?

A: He asked me to stay after work, and work ended at eight or nine.

Q: Eight-oh-nine?

A: Eight or nine at night.

Q: Sorry.

A: And the janitor whose name was Betczak was a little bit retarded but very sweet, would sweep the office.

Q: One second that noise is really – close the door.

[Break in tape]

Q: Lucille, I'm really sorry, there was an awful lot of noise outside. You won't be interrupted again. So, you were starting to talk about how you began to have a closer relationship with Spiegel and you're talking about the janitor, Betchak?

A: Betczak like a bed, Betczak. And, he would come and sweep around the offices and he would sit there at ten at night or whatever time it was, and Spiegel would read his drafts on which he worked most of the daytime although he wasn't supposed to, and – in Yiddish – and he told me what to think about them, whether they were good or not so good. And I listened, and some of his poetry is very beautiful. And the short stories really took me very much by surprised. They were fiction, but they were the story of the man who lost his horse to hunger, or the Germans killed an animal, or the father who stole bread from the children. He wrote a book during the ghetto time that was called "Malches Ghetto" – "Kingdom Ghetto", and it gives a story of the church on the Platske Chernya (ph), and the people who go in and who go out. He had a facility to describe people, and the description ran several pages. It reminded me of Thomas Mann and the *Buddenbrooks*. It gave the background of the story, the smell, the atmosphere, the air, the grass, the sky. It – to me at age 17, it was very impressive.

Q: Why did he have to tell you what to think?

A: Because I was very young and really didn't know very much. And we sat until very late in the office and when the janitor finally had to lock up, he walked me back to Pawia, 26, and that became a habit, a custom. It was noticed in the office. It was talked about in the office. Some people made fun of it because the age difference was tremendous.

Q: And how different was it?

A: It was 20 or 22 years, and I found it very awkward. I really didn't know how I felt about him. I admired him as a writer, or I liked his stories. I did not even know whether you could say a writer. I did not think that the stories would survive the war or we would survive the war, and then he began writing short poems, and I think there are eight or nine of them, and they were written to me. They were published after the war, and that's when he said, "If your mother were alive, I would ask her to marry you." He told me that he had a daughter, Eva, who died in the ghetto at not even a year old, and that's when I found out that he had a wife. He was separated from her. I saw once or twice. Somebody pointed her out. He had a couple of sisters, several brothers, and very, very old parents. They probably weren't as old as they looked old. The father could read and write Yiddish. The mother took in laundry for people before the war. She washed the laundry. She hung it up on the roof, and he had to sit on the roof to watch that the laundry wouldn't be stolen. The poverty in which he grew up was incredible. I had never heard of such poverty, and I believe that the apartment – and I was there twice – in which his parents lived, and the apartment which he shared during their time was theirs before the war. It was tiny. It was dark. There was hardly any furniture. It was the kind of poverty that you read about, but you never see it. By Spring or Summer in '43, I was taken to the common law police, severely beaten, and when I came back to the office, nobody said much, but I found out that I had been denounced for having a radio. The

Germans who beat me up told me that a woman had denounced me, and eventually being a ghetto and being a very small area, it became known that she had given my name to the common law police.

Q: It was his wife?

A: His separated wife. We never spoke about it.

Q: You never told him.

A: He saw it. You couldn't escape it. My left side – the whole left side of my face was for weeks a mess, but we never spoke about it. He kept bringing me back to Pawia, 26. He read me stories. He wrote more stories. And the following week he wrote a poem and he wrapped in an orange roll with a ribbon tied around, and the poem started "The eyes are green." The poem has been published in Israel and in Poland, and in one other book is a whole section and it says, "For Cilla." This friendship, I wouldn't call it a love affair. It was in between the two. On one hand, he was selfish. He got from Neftalin two weeks' leave to work in the bakery, which meant he could eat as much bread as he could absorb, but it also meant that his bread ration was not needed by him during the two weeks. I'm sure it went to his family, but he never offered me a slice. It hurt. Then I moved to Lutomierska, and it was then that he told me that he had written a poem "Raisins and Almonds". The poem was set to music by Beigelmann (ph). It was performed in the ghetto at night, clandestine in a basement. Rumkowski read about it because it says in one of the voices that "We are so hungry we have nothing to eat. What should the poor child do?" Rumkowski took offense, and he threatened deportation, and he said, "As long as I am here, you will write no more." Neftalin intervened with the understanding and the promise that there would be no references to Rumkowski in anything and there weren't from that point forward. He hated the man with vengeance, and

he always said, “If you ever get to know him, be careful.” I don’t know how to translate it, probably the closest would be, “He is a pest,” a *parch* in Yiddish.

Q: He spoke to you in Yiddish.

A: Yes.

Q: So, what did he say to you in Yiddish?

A: Spiegel?

Q: Yes, what did is say about Rumkowski?

A: “Rumkowski is a *parch*,” P-A-R-C-H, I think. He would not say anymore. He told me the story about the baby’s song. It’s a lullaby, so to speak, and around that time, Rumkowski came to the office. He did see Spiegel because he sat in the main conference room, and they did not look at each other. Neftalin took over, and he took a lot of people out of the office into the factories, straw factory mainly, and he told me that I would hear from him. And that evening, Spiegel again warned me, and in a way he was angry because I had done nothing, but somehow he felt it was partly my fault.

Q: About the song?

A: No, that Rumkowski had said I will hear from him.

Q: So, he saw that scene?

A: He saw that scene. And Fuchs didn’t say anything. He was present, Bernard Fuchs, and then Neftalin transferred me to the Statistical Department, and Spiegel picked me up every evening. He went over the bridge, picked me up, went back over the bridge to Lutomierska, went back over to the bridge to his parents’ house.

Q: But, in this period, you’re working there from October ’42 until the end of ’43. Is that right?

A: No, I would say the middle of ’43.

Q: Okay. So, it's a number of months.

A: Yes, six months, seven months.

Q: Now, is there – Soon after he starts walking you home, does he take your hand and hold your hand?

A: Yes.

Q: And, is this…

A: And, there was on Pawia, 26 – and that's in a book, in a poem – there was a covered well, and the well was covered with a wooden lid, quite large, and we would stand on that lid with our gloves on and our scarves and our hats and we would kiss, and there is a story of "*Der Tot Brunnen*", "The Dead Well", because the well was no longer active. My feelings were strange, I could not decide. He would say odd things. After the war, you would be married to a famous man. He was very sure of himself.

Q: Meaning himself?

A: Yes.

Q: I see.

A: He was very sure of himself, very much in love, and yet very frightening, and it told me not to worry about the divorce. Now, a divorce could only be granted by Rumkowski, and that was not in the picture. I know what my mother would have said.

Q: There's a growl from the world. How bad is that?

[Break in tape]

Q: Okay, well, we're finally back after this long break, and I believe where we ended was you were going to – somebody's whistling – is this all right? – what your mother would have thought had she been alive and you told her that Spiegel wanted to marry you.

A: I think she would have told me that I had lost my mind, that he had lost his mind, and she probably would have locked me up and thrown the key away.

Q: And why? Because of you or because of him?

A: That I even dared to get involved, which was my fault, and because he was in no way suitable, not age-wise, not professionally, not – she would have considered him a man without a conscience, because he wasn't divorced.

Q: And were these things you thought about at the time?

A: Mm-hmm.

Q: So, you were very-

A: I was brought up very proper.

Q: So, if that was the case, what in your mind was going on when you spent evening after evening with him and you knew that he was in some way falling in love with you, I suspect, no?

A: Well, it was the loneliness of being alone. It was a feeling of having somebody care for you, but on the other hand, I didn't talk much. I listened. I didn't talk because there is a poem and it starts, "*Wer Stricts der ausoy forbissen*" (ph). "Why are you so stubbornly silent?" Because I was very insecure. I was not comfortable. In some way, yes. In some ways, no.

Q: Did he ever ask you a question? Or was he always talking at you?

A: He was talking at me – very few questions. He wanted to know about the parents. He wanted to know about the home. But they were almost scientific questions. They were not particularly personal or informative or desiring to know.

Q: Is it the case that at some point he said that he wanted to live with you if you couldn't get married?

A: Yes, he did say that, and I said I would not consider that, especially not in the ghetto, where all these various affairs were public knowledge. I was brought up too strict and too proper to have thrown all caution to the wind. If I had known then of the duration of the ghetto, of Auschwitz, of Neuengamme, or Bergen-Belsen, I might have said, "Why not?" But I didn't know then.

Q: Was he your first boyfriend, in some way?

A: Yes, first love.

Q: And you do consider him a first love?

A: Yes, because I cared. It was not – it was not like being madly in love. It was more like being loved by somebody who cared, but not having to be alone.

Q: But you were a very innocent young woman?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you nevertheless see that there were a lot of affairs going on – that people were coupling?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you think of that as being a kind of desperation, that people thought they might die?

A: No, it wasn't out of desperation. It was – it was like in any society where people live in close proximity that these connections are made. The director of the corset factory and another factory, they had a *ménage-a-trois*, and it was common knowledge in the ghetto. They lived in one room, in one bed, everybody laughed. It wasn't funny. It was actually sad. Dora Fuchs was madly in love with the Auday Yakobovitch (ph). Yakobovitch was married. There are hundreds of these stories. Some were true love stories. Some survived the war and lasted long beyond the war, and some broke up with the end of the war.

Q: Were women – if you knew this at the time and maybe you can only know this on reflection – were women in some sense in a more vulnerable position because more men had jobs and more men were in a position to give women things?

A: No.

Q: No?

A: No. It varied from case to case. It depended on the individual. If a man was in a powerful position, yes. He had the power and the clout to demand, but so did the women in powerful positions. It worked both ways. They'd pick the man that they wanted.

Q: And there were a lot of women in power, as far as you know?

A: As far as I know, in the ghetto for the first time, women were not only nurses or teacher or homemakers, there was a woman a year older than I who ran the mattress factory, and she had her pick of the crop, as you would say. There was Dora Fuchs, for instance. There was Val Kovner (ph). There were many, many, and these women were very capable. They were powerful. They were very smart, very intelligent, but very tough, very tough.

Q: And you knew all this when you were there?

A: I learned all this-

Q: Later?

A: Slowly.

Q: Slowly.

A: Slowly, '42 – '43 – '44.

Q: Was this shocking to you?

A: Yes.

Q: Why?

A: Because I had no idea. I had a read some translated French literature that was risqué, but I really did not know what to make of it. If the director of the evening kitchen had an affair with a police – with a Jewish police, kept in only on the dining table in the kitchen, and it was common knowledge in plain view, it was shocking beyond words.

Q: Did you ever see anything that was shocking to you in that regard?

A: Yes.

Q: You did?

A: Yes.

Q: So, you saw things – people actually coupling in public places.

A: Yes, yes, public places. There was a woman in charge of the recovery home where you would be sent for two weeks if you were a deserving worker, but you had to be of fairly high rank, and it was out in Marysin, and Spiegel were walking, and she came over. She was twice my age, maybe more, and she made an open proposition.

Q: To him?

A: Yes, while I stood there like the fool that I was, and he said, "Let us stand here. You can come back later," but he didn't. So, all this was very shocking.

Q: I could imagine.

A: And then towards the end, after the evening kitchen, Spiegel just stopped picking me up. I asked him why. He didn't answer. He might have gone back to his wife. He might have stayed with his parents, but we never spoke again. In January '44, I was on a deportation list, and my friend Elie went to him to get me off the list. He went to talk Podlowski (ph), who had influence, and my name was deleted, but I never saw not until 1963, when he picked us up at the airplane.

Q: You and your husband?

A: And my two children.

Q: And your two children.

A: In Tel Aviv.

Q: So, when Neftalin sends you to Oskar Singer, you still see Spiegel throughout that whole…

A: He picks me up every evening.

Q: So, tell me about working – where you glad to go?

A: No, I was heartbroken.

Q: You wanted to stay in that office?

A: Yes. I have no interest in statistics. I had no interest – I had no knowledge even that this office was of any importance or prestige. I did not particularly wanted to work for a Czech. It was a very stuffy office with very few employees and everybody was at least 50 or 45. I was miserable, but it was not something that I could question or refuse. It would have been dangerous.

Q: And why would you have thought that Neftalin sent you there in order to get you away from Rumkowski, since Rumkowski could go anywhere?

A: He might have also wanted to get me away from Spiegel. He might have. I will never know because he was killed in Auschwitz. I would have asked him. I don't know, because he knew his former wife.

Q: I see. So, that's quite possible.

A: It is possible. I will never know. It could be one of two reasons.

Q: What kind of a person was Singer? Did you get to know him?

A: Yes. Singer spent his day mainly on the street, or away from the office seeing people who had some knowledge, who had some influenced, who had important jobs. I would pick up at the bottom of the bridge in the police station from Sergeant Margolis the daily statistics – so many people died, so many people committed suicide, so many were deported. When Singer came back into the office, he would write or have us take notes and eventually, he produced a tremendous amount of material, because the chronicle of the large ghetto is not all Singer's. I think several hundred pages at least, and that's a forthcoming book now. He was a journalist. He had worked as a journalist in Prague. He had a tremendous insight, and normally, I was able to understand his writing except for one two-page – I couldn't even call it a report. It was more like a love letter to Rumkowski. If you want to read the German version, I can get it for you. It's available in Lodz and at the University in Giessen. It does not fit his personality. It does not fit his other reports. It does not fit the man because he very well knew and realized that, on some level, Rumkowski was collaborating. He followed orders. Whether he followed orders because he really believed it would buy us life or time, or whether he didn't have the courage to do anything else, because he made it very clear any kind of resistance would not be appreciated is a mild word, would not be tolerated. So, this last entry to Rumkowski could have only meant that he took it there and got some sort of a reward, which meant additional food, a loaf of bread, whatever. His daughter was my age and I met her through him, and his son was two or three years older, and he cultivated the girls whose father belonged to the police and to other important ghetto institutions. He worked in the bakery as an electrician. Strangely enough, Dr. Singer, a very educated man and so was his wife, did not send either one of his kids to college, and he could have because Prague was not Germany. Whether they would not have been college material, I really cannot judge. But

both had trades. The daughter was a seamstress and the son an electrician. The wife came from a German-speaking family in Prague, a very bright, very nice woman. His sister was in the ghetto. Her husband had been arrested after Prague was occupied, and one did not know his whereabouts, and she had a longstanding, ongoing connection with the director of the electrical component factory. And then there were two elderly ladies living in the same household. They had almost a small apartment on Zgierska Street. It was very clean and when I could not keep my bread for eight or nine days, I'd give it to my friend, and she would bring me a portion to work everyday. So, I trusted her with my bread. What else can I say of the Singer? The two old ladies, especially one of them, was his landlady Roztoky, near Prague. No children, very wealthy. I think the husband died or was killed – or he died in the ghetto. In the ghetto, these two ladies made out a last will and testament in favor of Dr. Singer. I was, about six years ago, at Sonoma State University, and the director of Holocaust Studies is John Steiner. John is only very partly Jewish, but he made it through Auschwitz in spite of the fact that he never knew he was a Jew. It turns out that one of the ladies living with Dr. Singer was his aunt. He knew Dr. Singer before the war, and his daughter was his girlfriend. So, I told him the story about the will, and he's now – I mean, the will was lost in Auschwitz – he's trying to regain the house near park, and there was also a bank account by the same aunt in Switzerland, but the name and the numbers have never appeared. So, after 50 years, to come across this little old lady again is very strange. I found it in a way strange only it was resourceful that Dr. Singer asked the two ladies to make out their last will. On some level, he must have thought that he would survive the war, because otherwise, why would you do it? His son had, at times, a radio. It was in poor shape, it needed constant repair. We only got the BBC and the progress of the war – nothing about Warsaw, nothing

about our ghetto, nothing about Auschwitz, no idea. No mention was ever made by Dr. Singer of a place like Auschwitz, like Bergen-Belsen. No mention was made by Neftalin, by Spiegel. It just was not mentioned. So, it can be assumed that we really didn't know. Maybe somebody knew, but I don't know.

Q: And nobody mentioned Hamburg?

A: No, that you saw from the letter which I got in '47 where it stated they were killed in Auschwitz, and it turned out they were killed in Hamburg. So, that is much later information. The work for Dr. Singer was effortless. It was boring. It was dull. I was a clerk. It was a large, dark office, and it was terribly lonely, whereas the previous office had people. Until one day when I got a phone call, would I please appear in police headquarters outside the Balutski Renneck (ph), and there was Rumkowski, and he told me that I would work in the evening kitchen together with 40 other young women my age who had been for six months in the women's police corps, and they wore uniforms just like the men. They were mostly young women who had finished *matura* (ph) either before they ghetto or in the ghetto in '40, and they strutted around the ghetto in their police uniforms, gray with an orange band, and it was a police corps that lasted probably eight months.

Q: In 1943?

A: Yes.

Q: I'm looking surprised.

A: Yes, I'm surprised that you're surprised. I thought it was common knowledge.

Q: Well, maybe for some, but has not been for me.

A: Well, there are some of these women still alive.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, and all of these went to work in the *Kuechenuhr kueletini* (ph) evening kitchen, which was used for a two-week period for deserving workers on a coupon which gave them an evening meal, a little vegetables, sometimes a little starch, and something that looked like a hamburger, but it was round. What it contained, I really couldn't say. I ripped mine up and I gave it to Spiegel when he picked me up. Rumkowski knew about Spiegel and he threatened.

Q: Threatened you or threatened Spiegel?

A: Threatened me for seeing him. He told me that he knew. Who had carried the information, I don't know, but it was common in the ghetto to trade information, to talk to the administration about anything or to denounce people, to no particular gain other than maybe you got a little reward for it, but just to carry gossip. The young policewomen were all waitresses.

Q: Let me stop you for a minute. Is this the time when Spiegel stops seeing you?

A: No, that was before – after that, he stopped seeing me.

Q: After he stopped seeing you?

A: End of '43.

Q: So, perhaps he stopped because he was frightened, or you didn't tell him?

A: I didn't tell him.

Q: Is it possible that Rumkowski went to Spiegel and said, "Stop"?

A: Anything is possible. I doubt it, but it is possible.

Q: And, how did you – that's a question you can't answer. All of these women who were in the women's police who came in and you're the only one who's in another – was in another job?

A: I was in the office.

Q: Right.

A: If we received 50 kilo of carrots, and we had to serve 400 meals, how much did each person get in terms of weight? So many grams, and I had a little trouble with the arithmetic. They kitchen was run by a man of the name of Minsk. He was sort of grandfatherly and kind, and he ran the kitchen. He was the – there were four of them. He ran this particular one, and he brought in a young man who helped me with the figuring. I couldn't manage it. I could manage it now. But in the afternoons, he was ordered to leave because this was done clandestine. Rumkowski did not know, or if he knew, he did not let on, but I was a clerk for that kitchen.

Q: All right, I want to go back to being in Singer's office for a minute. Did you learn anything? I understand it was boring, but you didn't have colleagues on a regular basis.

A: No.

Q: But did you learn things about the ghetto from being in that office that you would not have known otherwise or that you did not know before about how things were operating?

A: Yes. You found out if a factory changed management. You found if somebody was replaced by somebody else. You found out if people were in the ghetto yesterday. You heard a rumor, true or untrue, that Biebow tried to rape Dora Fuchs. You heard – you heard all sorts of rumors in that office, some of which you didn't dare put down on paper because there was always the chance of censorship by the Germans, and censorship by the Jews. There were sometimes stories about food rations to be and they never materialized or vice versa. The information was accurate to the extent that you couldn't substantiate very much. I mean, even when I picked up the daily statistics, so many died in the hospital, so many jumped out of a window, of course, no births – there were hardly any births, even these statistics they were kept, but the question arises how accurate where they. There were quite a few suicides

especially from – committed by people coming from the west – some were doctors, some were lawyers, and they must have brought something along to make suicide possible. There was a rumor that the ghetto had some doctors. There was a lady by the name of Kronan Burke (ph). There was Dr. Miller, who was Rumkowski's favorite doctor, but no medication. There was a lady dentist who operated a drill with a foot pedal, like an old fashioned sewing machine, and you heard about them. You heard, for instance, that if you were jaundiced or if you had hepatitis, atropine would help, an injection of atropine. Whether this is true today, I do not know. Atropine could be somehow smuggled into the ghetto if you knew a German of the guard. These things you heard in the office, but you could never vouch for honesty or credibility.

Q: And did Singer write down more than ever went into the *Chronicle*? He had many more – because I'm sure when he went out to talk with the people, he must have taken down notes.

A: He took very brief notes, but then-

Q: He would write…

A: Then it got… They're all typewritten on an old-fashioned manual typewriter. They have some errors. All of his entries will be out in January in German, and if you'd like it, I'll get it for you. His counterpart was Oskar Rosenfeld, also from Prague, and his – he had not nearly as many entries. He was much older. He had a very young wife in England and he was very grandfatherly, very sweet, very kind – a totally different style because when I was at the Justice Liebzig University, they gave me a stack of these reportages and they asked me to identify them and said, "Here is Singer's." And I went through them. I said, "No, this is not Singer. This is Oskar Rosenfeld." And it was correct – totally different style. I didn't know him as well as Singer because he worked in the office, but I didn't work for him. His book

supposedly was just published in English by Hanna Levy, either Frankfurt at the Bauer Institute in Frankfurt, or it came out in Berlin. I'm not sure which. And Hanna Levy did the editing and it supposedly came out in English. I have not seen it. And I'm not as familiar with his entries.

Q: So, you didn't type these reports?

A: Some I did type wherever there was a typewriter available, but there was only one and I was not the only one who had access to it.

Q: So, when you say you were clerking, what would that mean?

A: I would transcribe some of Singer's notes in longhand. I would file things. I would give him the daily statistics. I would do very menial work – nothing of any consequence or substance, but I did read what he wrote because it was an interesting style.

Q: So, you weren't completely, given the kind of job you were doing, you were not completely unhappy going to the kitchen.

A: No, because it meant an extra meal. It was from five to seven in the evening. People lined up and had a coupon, and, well, Rumkowski came almost every evening, and the apron of the waitress, if the bow in the back was not straight, he would hit her with a cane. He carried a cane. He threatened a couple of them with dismissal. In the front sat two ladies who clipped the coupon which had to be counted every morning – two ladies? Two young women. The cooking was done by a couple of lady chefs.

Q: Let's hold here. We have to change the tape.

End of Tape 4

Tape 5

Q: Lucille, we'll talking about the kitchen, and you were mentioning, before we were talking about the actual cooking, there were people at the – women at the door clipping coupons. Where did people get the coupons?

A: You got them in the factory, you got them in an office, if your boss decided that you deserved a bonus. And of course it was – there were never enough coupons to go around the ghetto, but it was an incentive or a gift for some of them. There was a lot of favoritism involved as to who got them. If you were well connected, you could be sure to get the coupon. It was – it was an original idea to reward a worker because it was said the straw shoe factory rewarded 12 workers, not bosses, but 12 workers, or the uniform factory rewarded 10 workers. It was supposed to be an incentive to work hard, to try to top the quota, and in the end to please the Germans.

Q: One dinner for one coupon?

A: Yes, one dinner for one coupon, but you got a week at a time. You could come for seven days. So, you got seven coupons. It was one coupon and you cut off seven strips. At one point, they tried to do it for two weeks, and then somebody else got a turn. How it was decided, administered, as to who got them, or which factory – that was done behind closed doors, I do not know, but there was a lot of protection involved.

Q: And your job was figuring out the mathematics of we have this much food and how much for each person?

A: Well, we had this much food for the week, divide that by seven, and then divide by the number of clients or the number of diners who would come, and how much each person would consume in grams. For instance, it would be 50 grams of meat which equals about an

ounce. It would be so much red beets, but the figuring was complicated. There was no adding machine. There was no calculator. I had to take a pen and pencil and you had to convert the kilos to pounds and the pounds to grams, and in Poland they used the word "deca" which meant ten grams. So, it was a little overwhelming for me. I mean, I wasn't bad at math, but I wasn't that good.

Q: And who decided what the menu would be?

A: That depended – well, the – Mr. Mintzer was in charge of the kitchen, and it depended on the supply. They would – they would send – they would come on a horse-drawn truck, sort of like a flatbed truck but horse-drawn, and they would either unload or sack or a crate or sometimes it was flour, sometimes it was carrots or beets or turnips, very rarely potatoes, sometimes meat, and from the looks of it, it was horsemeat because it was very dark red, and it was all served on one plate, in little portions, and the portions were pretty much equal, almost if you would take an ice cream scoop. We were entitled the same meal an hour before our guests would appear with the rule that nothing was supposed to be taken out, but we did anyway.

Q: And how many people per evening usually?

A: Well, the so-called dining room was filled up. I would say probably 200.

Q: That's a lot of people.

A: 150-200, but not for a ghetto of 160,000 people.

Q: Was there a large kitchen, or was it a very makeshift kind of thing?

A: No, it was a large kitchen. It had big kettles. The cooks were ladies, and they were standing on a platform stirring ferociously at those kettles, and we would come in and look and they didn't like it, and in the back of the kitchen was a storage room, and the storage room had the

supply. The young woman who ran the storage room was somewhat older than we were, I guess, close to 30. Her name was Meyerowitz, and she carried the key to the storage room around her neck, and you were not allowed to go over the threshold into that storage room. She would reach – she would weigh, count, whatever, and she would reach the food out, and I was a little friendly with her, and if I would come near the entrance she would say, "Stop, stand there and talk to me. Don't go further." Because I might touch something or take something. She was very meticulous for reasons of her own.

Q: And were you also the youngest person working in the kitchen?

A: No, there were two or three people younger than I. Most were older than I, but there was a young woman that – three young women who were younger than I am, but not by much.

Q: Rumkowski came in every night – to eat?

A: Almost every – no. No, he had decent food. I mean, if you look at his prewar picture – his rumpled shirt, his rumpled pants, his disheveled hair – he was a poor man. When he showed up in the ghetto, he was pressed and tailored, immaculate – boots, he wore boots – SS-type boots – shined. Lodz had very good tailors. I think the best in all of Poland. His top coats, his jackets were out of Fifth Avenue – unbelievable, elegant.

Q: So, he comes in and he's sort of a monster to people.

A: Well, he comes in – he was very proud of his achievement, and I guess it was an achievement, but the people – the young people who worked for him were petrified of him because he would beat them and if he was displeased, he would dismiss them, and that was a risk you took. A couple of girls I knew were dismissed. One of them managed through connections to come back. It was a good job, but it was a risky job in some ways.

Q: Were you frightened of him?

A: Yes, I was. I was.

Q: Were you frightened based on what you saw or what you had been hearing?

A: Both.

Q: Both?

A: Both.

Q: Now, I'm a little confused about timeframe when it comes to the various conversations you had with people about Rumkowski. Spiegel says things to you – that he's a pig or a pest, and that one has to be careful of him. You meet other people Shlomo (ph), Branya, Luba.

A: Branya I met while I worked for Spiegel. She came into the office as a courier.

Q: Okay.

A: Luba worked in the Statistical Department.

Q: When you working with Singer?

A: Right. The woman who worked at the orphanage, the teacher.

Q: Dorka?

A: Dorka, she lived in our building. She was an unmarried woman and she was deported together with my sister to Chelmo. Yulik (ph), I met after the war in Paris.

Q: And Shlomo, when did you meet Shlomo – Shlomo Hect (ph), he has the pushcart.

A: Oh, I met him at the very beginning, when I come into the ghetto in '41.

Q: So, right in the beginning you hear stories because he tells you-

A: Right.

Q: -about Sergei-

A: Right, who was his friend.

Q: -who was his friend, and was investigating Rumkowski.

A: Shlomo before the war had a store that sold yarns and fabrics and things like that. He had pushcart on corner Rybna and Lutomierska Street and it sold – he sold needles and thread and other small items. I think he was an educated man because he spoke German. He talked to my mother in the very beginning, and he talked to me – as long as he lived and he died shortly after my mother – he talked to me in bits and pieces. On the outside, on the street corner, when the weather permitted. When it got very cold and I could spare the time, I would drop in at his room. He had a daughter about my age, a year older, and he would talk. He lived on, I think, Narutoviska (ph) Street before the war as did Sergei. Sergei was a bachelor until quite late, and he worked for the city council in Lodz. He was a short man. He was heavyset.

Q: This is Sergei?

A: Yes. I met him only after the war, and he had a brother. I never met him. He perished. And he was a friend of Shlomo's, and he heard the story about the complaints. He tried to investigate. The first time the accusations were thrown out for lack of evidence by the Jewish Council. The second time was just before the start of the war. Supposedly, the complaint was filed. Rumkowski knew about it. Sergei escaped to Russia to – through Russia, I think he went to Yugahama (ph), then to Canada, then to Los Angeles. I met him in 1975. Rumkowski looked for him all through the war. He thought he was hiding in the ghetto. Sergei eventually went back to school and became a social worker, but while he was working on the city council, he worked in the Balut. He knew the thieves. He knew the thief in charge. He knew the underworld, and when his silver watch was stolen, he complained and it reappeared. There was a young woman in the ghetto. She also worked in the kitchen, and she once took me home, and I met her mother – a tall, well-dressed woman, heavyset, and the father is sort

of small and shifty-eyed gentleman, and he asked me where I come from and what my father did, and his only answer was, “Feh” I didn’t know what to make of it. The apartment in the Balut had all the prewar furniture, rugs, glassware, crystal, and it turned out he had lived there before the war with his family as had my co-worker from the kitchen. She was very pretty, very blonde. I don’t think she could count to five, but she was very popular. She had a couple of sisters, a brother-in-law, and when I asked the father, since he had such contempt for my father’s work, what did he do before the war, he said, “A little of this, and a little of that.” But the rumor in the ghetto was that he had an older daughter and the daughter was sold to a brothel in South America. And it was common knowledge. But he had underworld connection before the war; during the war, I don’t know. His children survived. What happened to the daughter in South America, I do not know. He and his wife did not survive. His daughter is still living.

Q: How does it come that Shlomo tells you about Sergei’s investigation of Rumkowski? Is it just because Rumkowski is part of a lot of conversation?

A: Yes, yes, because he used to drive by in this horse-drawn buggy. Everything was signed with Rumkowski’s name from the money, to the announcements, to everything else. He was envied, envied partly for power, mainly for food. I mean, it’s almost like saying, “Why was Kennedy talked about?” It was a person who wielded enormous power, and who did not live the life of the average ghetto dweller. He lived a different life.

Q: So, Shlomo tells you about four children or three children? He tells you about Branya.

A: He mentions the four children.

Q: Including Branya and Dorka.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, you have a sense of what Rumkowski was doing in an orphanage to little children-

A: Well-

Q: Or not?

A: No, I didn't have a sense. I had never heard of such a thing, and it didn't – it didn't really fall into place.

Q: But, he tells you he takes children into a room and undresses them.

A: Yeah, or molests them.

Q: Or molests them in some way.

A: And – but, to me, I mean I was 16 years old.

Q: So, it's just a story.

A: It's just a story, and I must have found it frightening but I could not – I could not really relate to it.

Q: When you meet Branya, who was the first person who actually experiences this and is still experiencing it in the ghetto-

A: Right, and she cried and she couldn't talk. She started a sentence and never finished it.

Q: So, you never found out from her, as much a story as you heard from Shlomo?

A: No. I found out bits and pieces. I found out that her food ration was considerably better than mine. She was a very - well, she gave the appearance of a very happy person, but she was very, very unhappy because her family used her, and she had a miserable childhood, and she had a miserable ghetto life.

Q: And then Dorka, who tells you about this little child, Manya.

A: The child with a violin.

Q: Who he molests-

A: Yeah.

Q: And she runs away fearful.

A: She runs away and she hits the barbed wire and gets shot, but it was never publicized. It was never spoken about. Nobody dared because there were many killings along the barbed wire. That was very, very common. Luba was much more outspoken. She was very worldly, very wise. She was an orphan from a very young age. The man with whom she lived used to run a food distribution center and he was caught stealing, and he ended in prison, and she had Rumkowski release him under the condition that he would not get a job.

Q: And then she continues in some way going to Rumkowski.

A: Yes, she got-

Q: But she was in the orphanage before the war.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: So, she was molested as a child and then as adult woman she agrees to do it in order to protect this-

A: This man and to get food, and she got a beautiful apartment out near Marysin with the promise that she would get married and that Rumkowski would perform the ceremony, and she always postponed it. She postponed it three or four times. I don't know why, whether he didn't want to get married or she didn't want to get married. I never found out.

Q: Did he know what she was doing? Her – the man she was living with?

A: I don't know.

Q: You don't know.

A: I never knew him well enough to have a conversation with him. We said, "Hello" and "How are you?" and small talk but we never talked.

Q: Now, you meet Luba in ’43-‘44

A: ’43.

Q: You’re a little older now. Do you now begin to understand what he’s doing?

A: No, what I understood is that Luba had to have an abortion. That she was living with her boyfriend. That I understood. I knew that Luba was really wise and very worldly and she played the game by her own rules. How much I related to it, or how much I understood, I don’t know.

Q: You liked her?

A: Yes, because she was very friendly, very boisterous, very outgoing, and very attractive, but not pretty. She was short. She was plump. She managed to buy clothing from recent arrivals because she had the means to purchase. I liked her. There was – there was a charm about her. There was a will to live. She could be a lot of fun. She could laugh about anything and there was really not much to laugh about. But I liked her.

Q: Did she work in the kitchen also?

A: Yes, she clipped coupons.

Q: I see. So, you and she moved into that position-

A: Yes.

Q: -from the Singer job, as well.

A: Yes.

Q: I see. So, are you – I don’t know if it’s unconsciously nervous about Rumkowski because he in some sense pointed you out to himself, “I will see you again.”

A: Yes. It made me nervous. On the other hand, I thought maybe I will get more to eat, in an innocent sort of way – maybe somebody will be kind and give me more food.

Q: So, you are a still in an innocent way.

A: The strings – the strings I didn't attach at that point.

Q: So, then what happens?

A: Well, he came into the office. One of the first proposals were that he would rent – he would rent! – he would get a room above the kitchen so he can come anytime, and I started to cry and I said, "I want to stay where I am", et cetera. He got angry and he beat me with his cane. He came back in subsequent weeks and months and it was a matter of molestation. The man was impotent, but he did not like to know that or hear about it, and to me it was utterly frightening because at one point I wasn't even quite sure how you become pregnant until Luba told me.

Q: Did he undress you?

A: No.

Q: So, he didn't -

A: It was just a matter of touching.

Q: Touching him?

A: Yes, and it was disgusting. The fear was tremendous. Not only the fear of the beating, but the fear of his power. The fear that he could decide over life and death, that he could deport, that he could denounce to the Germans, that he could do just about anything. That fear was overwhelming. He wanted to know about my family. He wanted to know who was living in Palestine. He wanted to know if they were well-off. He made me promise that after the war I would see to it that they would help him, both to get to Palestine and to give him money because I owed him that. And he made one remark that struck me then, it strikes me now. "If I can save a hundred human beings, it will have been worthwhile." I tried to figure out the 'it'

in the sentence. He spoke Yiddish. What would have been worthwhile? The death of so many others, the collaboration, the cooperation with the Germans, a hundred human beings out of 150,000? It – it shocked me. That and the children, "Give me your children." Those remarks I could neither forget nor forgive.

Q: When he beat you the first time, he never beat you again?

A: No, he beat me several times.

Q: He beat you several times?

A: With a stick, over the shoulder, over the head. He was not as steady on his feet as a normal 65 year old, mainly because he probably wore those crazy boots and it wasn't easy to walk with boots up to your knees. You just know that when he was displeased he would beat people. Whether those were the girls in the kitchen or anybody else, it really didn't matter. If you were lucky, you flinched and you hoped there were no further consequences. But he was every bit as frightening as an SS – I found out later – as an SS man in uniform.

Q: He locked the door-

A: Yes.

Q: -to the office when he came.

A: Yes, absolutely.

Q: Did you scream when he hit you?

A: No.

Q: You didn't cry?

A: No.

Q: Why?

A: I cried.

Q: You cried.

A: I cried. You didn't hear a sound.

Q: Did he beat you more when you cried?

A: No, he just – he vented his anger or his frustration, and if I cried, so I cried. That didn't bother him.

Q: Did he try to kiss you?

A: Yes.

Q: And he kissed you?

A: Yes.

Q: Yes. Do you have any idea why, when you refused, he said, "You can't refuse." He wouldn't have said, "You can't refuse me. I'm going to move you into an apartment." Because he clearly had the power to do so.

A: He had the power to do so. My crying probably stalled for time, or gave me time, and the time was the food ran out and the kitchen had to be closed, and everybody in that kitchen was transferred to the leather factory, to the Saddlery. So-

Q: So, you don't know what he would have done?

A: No, but there was one woman about ten years older than I who took him up on the offer of a room on the other side of the kitchen, but she didn't care. She was only stupid enough not to cover the windows, and she was dumb enough to talk. But she was much older – much, much older, at least ten years older.

Q: So, clearly this was happening with a number of women-

A: Right

Q: -in that kitchen.

A: Right.

Q: You were not the only one pointed out.

A: Yes, he also went into the storeroom where the provisions were kept and the door was locked. That's all I know.

Q: So, how long were you working in this kitchen.

A: I think it lasted about three months, four months.

Q: And how often did he try to come and see you?

A: Every other day, at least.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, because it was his accomplishment, his pride and joy, his – his child, I mean, this brainstorm of having a kitchen for deserving workers. I mean, what else could he give them? Money didn't mean a thing. The only thing that meant anything was food. So, he came just to make sure that everything was running properly, because there was a lot of theft, there was a lot of corruption, there was a lot of dishonesty, and we all knew. It was unavoidable. It was understandable. So, for at least three months, he came at least every other day. You never knew when he would come. You could hear the horse's hooves outside, the clicking, and then, who else had a horse? And, then in the hallway, you could hear his footsteps because he walked very unevenly and very noisily.

Q: Approximately how many times did he come to see you in particular? Do you remember how many? A few times a week, once a week?

A: Oh, it would be at least two or three times a week, at least twice a week.

Q: Did you talk to Luba about this?

A: No. She had an idea because she was much smarter than I was, and I did ask her about pregnancy, and she laughed. She laughed so hard, and she said, "Don't you know how you get pregnant?" And I really didn't know, and – but, that really didn't change anything. I went once to see Dr. Kronenburg, and she looked at me as if I was a little bit out of my mind, but she was kind, and she said, "Go back; don't worry."

Q: So, did you explain to the doctor what was happening?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And she said you don't have to worry about pregnancy.

A: Don't have to worry, she said, "Besides, you're not menstruating. Why are you worrying?" And I said, "What does that have to do with it?" It was very complicated.

Q: Did you menstruate at all during the ghetto?

A: Nobody did.

Q: Nobody did?

A: Nobody did, lack of food.

Q: Had you menstruated before?

A: Yeah.

Q: Of course, and you just stopped.

A: It just stopped.

Q: Was she, the doctor, shocked at what you told her about what Rumkowski was doing?

A: I don't think she was shocked. She was an older woman who probably had children my age. She was well-known. She was an MD. She was not a *felczer*, because the ghetto had a lot of doctors that were – like, what should I say – first-aid man, or medical corpsman and they were called a *felczer*, from falsifying the word comes, but they were called doctors because

there was a scarcity of doctors and hospitals otherwise, and she was too smart and too intelligent and probably slightly amused. I don't know.

Q: Amused?

A: Yes, that I would be so stupid, and she said, "It's all right, child, go home."

Q: So, she didn't ask you anything about what this was doing to you or what-

A: No.

Q: - because this was not relevant?

A: No, it wasn't relevant. You – the ghetto did not have time, compassion, or patience for anyone's mental well-being. That did not exist, and didn't exist during most of the war. It didn't even exist in 1946 in New York. So, this is human nature. You just shrug, and you figure it out by yourself.

Q: And, even Luba laughed because of your thinking that you could pregnant from this.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did she say anything else to you about?

A: No.

Q: About Rumkowski?

A: No.

Q: So, you didn't talk-

A: She told me that she had known him since childhood, since the orphanage, but their relationship, their talk was so relaxed and so easy, it wasn't on the basis of "Sir." It was on the basis of "you", and you don't call the president "you;" you call him "Mr. President." Even in Polish. So, it was fairly obvious that there was a connection, somehow, somewhere.

Q: Did she in some sense after all these years, gain some power, now that she was a woman and not a girl, with him?

A: Well, the power she gained was the additional food, the apartment, those were the obvious gains. She managed all sorts of strange things. She lived in a small room, a small apartment, and it was cold and you couldn't heat it, but you could get the element, which is the spiral that fits into a heater, for instance, and she strung it across the room from right to left, but you couldn't hook it up to meter because the Germans would have known. So, she got in an electrician to hook it up above the meter, so it would not show the numbers on the individual room meters. I mean, she knew things that nobody knew. She knew how to survive.

Q: Actually, what I meant was that in some way she had a certain kind of power with Rumkowski.

A: She didn't use it.

Q: She didn't use it?

A: No, on the contrary, she was very relaxed and she was very sweet, very smiley.

Q: To him?

A: Yeah, very outgoing, jovial, joking, because in the end, she got a reward.

Q: So, when this is happening, that he's forcing you in essence to masturbate him.

A: Yes.

Q: Where are you in your head? Do you go somewhere? Do you leave?

A: Fear.

Q: You're in fear.

A: Fear, just fear, cold fear.

Q: And it's the same thing each time.

A: Over and over.

Q: And it only stops because the kitchen is closed.

A: Yes.

Q: You think?

A: Yes. Maybe he would have found another toy, but the kitchen closed on Monday and on Tuesday we were working in the Saddlery, all of us.

Q: Was that hard work?

A: Yes, it was sewing the metal frames that go around a shovel that a soldier carries on his belt to dig a trench, and those were sewn on a goat or a *causa* (ph), as you say in a Yiddish. That means you sit on a bench and in front of you is like a head with a vice, with a wooden vice, and you put the leather into – the two pieces of leather into the wooden vice, you have an awl to punch the whole, and then you have a long string with two needles, one right, one left – and you sew a double stitch like this, and it was piecework. I mean, they counted it, and once in a while, there were ten strips to a unit. Once in awhile, we were a strip short, and then you had to go to the foreman, who was a young man our age and you had to do a lot of explaining and a lot of excusing, and then you would get another strip, but they were counted out carefully because the Germans had shipped them carefully. The reason my strips disappeared is I stole them. I stole six strips because my shoes had no soles, and I put them in the top of my boots, and I walked through the inspection; it was like at the airport. They would tap you from neck to the bottom. Occasionally you had to undress, and I only told about it after I had all six out. Nobody knew, and people thought I must have lost my mind, but I had no soles for the winter.

Q: And, then you get somebody to fix them.

A: I got a shoemaker to sole the shoes, and the reason he didn't talk is because he could keep half of the strips, and he could sell them for bread. I think it's about the only time I stole. That's why I never bought a pair of boots, never.

Q: And you didn't buy a pair of boots because – weren't these boots something that were made for you.

A: The boots came from an old hatbox that my mother had, and when I had them made, I gave half the hatbox to the shoemaker. And in Poland, there are two shoemakers; one who makes the uppers and one who makes the bottom. One makes the uppers are the kupita (ph), and the bottom is the shaftsa (ph), and it's two procedures. It's like a designer, designing the upper part, and then putting the sole on it. And the reason I got them made was that I left them have the box, half the hatbox because it had a top and a bottom. The side were sort of stiff, and – but they only lasted one winter or maybe a winter and a half and I came through the soles, and I had frostbite, and they were pull up boots in sort of a nice brown leather, but much too soft for shoes. They were for a hatbox, not for shoes. But I had enough room below the knee to get a thin item into it like a strip of leather, and those I stole.

Q: So, why is that you've never bought a pair of boots since then?

A: Because I remember those boots.

Q: And never wanted another pair of boots?

A: No. I couldn't, because my mother used the box for hats before the war. I never bought a pair of boots.

Q: It's good you lived in California.

A: Probably, but in California there were boots. It's fashionable.

Q: That's true. So, did these – when they fixed the boots, it was okay?

A: Yes, but the frostbite remained. I saved the toes, but barely. And once in awhile, they lose all circulation and they turn greenish-blue. But I kept them. I mean, I didn't lose any toes. They thawed out.

Q: And how long were you working in the leather factory?

A: Until deportation out of the ghetto in fall of '44.

Q: And you get there a few months before. You worked there a few months or longer?

A: Yes, I worked there a few months.

Q: And, Rumkowski doesn't follow you?

A: No, never – never saw him again.

Q: And, do you ever talk to anyone else before you leave the ghetto?

A: No.

Q: Does it in some way leave your mind or does it wear on you?

A: Nothing. If you went through the war, nothing leaves your mind. It's filed away under Z or Y. You don't think of it every minute or every day, but once in awhile, something comes back. I was at the airport in Munich in September, and it was of course after New York, and there the Germans stood in their uniforms and their black boots, and one of them started yelling, "You can't use this door. Use that door." And normally I don't understand German, I just understand English, and it brought back, "What are you, Gestapo?" I just – it just came back. I didn't do it on purpose. There are flashbacks when I'm under stress, but not otherwise.

Q: And when you wrote the first part of your autobiography, *From Ashes to Life*, there's a hint of this – what happened with Rumkowski.

A: Right.

Q: Why did it take you a few years more to decide that you would write about this?

A: Because it's difficult to admit this. The times have changed. We hear now of abuse of children. We hear now of abuse of wives. Twenty years ago, we didn't talk about it. It's very painful to go public with something you're not proud of. What should I have done? Maybe I should have run away. Maybe I should have slapped him. I don't know. Maybe I should have done something. It's difficult to say, and that's why I didn't write it. The other reason I didn't write it is because my mother used to say, "If you can't say something good about a human being, don't say it." And I agonized with that for years.

Q: Do you think that in some ways it helps people to understand something about Rumkowski that they couldn't understand otherwise?

A: I don't know whether people now really can understand our past. I think you have to have lived through it to understand it emotionally. Intellectually, maybe – I can't expect my children to understand the past or what it was like. It's not possible. The Holocaust has become a matter of scholarly research, of history, and it is viewed differently than it is viewed by those who were there. It is unavoidable, and it will change more in 20 years when we are gone.

Q: For me, if I can just say this, in my innocence, I would have thought that someone who took care of children in an orphanage was a different kind of person. Even knowing all I know about child abuse, and knowing this makes it much more understandable how he becomes such a dictator within the context of Lodz. Because it is a very odd move, it would appear.

A: Yeah, but look at the people who work as nurses in a hospital and kill people by injection. Wouldn't you expect that their training, the intellect – after all, they went to college – and

their medical knowledge, to do just the opposite. And what is it in human nature that makes us inhuman? I don't know.

Q: Maybe being human.

A: Maybe.

Q: Do people believe you?

A: People believe me, except for Germany, where I was told, "We are having a problem with the subject of all the Jewish elders." And I cannot understand why. As I explained to them, politely at first, "If you had not invaded Poland, if you had not created the ghettos, if you had not kept us prison within the ghettos, we would have had no Jewish elders. So, you shouldn't have a problem because these are facts." If you question the honesty, I can only say, "Were you there?" If you were not there, it's easy to talk. So, that's the only thing I encountered, in Germany, not in this country.

Q: Not even with scholars?

A: No.

Q: They accept what you say.

A: They would like to see evidence. They know of other quotes in other books, of other paragraphs. They know of the dismissed complaint, which happened in the mid '30s. It is not something that appeared out of nowhere. The indications were there. The knowledge was there, but in the '30s, for a Jewish community to admit something like this is overwhelming. You couldn't do that. The publicity would have been devastating, and it wasn't done. I mean, there were a lot of taboos in the '30s, and lots of things that were never mentioned.

Q: I'm trying to figure out where to go right now.

A: All right.

Q: Because it's late, and I know that you're after the deportation from Lodz, you were a couple of weeks in Auschwitz, and then you moved to Hamburg.

A: Dessauer Ufer.

Q: Right, to do heavy construction?

A: Yes, which was a camp, and out-, a sub-camp of Neuengamme, and from there they moved us to Sasel, to build temporary housing for the Germans for the bombed out Germans, and from there to Bergen-Belsen.

Q: And, you were in Bergen-Belsen in '45?

A: Yes, March '45.

Q: So, you're there for about a month before the British come.

A: Just about, and I wouldn't have made it much longer.

Q: It was horrible.

A: The dead were not buried. The dead were lying on the walkways. Typhus was rampant. The dead were not even thrown into the pits. They were decaying. People died by the hundreds. The Germans did not enter the camp any longer. They remained on the other side of the barbed wire. The camp was guarded from watchtowers by Hungarian – by soldiers in Hungarian uniforms who were vicious, who shot a great deal, and I think another three to four weeks and Bergen-Belsen would have been empty. Nobody would have survived.

Q: And were you ill by this time?

A: I had typhus and just before, and my friend who was killed in Sweden at least gave me some water. I had jaundice in the ghetto. I had liver problems in the ghetto. I had kidney trouble, and a few other little things.

Q: So, did you think that it could worse after leaving Lodz?

A: No, I didn't think so.

Q: But it did?

A: Yes and no, because Lodz lasted three full years and the horror was overwhelming. Bergen-Belsen was as horrible, maybe more so, but of shorter duration. So, the impact for me was the ghetto and not Bergen-Belsen because by Bergen-Belsen, you really didn't care anymore. There was not enough energy left to care.

Q: When you're deported from Lodz, do you know what's going on in the war? Have you heard any-?

A: No.

Q: So, you know nothing. You were so-

A: We were in cattle cars and looking through the slits above. You had to stand on somebody's shoulders. You saw troop trains on adjacent tracks. You saw other trains with men in striped gray and blue uniforms that were shouting something at us, which you of course could not hear. I sat in a corner together with Dr. Singer, his sister, his wife and his two children. The last time I saw him was in Auschwitz. How he died in Auschwitz, I'm not sure. Somebody in Germany claimed he was shot. I rather doubt it. I think he was very gaunt looking and he looked much older than his age. I think he just went to the gas chamber. I spent the whole rest of the war with his daughter partly with his wife. His wife died right after liberation of Bergen-Belsen. His sister survived and died in London. It's really immaterial how he died. He didn't make it out of Auschwitz.

Q: But all during that period, from end of August, September when you arrived in Auschwitz in September of '44 until April of '45, you were not sure what was going on – who's winning, who's losing, how it's going.

A: We heard some distant air raids in and around the city of Hamburg, but it was not the major attack of ’43. We heard rumors because adjacent to us were some Italian prisoners of war and in Neuengamme were French prisoners of war. We heard rumors, but we had heard rumors for five years. We had no idea.

Q: I know that we can go on for a few more hours, which we will not do now. But what I would like to do, and maybe well just take one more tape – maybe we’ll stop now. I’ll tell you what. What I think I would like to do because I would like to end this on a very sweet, romantic note.

A: All right.

Q: Okay, and what I’d like to do is tell about the story about meeting your husband, which makes a really wonderful ending, even though there’s so much more you can cover. So, let’s stop the tape now.

Tape 6

Q: I changed my mind. We’re going to go back to your deportation from Lodz. I’d like to have some description of that deportation and the train ride as far as you remember. Just describe it some.

A: The deportation was by street. The streets were posted which were off limits as part of the ghetto. My street was very early on the list. That meant if you did not vacate or if the Jews did not vacate that street, the Germans would take us out or shoot us. I’m not sure which. So, you took whatever you could carry, and you vacated your rooms or room, and you could walk to the other side of the bridge if you knew somebody there and stay there for awhile if they would let you in, or you could go voluntarily to the railroad siding. I started walking and I knocked on Luba’s door because she was on the other side. Her boyfriend answered the

door. I told him who I was, and he said in Polish and not very politely, “Get lost.” He didn’t open the door. I knocked on another door. A friend – a coworker who was living with her elderly mother and whose boyfriend had died Warsaw of typhus, probably about 1940, but they shared the apartment with the captain of the *Sonder* police and his wife and I think a child, and when I knocked there, the captain from the other side of the door told me, “You either leave or...”. So, I had no choice left but walk, and it was very warm, to the railroad siding in Marysin, and there were quite a lot of people milling around with their little bundles or suitcases. I had a little suitcase and my father’s briefcase, and the briefcase held documents – papers, passports, whatever. And I saw to the left of me Oskar Singer and his family, and they said, “Come on over. We’ll go together.” We stood there probably for a couple of hours in the heat. The Germans put up the ramp to the cattle car. We each received a piece of bread, a half a loaf of bread, some received a whole bread, and some received some sort of a sausage, but we did not – nothing to drink. We entered the cattle car, and I sat with Oskar’s family in one corner. There were the two old ladies, Oskar and his wife, his two children, his sister, and I. And, when we asked him, “Where are we going?” He shrugged his shoulders. He said, “Probably west for labor.” That was the best guess. The cattle cars were closed from the outside, and they moved in stops and starts because there were other trains on the same siding that were given preference. Either they were prisoners from other areas or they were troop movements. We were never sure. We tried to yell over to a different car, but of course that doesn’t work. We sat in these hot cattle cars. Some people cried. Some people fainted. There was a bucket in the corner. The bucket soon overflowed. You couldn’t lie down. You could barely sit. And there was really no energy to think, “What next? Where next?” At one point, somebody spoke of jumping out of the car, but the doors never opened.

There was no jumping. The next time the door opened was four in the morning two days later with a concrete platform, brightly lit and dogs barking, and SS shouting commands. We scrambled out of the car, and we stood. They shouted orders, “Men to the left. Women to the right.” And I stood with the women, with the single women. Oskar and his son went to the other side. And they were soon marched off into the distance. We don’t know where. We don’t how they were separated again, because at this point there was no separation between young and old. We lined up, and I held the briefcase. I held onto that briefcase with the papers. Having grown up in Germany, papers are very important. And the command was shouted, “Drop your belongings.” Which meant a knapsack, a bag, whatever you had, but I wouldn’t let go of the briefcase, and an SS walked towards my friend, Dr. Singer’s daughter, and towards me and he shouted again and she took the briefcase and tore it out of my hand, and he shouted back, “You saved yourself a beating.”

Q: So, who tore it out of your hand – Singer’s daughter?

A: His daughter made me drop it. She just tore it and dropped it. She probably saved my life. A little further down the road, the separated the old from the young. In back stood a woman who lived also on Pawia Street, and that’s another story, with a four year old child, a very ugly child and I’ve never really seen an ugly child. The child was locked up while the parents went to work in the daytime. The child whined. The child was hidden behind a chimney during the selection, during the curfew for hours alone, and in Auschwitz, she stood behind us. She was ordered to let the child go because she was probably in her ’30s, and she wouldn’t let the child go, and the SS man hit them between the two hands holding onto each other, and they didn’t let go. The child screamed terribly, but they wouldn’t let go, and his

last remarks were, “You may both go to the gas chamber.” And they were marched off with the old people.

Q: You heard that?

A: Yes.

Q: And what went through your head?

A: Nothing, what’s a gas chamber?

Q: It didn’t make any sense.

A: No, it didn’t make any sense. By evening it did, when I saw the smoke and when the grapevine carried the words forward.

Q: But not then?

A: No, and one was so bewildered by this whole scene that one didn’t think. We heard that there was a family camp in Auschwitz which we never saw. We heard that there were gypsies. We never saw them. We did see Hungarian women. There was a young man in a striped uniform with an armband ___, red, and he spoke Polish to us and he said, “Where are you from?” And we said, “From Lodz.” And we asked him, “Where are we?” And he said, “Auschwitz.” And, my friend asked, “What’s Auschwitz?” He said, “You mean to say you don’t know?” “No, never heard of it.” He said, “I’ve been here a year and a half, two years.” He didn’t come from Lodz. He came from someplace else. He couldn’t understand, but he did ask us whether we knew his sister who might have been in our transport. And there was a woman who recognized a mother who had been there a while, and she brought extra food, but that was already the next day. From there, they marched us those that were fit-looking or not elderly or not children anymore, into a barracks. We were asked to undress, drop all jewelry, fold the clothing neatly, and then they took us to another barracks and they shaved our hair,

and Dr. Singer's daughter asked, "Couldn't we rather have a number?" and, the answer was, "Here you take what you get. You don't ask for anything."

Q: Where did she get the idea to ask for a number? Do you know?

A: She saw some women kappa with numbers who did the actual shaving under SS orders. And as we were walked out of that barracks, the upper half of the door was glass and I saw my head minus hair and two big ears and it looked like an egg and I started to cry. It looked so horrible that today I'm asking myself, "How could I have been so stupid and so vain?" But I was. We went into something called showers, into another barracks, and they were one adjacent to the other – without shoes, without clothing, and by then the grapevine had said something about gas and we looked at the showerheads and we didn't know what a gas chamber would look like and whether gas would come out of these things on the ceiling, and the little wetness dribbled down, very little, and we were pushed forward and we were each thrown one piece of clothing, whether it was a dress or a rag or a house robe, one piece, nothing else. One woman in our group was thrown a pair of Dutch wooden shoes, the rest of us were barefoot. It was hot in Auschwitz – being called out in the morning, it was freezing cold. Being called out in the afternoon, it was so hot that the rims of my ears were burning, my scalp was peeling. That's how hot it was. We were given a slice of bread a day and some brown liquid to drink, and in the evening there was supposed to be a soup but we were given no utensils. So, Alice, who had been in the ghetto, who had come from Vienna, took off her wooden clogs and we each took one of them, filled them with soup, drank the soup, and handed it to the next in line, but we guarded the shoes like you would guard Fort Knox. We were afraid somebody would steal them and run.

Q: So, none of you got shoes?

A: No, there were close to 500 of us in that barracks, and the barracks – there were no cots. The floors were concrete floors and they were divided into oblong squares, oblong sections, and each section had to have five human beings, but there wasn't room for five. So, at night, we would – one would sit against the barracks wall, spread the legs and the next one would move in, until all five of us could sit that way, and in order to sleep, you would lean against the neck or the chest of the person in back of you. The corner – the center of the barracks had a raised platform, and the barracks had a couple who had been in Auschwitz quite a while, she had hair. She was Jewish by the looks of her. I don't know where she came from originally, not from Poland. And she had a cubicle in the corner that was sort of parceled off – it was sort of hidden away with a string that was attached to the right and left of the wall. It was a dirty old blanket, and occasionally we'd see an SS man come to visit. She screamed a lot. She beat us, if we weren't fast enough. I don't think she killed anybody. Her name was Maja. She might have been from Romania. I don't know. She did not come with us, though she told us after a couple of weeks that there would be an inspection, to undress, take off the rag. There would be an SS inspection team in the center of the counting area. We should put the dress over the right arm, and walked passed the three SS man as fast as possible, and one of them motioned with a stick or a riding whip, a leather whip, right left, right left. We later found out that one of them was Dr. Mengele, which we did not know. We had never heard of him, and it had no meaning to us until it was explained probably several years later, or a year later.

Q: You mean that someone explained to you a year later that it was Mengele?

A: Yes. No, they said that one of them was Dr. Mengele, but we did not know who he was or what he was, and we were given another rag and a pair of random shoes. I got a size eight

shoes; I wear a six. And we were put into cattle cars, and when they stopped two or three days later, I stood on Dr. Singer's daughter's shoulders and I looked out through the little slit in the cattle car, and I said, "You know what? We're near Hamburg." And then she went up and she looked and she said, "Nah, just green landscapes; nothing Hamburg here. You've lost your mind. It's been hot too long." And the cattle car opens up, and we were housed in a warehouse of the outer harbor that housed Czech women on the other side. It housed some men from various occupied countries, and they were all used for forced labor in the *Deutschebef Blomenforce* (ph), the defense industry shipyards, cleaning up the bomb damage in and around Hamburg. And even Dessauer Ufer was not a concept because it was the address of a harbor area which to me had no meaning. It was not residential. But when they started us by truck or mainly in the subways in a corner, taking us to the worksites, and we had on these rags and across the rag was a yellow painted-on stripe, and underneath the fabric was cut out so you couldn't run away – no stars, no nothing. Some had a purple triangle, but very few. That I realized that indeed it was the surrounding of Hamburg, and for a minute I thought, "Since I know the area, I could get away." But how? To whom? Where? Food? And then I realized that this was ridiculous. So, they then transferred us to another camp and in a now very fashionable area in Wedel where the mayor of the city lives, and there is one of these temporary houses left as a memorial, and we were guarded by 42 SS men and women. They needed people in the office to keep records of the SS personnel and of the people in the camp. There was a young lawyer from Poland, Sophie Kalishinska (ph) and I, we spoke German, who got sent to the office. We had the disadvantage that the commander of the camp came from Southern Germany and used to be a gardener in civilian life, was vicious. He would come in and he would kick us with his boots. We had bloody legs and

bloody arms, but for a while we didn't go out to work in the rain, but we took a daily beating. The SS women had no compassion, no understanding. There was no typewriter. Everything was written manually with a pencil, not with ink. I do not know why. Most of these SS people had been drafted late in the war; they had been civil service employees before the war. For the most part, they were uneducated. The women were vicious, some of them. The men – some were vicious, some were not so bad. They brought in three women from Prague to be in charge of the camp, to be kapos. They couldn't speak Polish, but they managed German, and the story of these three women is another story. They brought in one woman who was tiny, it's also another story. We couldn't tell how old she was. She probably was in her late '30s, but she ran around like a frightened mouse, and rumor had it that she was an MD by training. She came from Romania, and she was in charge of the hospital room, but nobody dared ever use it. It was used once for an abortion for a girl who became pregnant on the worksite, and Dr. Gisa and I met in the latrines where we would talk a few minutes, and then she would go her way and I would go my way. She had worked for Mengele in Auschwitz, and she did the abortions at night so the women could live and the babies died.

Q: And her name again?

A: Gisa Pearl.

Q: Oh, Gisa Pearl.

A: Yes, she was in the same camp, and there were 500 of us. She came to New York, and I saw her one more time after the war. I know she went to Israel, and I know she died. The camp was not the worst possible place. One of the SS women took the young woman who cleaned the SS barracks and me in a truck to Hamburg to pick-up provisions. We saw the bombed city, and she stopped at a building in front of the building that used to be upper-middle class

neighborhood apartments – wrought iron balconies and a lot of stucco work, very pretty. And she told us curtly to get out of the truck, moved us towards the entrance, all the way back and down into the basement, and she knocked on the door and the door opened and it was her mother. And the mother apologized for not having food, and the young woman who cleaned the barracks would come from Lodz with us. She was very small, very tiny, but very friendly and very obliging. She told her to lie down on the couch and she covered her up and she gave me a chair to sit on, but not a word was spoken. We had an hour of rest and nobody spoke. I mean she spoke to her mother, but we didn't speak and she didn't speak. We went back to camp. We didn't tell, and we couldn't quite figure out what the story was. I think that was the only kind gesture on the part of a German that I can recall. When they evacuated Sasel and put the gypsies there, they took us to Bergen-Belsen. Except for the overcrowded barracks and the dead bodies, I only remember two mountains of shoes at the gate, just empty shoes – old and new and worn, huge mountains, and what crossed my mind was, "Where are the feet?" But it didn't matter anymore. After Bergen-Belsen was taken over by the British, I worked as an interpreter and translator.

Q: Had you given up in Bergen-Belsen?

A: It was hopeless. I mean, we saw the dead bodies. We saw the typhus that was ravaging the – we only saw the women. We did not see the men. There was no possibility you could live another month in Bergen-Belsen, and food wasn't important anymore – not the soup, not the bread, nothing. And one day we saw the Germans with white bands on their arms sort of tight, white rags. We couldn't figure out why, and another few days passed and then on April 15th, the British stumbled upon the camp advancing towards the Elbe River to cut off the Russians, and they managed, but they found us, as well, and they were not prepared for what

they found. I worked for them almost from the first day, although I was sick a great deal. I had a very good boss. He was a major.

Q: How did they found you with the thousands of women there?

A: In that small group that managed to approach the second tank, somebody asked, “Where are we? What is this? Who speaks English?” And there were very few people who spoke English because, coming from Poland, you speak French, not English. So, there were five or six of us that knew.

Q: And you were one of the ones approached?

A: I said, “I speak English.” And we showed them around the camp. In the evening he asked, “What can I give you?” I said, “Cigarettes and some biscuits.” And the only thing they could find for us to eat were two pound cans of pork and lard, and they handed them out, and we opened up those cans with stones, with metal, whatever we could find. We had no can openers. Most of us ate that stuff. It was half lard and half pork, and probably came from an occupied country. By morning, hundreds of people were dead, among them Dr. Singer’s wife. His daughter and I ate the biscuits and smoked the cigarettes. I continued work and I didn’t know when to come to work. I was allowed to pick out a watch from the storehouse in the camp where they had items sorted by watches, rings, pearls, jewelry, teeth – gold teeth, and I picked out a little silver watch. The back was rusted. It had a black leather band. And I wore the watch, and I thought, “If only somebody would say, ‘You wore my watch,’” but nobody ever did. And a few days later, my boss asked, “What can I do for you?” And I said, “I would like a shower.” And he provided several of us with a Red Cross woman, a little piece of soap and a towel. I thought I could wash away the past. I couldn’t. Eventually, we were given clean clothing. It took about four weeks. The barracks had to be burned down in

very short notice. They buried the dead with a bulldozer. The mass graves are there, 500,000 – 5,000 – I think in all, they buried 10,000 people when I was there in September. The terrain is immense, the terrain of Bergen-Belsen. I would say probably bigger than Birkenau, but nothing remains standing because of typhus. I got one picture of one barracks and I think you have the original in DC. And as I worked for the British, my boss asked me, "What did you do during the war? And where did you work? And with whom did you work?" And somehow I mentioned those two months in the office and he said, "What did you do?" I said, "Well, I worked on names and addresses and kept a roster of the SS and a roster of food supplies, and how many women went to each work detail," because the shipyards where we worked had to pay the government for our labor. This is what is in dispute now, if you ever see it. And he said, "You worked in the office, and you wrote down their names? Do you remember any?" I said, "All 42 of them." He said, "No, can't be." And he gave me a pad and pencil, and I wrote them down – first name, last name and address.

Q: And address?

A: And address because it was in and around Hamburg. It was very easy. I had lived there. I knew the place. I spoke the language. He didn't believe me. It took a few weeks. He checked it out, and he found out that it was correct, and they took the truck or lorrie, as they called it, and gradually we picked up one after the other, 40 of them, in and around the city, and they all said, "We never did anything bad unless you deserved it. We never beat you. We never did anything." Two of them were with the Americans in Southern Germany, and they were brought up, and I rang usually the door bell, and I asked, "Is Mrs. Miller home?" And then her father would yell, "Else Miller, somebody here for you." And, she would come to the door, and the British were right behind me. I had nothing to say. I asked that I could walk

passed the prison, Munsevan (ph) Prison. I just wanted to see them behind bars, and they all begged for help, and "We've never done anything," and "We've always liked you." I don't know what else they said. I didn't hear a thing. I was once taken to the city of Saale (ph) near Bergen-Belsen, and it was some sort of a preliminary deposition. I was asked whether I would speak German or English, and I said English, and I had gotten a blouse and a brown skirt and I was driven in a staff car, in an English car. I don't remember the questions. I don't remember the answers. I don't know what I said – probably two hours. They thanked me, and they remained in prison, and a few weeks later I received little notes under the dormitory door where we were housed threatening my life. The first one was nothing. The second one was worrisome, and the third one, I was hysterical. Three days later, the British drove me across the Dutch border into Belgium, into Brussels together with three other young women, and from Brussels to Lille, and the captain whose drive drove us. We went out for dinner in Lille and there wasn't much to eat in '45 in Lille, food was rationed. They had survived a war. We ate some chicken, but it tasted like leather. I forgot. He was engaged to a young woman. It turned out he was Jewish and he had been born in Berlin, and he put me on the train in Lille for Paris, and he gave me the address of the Centre de Coeur, the youth hostel, at quatre bis rue des Rosiers. The metro opened two hours after I arrived in Paris, and I saw a Polish officer in the army, and I asked him in Polish, "Which subway do I take? How do I get there?" I had only been to Paris once as a child. I had no idea. And he told me and he accompanied me, and I was back in the dormitory youth hostel, but this time it was Paris – no food, the food was rationed. The little clothing I had I had to sell because I needed money. And I started visiting the American embassy. They saw me coming, "There she is again." I made a nuisance of myself. I've never hated a place as much as I hated Paris at that point. It

was no improvement except it had no Germans, but living was horrible. I met a young Hungarian woman there which is again, another story, who had been married in an Orthodox ceremony at age 12 to a young man, but it was a civil ceremony. It wasn't a *chupah.* That was to come later, but in the eyes of the law, she was the legal wife of that man who lived in Williamsburg, New York. She eventually married him in Williamsburg, but that's a totally different story. I'll mail you that story. And we lived six of us in that tiny corner on cots with an outhouse two stories down, and for a bath in Paris you had to pay 2 francs and go down the corner to the bathhouse. It was 1945, '46.

Q: And the Brits gave you no money?

A: No, of course not. They gave me food – all starchy, I weighed 140 pounds.

Q: So, you're dying to get out of Paris.

A: I'm dying to get out of Europe. I got papers from a former classmate in New York, and I got papers eventually for Palestine from the British because I was showing that letter of commendation wherever I could. There were no photocopy machines. They wanted to keep it, and I didn't want to let it go. It was a big battle. And I got the two papers within two days of each other, and the family decided that my cousin who was in the British brigade in Einhofen was supposed to marry me – marry me for real. I said, "No, I'm not coming to Palestine-"

Q: This is your family who's in Palestine.

A: -I'm going to New York." And I paid $500 to get on a merchant marine boat.

Q: Where did you get $500?

A: My uncle in Palestine sent it to a cousin in Belfort, France and it got to me. I repaid it, but a long time later, with a refrigerator because they couldn't get refrigerators. It took 22 days

from Bordeaux to New York because it was March, the hold was empty. There were ten of us on the boat, and they were all, they were the Polish ambassador's sister-in-law, there was the fiancé of a lieutenant colonel. They were people with considerable clout and we landed in the Fulton Fish Market after 23 days, and I was sick all 23 days. And my friend, her parents kept me on their living room couch for a week, and they told me to get a job in a glove factory and get myself a rented room. I earned $30 a week piece work, $5 went for taxis. I paid $8 for rent, and I was ready to go back to Europe. I hated it. There was nothing in New York that even remotely appealed to me.

Q: Really?

A: Really. That's how lonely it was, how isolated – I mean, I spoke the language, but there was nothing there. Everything I knew, everything that was familiar was in Europe. God did I hate that work in that glove factory. I loved leather, but I hoped I'd never see leather again, and I worked.

Q: Where did you live? Where did you get an apartment?

A: I didn't get an apartment. I got a furnished room on Long Island, on Woodside Avenue.

Q: Really? And you commuted in?

A: I commuted in for a nickel on the subway, and for another nickel, I bought sort of a chocolate square, chunky-something. That was breakfast. For lunch, I went to Chock-Full-o-Nuts, and I bought a cream cheese sandwich and a coke and it cost a quarter, and any money I had left over went for clothing. I went absolutely clothing crazy. I didn't care if the dress cost $10 or $15, I just – I just had to buy it. So, anytime I'd save some money, I would buy a dress, and I'd buy shoes in the cheapest shoe store, it was a chain in New York.

Q: Bakers?

A: Bakers – very high heels, and I bought them a half a size smaller instead of buying a six, I bought a five and a half. Why? I will never know.

Q: Didn't it kill your feet?

A: Of course it did. I bought several pairs over a period of time, and then my friend who had sent the papers invited me – rather her mother did – for Friday evening Shabbat dinner because my friend's father was somewhat conservatively religious, old-fashioned – not very, but a little.

Q: Could you stop for a moment? Can we stop the tape?

[Break in tape]

Q: Okay, we're back. I'm sorry for that interruption. So, you're going to this house for dinner.

A: And there was my friend and her husband – she had married early, I think at 17 or 18 – and she was quite disturbed at the time. I don't know what the problems were, and nobody ever asked me, "Where have you come from? What had you done? Where had you worked?" Nothing – the past was a taboo in New York. It wasn't mentioned. It wasn't addressed. Nobody wanted to know. They saw the newsreel, nobody spoke. And at that party was my friend and her husband, her brother and his wife, and her brother's friend. And we had dinner and I guess we were introduced, and at one point his last name was dropped because at first it was only first names, and when I heard "Eichengreen", the name was familiar. I had met the Eichengreens on the way to the ghetto.

Q: This is Julie?

A: And Julius, and they had spoken of a son who was in Cuba and would go to the States. I asked him about his parents and the answer was very evasive. He had just come out of the army, and then several weeks later he called – or he called my friend's mother and he asked

where exactly had I come from? Or was I in Hamburg? Had I heard anything about his parents? And I called him back and I said, "Probably." And I met him again for dinner at that house, and after dinner we walked from Sunnyside, Long Island – no, it wasn't in Sunnyside. It was in Rego Park – we walked back to Sunnyside. It was about a three-hour walk and I told him the whole story. It was, I think, the only time we ever talked about it. We started dating, and that must have been April or May.

Q: Lucille, let me ask you something. What's going through you now – thinking about telling Dan about his parents?

A: The waste – the waste of a family. We started dating in May and he made me go to evening school. At least I learned to type and take some shorthand. In July, we went to see his cousins in Los Angeles, and I liked them, cousins on both sides of the family, on the mother's side and on the father's side. The mother's side is partly Dreyfuss and Reinsburg and the father's Eichengreen. And on the train from New York to Los Angeles, he proposed, and I said I had to think it over, and I thought it over and I said yes. It took a few days, but his aunt and uncle in New York and his many cousins in New York made one statement which they haven't lived down yet. "We don't need an Eastern European Jew in the family, and we don't need somebody from the camps." The irony of that remark was that all the other cousins married Eastern European Jews, but many years later. I was just the first one. And of course, there was no contact. I did not want to see them or visit them. There was very little contact.

Q: Are these the same people who made dinner for you?

A: No, those are strangers in the family. The family lived in Washington Heights.

Q: So, you never saw them.

A: And at 69th Street. Very rarely, once when they came to California, but not – basically no.

Q: So, you were still *Ostjuden*?

A: Of course, we are still. When we go to Berlin today, we are still *Ostjuden*. There's a decided difference. I spoke to people now in Germany whose parents came from Lodz, but they were born after the war like my children. They consider themselves German, and I said, "Just scratch the surface. You're a Polish Jew kid."

Q: So, tell me, there are at least three other men who said they wanted to marry you.

A: No, they didn't really say it, but they were interested.

Q: They were interested.

A: They were interested.

Q: When did you fall in love with Dan? Did you fall in love before than he asked you to marry him?

A: No, about the same time. He was very well read. He was very well educated. He saw that I read all the right books at the right time, and he brought them. He worked for Baker & Taylor in New York, which was the largest book distributor on Fifth Avenue down on 14th Street or something. He was an export manager. He took me out for dinner. I could eat decently rather than makeshift. He took me to Carnegie Hall. He took me to the theater. He took me to the opera. And I took him to the Yiddish Theater on Second Avenue. I think it was the first time he heard of Saul Tomaszewski. His grandson now conducts the San Francisco Symphony – Tilson Thomas – still Tomaszewski.

Q: So, did Dan also make you like New York?

A: Yes, life changed. We found an apartment. We paid key money or black money because you couldn't get anything. We started out in a room the size-

Q: What does that mean 'key money'?

A: After the war, there were no apartments in New York. You – we paid about $75 for a little glass enclosed porch and could use the kitchen and the bath of the landlady, and eventually somebody told us, "There's an apartment vacant in Sunnyside, and if you give the superintendent $500, he will let you have the apartment." And we did. It was a lot of money – it was a lot of army pay. We got married in Washington Heights in the rabbi's house. Dan's family did show up. Only an old friend of my mother's showed because there was nobody else, and my classmate, and we went for three days in a hired car to Goshen, upstate New York, because we had to get married on a Thursday because we had to go back to work on Monday.

Q: And the date of your marriage?

A: November 7, 1946.

Q: And this is November 7, 2001.

A: We – I changed jobs, and I started to work for Lionel. Do you remember those big toy trains?

Q: Absolutely.

A: That whistled when you threw a little pill in it, and it smoked? And it went around the track? I worked for the export department of Lionel. I learned to type.

Q: So, did you type well finally?

A: Not…90 words a minute.

Q: That's very good.

A: I learned to operate a Dictaphone. In those days we had Dictaphones, no computers, and I worked there from '46 to '49, and then an old friend colleague of my husband's came to New York, and he had started a small business in San Francisco, and he said, "Pack up your car and come out. You will work for me and I'll give you $75 to start with a week," which was a

lot of money. And we picked up the Plymouth and we drove out. First we had a ’39 Plymouth, then we had a ’45, ’46 Plymouth.

Q: Moving up.

A: And we drove in three days from New York to San Francisco, day and night. We drove straight through.

Q: You didn’t even stop to see the scenery?

A: No, we couldn’t afford to, and the whole back was all full of whatever we had in clothing, and I had a little portable sewing machine for some odd reason, and a portable typewriter, which with covered key, I’d learned to type. I got a job in San Francisco at Westinghouse, and I needed FBI clearance because they were dealing with turbines and generators and whatever we had to use against the Russians in those days, and it was a very uptight organization. There was not another Jew in the whole organization, but it was pleasant and I think I made something like $300 a month which was a lot of money in 1950, and Dan wanted children very much, and I was very undecided, but we had the first child in 1952, and I stopped working for a while.

Q: Were you on the fence about having children, bringing children into the world, or being a mother?

A: I didn’t want to.

Q: You didn’t want to bring children into the world?

A: No, not into this world, and we bought a lot in Berkeley because Dan’s boss lived in Berkeley, and we build a two-bedroom house – a redwood house with a view of the Golden Gate Bridge, and then we decided we ought to have at least two children, and then we add two rooms and a bath.

Q: And were you then - it was okay to have children?

A: Then it was okay.

Q: Why?

A: Because life had meaning. Life had normalized. I accepted the past. I resented the past, but I accepted the past, that it was a part of me, and I asked myself whether I could live without the past, and I couldn't. So, it was all right. The kids grew up in Berkeley, and I went back to school. I went first to the college of arts and crafts, and then went to Contra Costa College, and then I went to UC. It took a long time. And then I went to Golden Gate College, and I finished the business courses, and I got a job as an insurance broker, and I worked there for about 20 years, which made it possible to send the kids through college without having to take out a loan. It gave the kids music lessons, tennis lessons, riding lessons – you name it, they had it.

Q: And what is Dan doing all this time? What's the business?

A: Dan worked for this old friend. It was a fairly successful business. They made modern fireplace equipment. They manufactured it. It was a very time consuming job, a demanding job because the man was very difficult, very uneducated, very unschooled, from a very poor family in Germany. The father rolled cigars for a living, and he also was an alcoholic. The mother was Orthodox. But somehow the contrast between these two men made the business work, because Dan was level-handed. He was volatile. He also became an alcoholic as he became affluent, and Dan had to carry him to bed when they went on a business trip. We went a couple of times to New York because there was a show at the – Columbus Circle I think. And life turned normal.

Q: You found a very good person.

A: Thank you.

Q: Why don't we stop the tape?

End of Tape 6

Tape 7

Q: Who is this Lucy?

A: These are my parents – Benno and Sala Landau in 1922.

Q: Is this before they were married or after?

A: They were married twice as you have to do in Europe. First in a public office, and then a Jewish religious service.

Q: [New photo shown] Who is this?

A: These are my parents when they went with me to Sombor in Poland to visit my grandmother, and it was between 1928 and 1929.

Q: [New photo shown] Who is this group?

A: This is a group on the beach at the Baltic Sea, probably 1928. My father is second on the left. My mother, second row on the right, and I am way in front – the little girl who covers her face.

Q: And your mother is pregnant at this time?

A: Yes, I believe so.

Q: With Karin?

A: I believe so.

Q: [New photo shown] How about this picture?

A: This is at the North Sea. I believe it was Dumen (ph), probably 1932, where I sit in the sand with my little sister.

Q: How old was Karin there do you think? Two?

A: Yeah, two – two and a half, around two.

Q: It's adorable.

A: I like the matching dresses.

Q: [New photo shown] What about this picture?

A: This is my mother in Hamburg, Germany, in 1939, and the picture was used in her passport.

Q: [New photo shown] Who do we have here?

A: This is in Bachwalto (ph), Germany, with my sister Karin, and I believe it was in the Summer of 1933.

Q: [New photo shown] Who has this beautiful smile here?

A: This is my sister Karin in January 1939, and I believe the picture was used for her passport.

Q: So, she's nine years old.

A: Mm hmm.

Q: [New photo shown] And this picture?

A: This is my friend Sabina who died in an automobile accident in Sweden, and the picture was taken in Bergen-Belsen in Fall 1945.

Q: And say who's on the left and who's on the right

A: I'm on the right, and my friend Sabina Shmolevitz Zuretsky (ph) on the left.

Q: [New photo shown] And this one?

A: This is New York City, when Dan took this photograph of me in 1946.

Q: What color was the nail polish?

A: Red.

Q: And where was this?

A: It was near the fountain at Central Park and I think it was near Bergdorf Goodman.

Q: [New photo shown] Who's here?

A: This is Dan in Casa Blanca in 1942.

Q: He was – in what part of the armed forces was he?

A: He was in censorship and in intelligence.

Q: [New photo shown] And who is this?

A: These are Dan's parents, Julie and Julius Eichengreen, in Hamburg in 1939.

Q: [New photo shown] And this one?

A: This is November 1946, November 7th, in Rabbi Leiber's house after we were married.

Q: Lucille, we want to thank you. We're not on camera now, but I can't say enough about your patience with all that we had to go through today, and I'm so grateful that you were able to come and to give us such a really, such a sustained and interesting and open story, and you're just really wonderful.

A: I thank you for your hard work, your knowledge and your patience.

Q: Thank you.

End of Tape 7

Conclusion of Interview