

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Teofil Kosinski**  
**November 8, 1995**  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Teofil Kosinski, conducted on November 8, 1995 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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## **TEOFIL KOSINSKI**

### **November 8, 1995**

Question: Can you tell us your name and where you come from and when you were born?

Answer: Yes, I do this. My name is Teofil Kosinski, Polish, but for Americans it may be a little difficult to pronounce, Kosinski, so it's better I say Toffi Kosinski.

I was born in Poland, in Torran. This is a Polish name, and in German it was Torran. I was born on the first of January 1925, so in one month I will be 71 years old.

Q. Did you go to school also in Torran and what did your parents do?

A. I finished my ordinary school, seven classes, in Torran. My parents -- my father worked on the railroad and my mother worked from time to time cleaning some houses.

We were together five children and my mother and father. Until the war, until the first of February 1929, we were living in the railroad blocks. We had three rooms, but two rooms were rented always because the salary of my father was very low to feed the whole family.

Q. You speak also very well German. Why?

A. You see, in Torran were many German people. Even my parents had to go to the school, to German school so that before the war I learned a little German from German people, and just a little home because from time to time my parents if they wanted to speak in secrets before me they tried to speak in German.

Q. And do you understand what they were telling?

A. No, no, I couldn't. I was so angry. "Mamma, why you speak?" And she laughed and it was so funny, but then when Hitler came I had to try to speak and to learn because I knew that was very important for me.

Q. How were you raised -- in which religion were you raise

A. I was catholic. I am catholic and that's all. I was educated in this religion. When I was going to the school -- we had also because in Torran were some Jews. I had two friends at my school but during the religion lesson they went out.

Q. Do you remember their names?

A. In Torran school not, but later I had some friends after the war that I met. Titlebaum. He's now in Israel. He left Israel in 1968 probably he's still alive. Maybe when I will be in Israel I will find him. It will be a great pleasure for me.

Q. I don't know Torran at all. Can you describe how it looked during your childhood when you grew up and your family --?

A. Yes, I try. It was a wonderful time. It still is wonderful, very old city. Some people called this town \_\_\_\_\_. It is from the old century, middle age city. A most gothic, beautiful old churches and the music house also very nice. This place, the Torran was the place born \_\_\_\_\_. It was very famous. You remember maybe or you know something before the war Hitler had in the place of \_\_\_\_\_, before it was a corridor, they called it, the train passed from Germany through Torran to Dank. So, me, as a child, I ran very often this train. I followed. I asked for sweets something and the Germans gave me.

Q. Do you remember in your early childhood, like when you went to school, was there any tensions between yourself, catholic, or Jews in Torran, or did you never notice anything?

A. No, I noticed. In Torran, not very Jews but the Jews that are, are very kind and very good. Even we, we made shopping by company by \_\_\_\_\_. My father was, as I told you, a railroad worker, so if we like to buy something, some dressing, some clothing, we received from him especially \_\_\_\_\_. It was very convenient for us because cash to pay it was very difficult. I played with the two boys and I went home and I like the cuisine, the Jewish cuisine. We had some restaurants and to me personally when I was young, I worked not only be German I had it also to some Jews some restaurants only -- I met with them shopping. So, I had money because I should never holidays, instead to go like holidays like all the children to spend a nice time I had to work.

Q. Your family didn't have a lot of money?

A. No, I told you. Even my mother -- we had three rooms, nice rooms but one room was always rented. They were given to the window for rent. It was also not good because sometimes they changed. Sometimes it was very good, sometimes it was very bad. Sometimes she didn't receive money for it. It depends there are different people.

Q. And you went to school -- how was your school career?

A. You see, I finished this ordinary school. It was exactly in 1939 and I remember in June. Then my parents wanted me, personally, because I had not talent but I had very good knowledge and the teacher said to my mother and to my father that it should be very good when they send me to the gymnasium. And my parents decided our son must finish just a little high school. So, I tried to make examination and I passed very good notes. I was the third on the list, and my mother ordered a new suit for the gymnasium. I had the uniform and we couldn't pay immediately so we ordered it exactly like my \_\_\_\_\_ so the suit could be paid for for a few months. Then came the war and I never went to the gymnasium. I never wear this nice uniform.

I gave it back to this tailor because I didn't use it and we couldn't pay. So, my further education was finished. Since the war it was absolutely forbidden for the Polish people to go to the school.

Q. Do you remember the day in 1939? Can you tell us exactly?

A. Of course, I remember very well. It was on the third of September, morning --no it was on the first of September. I was in the market. Usually I went very early before going to the school, and I helped some German farmers to put vegetables on the market. They paid me also with some vegetables and it was very hard for my mother. I returned home. We heard the signals and my mother said, "Oh my God, the war began." She has seen -- many people had seen a cross on the sky oral like this because my mother spent the first war, she had the experience and she said, "No, never in our life a second war." But the second war began.

And then, on the third of September, it was Sunday, I'll never forget it. My father has to go to Warsaw to fight against the Germans. He has received three months salary. He left his money to my mother. My mother took the money. She took special -- not in paper money only in coins, use silver because she said she had experience. Paper money would not be valid. The coins will be valid, just silver.

So, the third of September, from our family from village they came with the horse and how we call it this car -- with horse, and they took us from the village because everybody afraid that they will come, the bombs will come, and we want to be hidden there so that we went to the village with our family with our family to be more surely there than in the city of Torran.

Q. Did you return to Torran?

A. Not so early. First me, brother, everybody, we were there and the village but maybe after two weeks after we heard that in Torran are the German soldiers, my mother asked me and my older brother has to go to this house and try to prove that everything is okay because during the

absence could happen everything. We had returned. We seen soldiers, some soldiers in the beginning were very kind. They tried to give soups and breads because in the soups we had nothing. I took some breads even and I went by foot with my brother to the village and I told mother, "Come on. There is no reason to sit here. We must go home. The soldiers are not so bad. Maybe the war will be not so long." And we returned to the same place to the nice house where we lived before.

Q. Did you stay in this house during the war?

A. Oh, only maybe two months we were living there in the same house, but then once they came there, the soldiers, by some patrol, I couldn't recall because I was very young, and said you must leave this house. Oh my mother began to cry but where are we to go. We are living so long here. Don't make a \_\_\_\_\_. You must leave. We are giving you a few hours time but first she would like to know where. You will receive a good flat. We went with my brother. We had seen this replacement for us. It was terrible, but it was what we had to do. It was an order. So, we tried to take as much as was possible and we went to this new house. It wasn't a house, maybe it should be called shed maybe because it wa only -- we had three rooms and now my mother said it is more easier to move from a worse place to better than to on the contrary, from the better to the worse. Here it was only one room house, with small kitchen, a dark kitchen. There was no water inside. There was no water, toilet outside, no cellar, nothing, but what we had to do was to leave and to stay and thank God we had received this because some people they were put on the street.

Q. Why had you to leave the house and how many other people had to leave the houses in Torran?

A. The only reason was that we are Polish. This was the reason. It was too nice to us. They put it immediately German families from Germany. Sometime, because we were living in -- across sometimes we look out the window. It was very difficult to just living here and the people from Germany took our flat.

Q. How did you support yourself and how did the family support themselves in the following months?

A. Usually all young people were sent to the force camp to Germany. My brother -- before the war was one or two years he learned not as baker for some sweet things, but baker and so he worked by this baker and once he came to me he said you see, it's better you take the job by \_\_\_\_\_. It is also baker and I have some friends there. It will be very good job and maybe it you will not go to Germany to the force camp.

And I went to this bakery. I remember he was very nice tall man. I didn't speak so good German. I tried to speak German but this German he was living in Poland so he could speak Polish too. First, he refused to speak Polish but when he seen that I try but I couldn't he started with me speak Polish. I told him that we have very difficult situation. My father is not here. I have younger sisters and brother. We have to help mother. I would like to work because I heard that there is wanted a boy his bakery. He called his wife. She looked at me probably I was good for -- I looked well. She agreed and soon I was employed there as a delivery boy. This kind of job I had to go by bicycle. I had on my back a basket with bread and every morning very early I brought this bread to some German hospitals, to German shops and to some private houses.

Q. Were you disappointed that you were not allowed to go to school? How old were you?



A. I heard this immediately. It was written, we had many times some special how you call this on the streets, there was written, at the first in the beginning it was written in German and in Polish\_\_\_\_\_. I don't know in English how it was. I went

to the school but the door was closed and it was only for German children. I knew immediately I couldn't go.

Q. Were you disappointed?

A. Of course because I was so glad I started to study. I wanted to be as we called in Poland, even in Torran, one mensch. My mother, my father said I will take from a month and put to him for his schooling, one of our family must be a mensch. I think in comparing with other people, it was maybe in the beginning not so bad for us because as I told you I was working as a delivery boy for a baker. So, I could receive even for my payment, my salary was not so high. I remember it was only five marks per week, but I received some bread and it was very important because the food was rationed especially for Polish people. We had received -- what I remember, there was one pound of meat per month including bones. You can understand it was nothing. It was with some soldiers also. Sometimes we wondered she prepared some dishes, of course meat was maybe two or once per month, but she prepared this or that so things that my mama, she was very practical and we were not hungry. In the beginning I thought and my brother bought so that our family didn't be hungry.

Q. You said there were Polish people from Torran sent from Germany. Do you remember stories, do you know people who were sent to Germany for forced labor?

A. Oh, yes. Even my friends from the school they were sent to \_\_\_\_\_. For the first time I had received letters, I also have at home he sent me picture how he had to work in

\_\_\_\_\_, how very hard, and very -- they had here a -- Polish, this is in Poland and he wrote me so that I could read the conditions were very, very hard. So, therefore I tried to do my best only to stay to work for this baker instead to go there, to Germany.

Q. Did he write you where he was -- was he kind of imprisoned in a work camp or did he work for --?

A. That was forced labor, \_\_\_\_\_. He was sent, many Polish people were sent. Some of Polish families were sent to this \_\_\_\_\_. It's called because we were born in Torran. Who was born in Torran the Germans they kept them there, but who wasn't born there, they sent to the district \_\_\_\_\_. Maybe it was better. We would like also to go there, but we couldn't. We had to stay in Torran.

Q. Do you know why?

A. Why we had to stay? I don't know, maybe they wanted to make us German. I don't know. I don't know why.

Q. Those friends of yours who were sent to \_\_\_\_\_, where did they live in \_\_\_\_\_?

A. Oh, I never seen him. Then I went -- my study later, I never seen him.

Q. But when he did write the letter, did he tell you -- did he live in a house?

A. Oh, no, together with horses. Together with horses. Their food was very bad. They had to take him from the fields some row of carrots or this to feed because they were so hungry. You see, I tried to do everything not only to go there. Some of them they escaped but when they were caught, they put them in the prison.

Q. How old were you when you started to work for the German baker and did you stay working for him all the time?

A. Yes, I tell you. When I was fourteen years old I worked for this baker, and I worked, let's see, 1941, I worked there. But it was so that during the war for young people, no chance, life was so boring we couldn't go -- there was cinema but for German people only. There was the arts but for German people only. We had nothing. We had to stay home from eight o'clock evening until six o'clock in the morning. It was how we call curfew. You couldn't walk. You can't imagine. It is summer, a very nice time. Evening it's dark first at 10:00 and you have to be home. What we have done. There was a small place, we took our chairs, from all people, we were sitting there to spend in the fresh air because we couldn't go on the street. One time when I was delivering the bread to the hospital, I pass, always the theater. I was very keen for theater because I like very much music. I like to sing, even in the school. And then I have seen there was written "Chorus singers wanted." I think "Oh my God, maybe I could go there." First I wonder and ask was me as a Polish can I do it. They look at me because I'm very young. I was 16 years old and first he said, "You want to be singer? You still have this mutation, this change of voice." I said, "No, no, I finish my mutation. I would like to sing." Okay. We employ also Poles, but the examination will be at this and this time. I asked to write to fill my name and after two days I went there. I remember Mr. Veber, not so old, but a very good man and he gave the examination, first on the piano and then he asked me sing something. German songs I didn't know and I asked, "May I sing Polish?" "Yes. You can do this." I never forget I sang a very nice Polish old song. He liked it. It was very nice. I translate it soon as I could and he said to me, "Go away, wait." I don't know. Maybe he asked somebody. Maybe the commission makes some discussion. Anyhow, after one hour he said okay, you will be our chorus singer. Your voice is correct, very good, only the question you must work here only as an extra task. It will not be main work. I didn't understand what he meant. You will work afternoon and evening and

the other job you have you must keep it. Okay, I agreed. I went home. I said to my mother, my mother, oh, it will be too difficult for you, two jobs. And maybe the \_\_\_\_\_ will not be satisfied that you are working in theater. The night will be too short for you. But I insisted, my mother, it will be everything okay. I will keep this job and this job and believe me it will be possible. Okay, do as you like. And so I worked in theater and I worked in the bakery.

Q. You stayed working for the baker?

A. Not all time, but in the beginning I was working yes, I was working bakery and theater. The theater was very nice. I like this climate, this atmosphere. There were dancers, singers, nice people. In the theater you could forget, you see, the war, and especially for me, I had no chance, nothing, no cafes, just no -- it was war time boring. During the evening it was dark, closed house, no gas lamps nothing. War. Exactly war. So, when I was working in the theater it was everything good, but in my job happened something very wrong. Because as they told you you remember when I was employed by the baker the woman, his wife, came to me. She looked at me and then later I knew what for. The age of her husband and the woman was very big difference. She was younger and probably she was bigger and more demand in the month for love. She used me as a boy not only for delivery of bread but also of the delivery love letters to her lovers. In the beginning it was everything good but something happened very, very wrong. When I went with this letter, open it, a woman. She said, "What are you doing. You're trying to make -- break my marriage." And I ran away. I told -- I said in German "Meister, and she said "Yes did you --" No, I have this. Good that you haven't given this but maybe she can recognize you because Torran was very small. Everybody knew us. And then in this moment she tried to do everything that will go out from this job. My mother, the meister, everybody was wondering why. It was always so good, but I knew later that the reason was that she was afraid that maybe

there will some blackmail. The man will be know about her and okay. I was looking for a new job. It was very, very difficult to find a very easy job. But I found it as an ordinary worker. It is in German a \_\_\_\_\_. You can translate this into English. I remember the name it was Hanz Kruger. I agree and I was working there. I said immediately that I cannot stay very long only until 3:00 because then I have to exercises in the theater. They appreciated very much. At first they were very anxious, curious that Polish people and I said "No, I'm just a chorus singer, nothing more." And so I worked there and I worked in the theater.

Q. But Polish people were not allowed to be on the street after 8:00?

A. Yes.

Q. But you had to work in the theater sometimes in the evening?

A. Yes, you are right. Before I accepted the theater because they told me you will work here nights, performances until 10:00 and you will receive a special pass for the night. I received a pass from 8:00 until 12:00. I was very funny and very proud, but it was not for other people not good. Other people you can imagine. They are sitting. They are waiting and I'm coming at ten or eleven o'clock home. They are wondering what's happened. Maybe he is a German now. I couldn't explain to everybody that I have this permission. At home my mother knew. My brother was not satisfied with this, and he wasn't also satisfied that I was working in the theater. Maybe some friends, because he had many friends, and maybe they thought I was collaborating with Germans. It was not a pleasant time for me, especially when I came home or when I passed a street when somebody -- it happened also that my friends from the school sometimes when I passed they took the hat so on this side they thought that maybe I'm collaborating.

Q. Did your German also improve when you were working in theater? Did you start to speak better German?

A. Yes, of course I had to because we had the exercises. We received a note and it was German. I tried to learn the German better. I asked my mother, my father, the grammar. My mother could speak but she couldn't explain me how it was grammatically good. Then I asked sometimes Mr. Veber and he was very glad that I am so keen for this language. He said, "Oh, you are a very clever boy. In a short time you will speak fluently German." It was not fluently but it was better and better, always better. So, that's and even when I was working with this baker, we went together and we made shopping with the women, with the meister and I tried also to speak German or Polish. She said we are going now to the German shop, try to speak German only. And sometimes if I needed something, \_\_\_\_\_, then because we couldn't buy, except a small ration of food in the cart, nothing, no \_\_\_\_\_. The Germans had some \_\_\_\_\_, it is permission for buying clothes, dresses or shoes. We had nothing. Once I remember she also went to a German shop and you see the boy this winter it's cold maybe you have something, and they put it to give because I talk to her German, maybe they took me as a German too.

Anyhow, I improve my German so much as possible sometimes the Germans couldn't recognize me that I was German, because I used this night pass control for some shopping. For Germans there was everything, but at night, evening. And I went to those shops, I bought I remember it was marmalade, there was some not -- a kind of zwieback, sometimes there was some fruit some oranges, but there was only two or three. They wouldn't like to sell more so that I had use of this privilege of my pass and I could buy a little to my mother.

Q. Then when you worked for the theater you met at one point someone who became very special?

A. Yes. It was once when I left the theater I crossed usually the same place to make some shopping and I feel that somebody watched me. At the moment I thought maybe some policeman because it was dark. I didn't see. I went and he followed me and they see there is some uniform, some soldier. I didn't know what he wanted from me. He watched, but his watching was completely differently than usual. He smiled to me. It never happened before and he started to ask something of me and he said \_\_\_\_\_, which means "this is a nice place" and then hello, how are you? What are you doing? "I'm going home. Shall we go home to drink some coffee?" I'm looking. A German invited me for coffee. My hat was trembling I was so excited. I didn't know maybe if I refuse him maybe something happen wrong. I agree. I went and then when we're inside, so, and you're out shopping. "Your parents are living here, family?" "Yes, my parents are living here. My father is not here. My father is I don't know, maybe in Germany and I was born also here." You were born here? You're not German? No, I'm Polish. Oh, God, what are you doing now." I said, "Don't worry. I have the passport. I am working theater. I have the passport until 12:00" "Oh, God, that's good, but maybe we go out," because I think he was afraid my characteristic, German speaking that somebody here that he speaks with me, there were not so many people but anyhow I knew that in the beginning when I spoke only a few words it was correct. But I started to speak more he felt that my accent was bad.

And we went out. He asked me in which direction I'm going home. I showed him because I was living not in the center of city, we were in suburb, very, very poor district. Then when the evening he asked me, "May I see you again?" For the first time, I would like to meet you. But he look always in eyes. It was something completely different than usual with all the German men. I asked why not, we can do this. "But where?" I asked. You see, here, this

station. It was in the railroad station in the middle of the city. It was a very good place. Okay, but when? You see I don't know when I'll receive the permission for going out because he was a soldier. And I also, I don't know because there were differently plays, operetta, gypsy, a little longer, sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ it is an operetta it was a little shorter. We fixed exactly I remember it was after two days at the same place, and he came after my performance, he came. And then, I have to tell you we went -- I took him because I knew places. He asked me whether I knew some places because he is not so good to walk for him and for him, especially for him maybe more because Polish people were not on the street.

And I found some places we were standing there in the theater and he -- maybe I so exactly there is some item but he pressed on and he said, "You look very nice. You are a very boy." Then he told me, "I'm not German." "You are not German? Who are you then?" "I'm Austrian. "Austria, Vienna? Yes, Vienna." Then I feel a little better. It is completely different to like a German. Have you met in these places as a child. As a child I played in some places. I knew some. It was destroyed in the war in the field there was somebody watching as a guard. Let's go because it was cold. I met him it was on exactly the fourth of November 1941. It would snow. It was cold. I liked to wear shoes -- only small shoes and trousers with pump, here. So, the snow -- the winter was so strong. He took me to places for the first time like father and I was a child and it was very pleasant and then we went to the shed. We played. It was romantic. It was not so suffocating like now maybe, completely different. Then when I went home, I couldn't sleep. I dreamed because it happened something with me completely different.

Q. What happened? What was different for you?

A. Different for me, it changed my life. I feel something, like love. It was like love but don't think that there was real sex. No. There was playing, kissing, maybe the sex comes also,



of course, I was young, I feel it. But and we had no possibilities but it was a very, very pleasurable time. We couldn't see each day as I told you because he could not receive every day the permission but so long he could he came and he brought me always something, some sweet, some special ration card. With this card I could buy some pastry because for Polish people it was absolutely forbidden to receive pastry but for his card especially evening when I went, I could receive it. I received once even shoes because he had seen that my shoes for the winter time was no good. Home was big scandal, especially my brother.

My brother felt that there is something wrong because I brought shoes. I brought once shirt, inside shirt and he knew that this shirt was from soldier. He asked me something, "What's happened? Don't worry. What I am doing is my business." Sometimes he was very angry. He said I am older than you. I promise Father to take care of you so I must know.

Q. Did you tell him?

A. Not early. Later. When that was so big that even my mother feel something happened with me, something, because I ask very often, "Mother I need white shirt." My mother complained, "I have no soap. You change every day. I cannot wash. Mother I must look very nice", but it was not for theater. It was for my friend. His name was Willie Goetz. I will never forget his name.

Because he was so sweet to me, I wanted also to be sweet and once they of course, when my brother drank a little, schnapps, that's a kind of illegal vodka, we couldn't buy it but he had some contacts. Maybe later I will tell you. I knew he had to work. He worked with some underground. I never knew exactly, but he brought also sometimes schnapps probably from these places.

I said to him, his name was Casimir, I said, "Cashic, you must understand me. I fall in love with soldier. Oh my God, why? You don't like women? No, I like men like you like women. I like men. You must understand me. No, this is only for the moment. You'll find a girl probably, especially with Germany. You know what's happened. It's very dangerous. No, it's not dangerous, it's so good. No, you can be sure. You must stop this. I'll tell mother. Don't tell this mother, I ask you very much. Don't do this." He didn't say this, but from this time he changed his behavior towards me. And our relation was not so open. I knew that sometimes he went to somebody but not night only during the day. He had no permission so that his time working and doing this was not so easy for him. Anyhow, our relation was not so good as before.

Q. You said that your brother worked in the underground, did you ever get into difficulties with that?

A. I feel it. He never said this at home but there are too many friends and they came to our room, with no loud speaking. Even my mother, "What are you doing? This is our business." SO, that I feel there was something there. They had some news about the war, about the front, from where? We had no radio. I forgot to tell you that when we were living in this nice house we had very nice radio, Phillips Radio. We didn't even pay. There was two years of payment and the Germans in the beginning immediately took this radio so that the Polish people never listened to no radio. For my brother I had some news because from BBC they heard something. It was only my feeling, but I suppose he was afraid that I was working in the theater with German people. And then I said to him I have this friend, this soldier, I'm sure that he didn't want to tell me about his underground work.

Q. Did you -- how was your feeling that Willie was Austrian, I mean he was part of the German army and the German army was responsible that you couldn't go to school, that you had to work. How did you feel about that?

A. Usually my feeling to German soldiers was very bad because in the school we were educated against Germany and Russia. Even my mother sometimes when I wouldn't go to the church, she called me a Bolshevik. That was the worst thing. When I met Willie and he said to me he is Austrian, my feeling was completely different because I felt he's not German and his behavior was so good. I thought maybe when I said to my brother that he will understand me, but he didn't because he said for me German uniform is German uniform. It's Austria or it's not Austria but it is for me German. And he knew that I couldn't go to the school. Very often he made me plans, you see the world, it will not be war time. The war will finish. Maybe you'll come to my country. You will study there, you will be a real mensch. Be a waiting person, do like just now. Be in this way as you are because I was very honest.

In our family and my mother was very strong, strong for the education. I never forget once before the war I went not to the school I went -- instead to school with boys to some play and because I was always going to the school, the teacher sent somebody to ask what happened to me why I didn't come to the school. My mother knew this. I came home as usual. It was greetings. I said \_\_\_\_\_. My mother said I give you forever and I received -- I was punished so strong and she punished because who lies also steals. So, I was very honest so everything what I've done was correct and therefore I believed Willie.

We talked about his future plans. We talked about is life and before for me it was for me a pleasure to hear it. I agree that I was very lucky especially as I told you during the war time. It was so boring for young people. I was 17 years old at this time. I had no friends because I had

to work morning from one work to another work. I even had not enough for sleeping, only when I had no appointments with him I could sleep a little longer.

Q. How old was Willie?

A. He was maybe five or six years older than me, but he looks very handsome, very strong. I never seen his picture and he told me -- I asked once for his picture but he said it's better you will not have it. It will be very dangerous for you and for me. He told me also. He said something, you must be very careful because Hitler, what you receive for this kind of love is very dangerous. You must be very careful. I said what for we are doing nothing. Don't tell anybody that we meet or that we are coming here. It would be very dangerous. He told me one day he said "You know Hitler is also for men. He likes only this kind of love. Really? Yes, he's not married. He is single and he likes this kind of love. The Fuhrer then why are you so anxious? Please believe me, I am older I know better." He told me that.

Q. Did he tell anything about the persecution of homosexual men?

A. No, it was only the attention given to me in this way, but it was in a real 1941 when we met, let's go to a place here, I cannot tell you. He brought me something new and he was very nervous. What's happen? At first I thought maybe someone has seen us. I asked him, no, nobody seen you know. I'm sent to the eastern front of war. Oh my to Russia. I heard that this was the worst front in the war because it was warmer it was snow. You must wait for me. I promise you. The war will not be longer. When the war is end the war you will come to Vienna. I will try to live with you together. Wait for me. But how will I contact. I'll write you. I gave him my address and I was waiting for his letter but I hadn't received it. I was very sorry, very sad. Even my mother, my brother. I said to my brother that my friend went -- he accepted, he agreed. He was a little satisfied with this. He was more calmly that something happened wrong

to me. I was waiting for this letter. Once I couldn't remember -- I have to state to you also that in my theater there was working like me. He was a little older. He knew exactly, he learned me this way, he explained me this kind of love and he asked me -- first I didn't want to tell him but I wanted to see the place, what's happened. Where is this shed and then come on let's go. We shall go maybe there and once we went there it was after the performance and when we went there, voices. Some people -- I wanted to run away. He too, and especially one fellow took us here very quickly, halted the mouths. We couldn't cry, nothing and then in broken German he said to me that he's from the concentration camp Studthoff. He was a very young Jew. Bascal I remember this name. We give our story to him to the other people. We talk to them also. One spoke very good Polish. He was Polish. That Sigmund, the other boy took the Jew -- I couldn't take where we were living. He took him home probably for some feeding even some dressing. What's happened there I don't know exactly. I was only with my things about my friend. Even Sigmund if I wanted to know, he told me only it was very nice time. I can imagine. Maybe he used him for some sex or something like this because he said it was so nice.

Q. How many men were in this shed?

A. Three men. Some of them they had stripes, some trousers. Maybe they found them, but they had stripes. They couldn't go on the street. They would be immediately arrested.

Everybody could recognize them. They had this cap also with this thread. Now I know that they had some \_\_\_\_\_ but I don't remember exactly. I knew only the faces very --- Bascal was small, but the eyes were very large, very big. This is all.

Q. Bascal, where did he come from?

A. He said to me from France and he spoke -- I couldn't speak French. He spoke only a little German, a few words. Enough only to understand me. Then when I was in the theater one day I

had seen a German newspaper and this German newspaper on the table and there was written, there was the address for the soldiers who are on the east front. I wrote secretly this and then I was fighting with myself. It was so long time, four months. I haven't received a letter. Have I to write or not to write the letter.

**End of Tape 1**

## Tape 2

Q. When you went to this shed and you heard voices, what exactly happened?

A. You see, when we went there there was change. Usually I remember it that it was completely different. We heard some voices, some human voices and when I said to my friend, Sigmund, let's go, we go, at this moment somebody stood up and closed our mouths, nothing to say. Probably this man thought we are from Poland or maybe some spies. Then he started to ask me Polish. He spoke very good Polish. "What are you doing here?" he asked me. We came only here because our paths crossed. We are not from -- no we are Polish. He tested me many times. He feels that I speak perfect Polish. My friend also, and then we have seen two other faces. They were laying the sheets and the youngest was trembling, was very cold even the outside was not so cold. And the youngest tried to speak something. I asked in Polish first, but he couldn't reply me Polish and he said to me in German. I asked "Are you German? No, in a completely different way, in French. I'm French and Jew." He said Bascal's his name. My friend Sigmund took care of him immediately. I gave him shirt because he had only his striped jacket. This from the Studtkoff. It is warm outside I can go home in my white underwear shirt. And so I did. Then he said to this Bascal that he will take him home but only in this dressing. Then to the two, he promised to wait here so long as they will come. The French with the Bascal probably he wanted also to bring some food, maybe some dressing. I don't know exactly. I had enough problems with my Willie and I couldn't help nothing more. I give only my shirt and that is all.

Only the next day or after maybe two days I asked Sigmund what happened. He said everything is okay. Bascal was at his house, slept there, and he didn't want me to say more. I can imagine he helped them. He gave maybe food some dressing and they escaped from this place to maybe another place. I never went more. I was also afraid that if I go there and there are some prisoners because they said they are from Studtkoff. It was for me also very dangerous to go there. So, that I didn't go anymore there.

Only this I knew from Sigmund can be sure everything is okay. You can be sure don't ask more. I was wondering a little. Usually he was a little crazy, not crazy, but so funny and at this moment he was very, very serious and I proceeded very much. Unfortunately he is also not alive. I have met him maybe even ten years ago when I was in Torran but no more. He's also dead. He's no more alive. If he were we could go -- I would like to ask him even for this address of my friend as I told you Titlebaum. I tried to find his address. I wrote to my friend to \_\_\_\_\_ in the South of Poland but for Sigmund I have no chance because he is no more alive. I'm sure that he helped for them maybe they are still alive, these three prisoners, maybe not. Maybe when we ask sometimes in the radio, who was hidden in the shed near Torran, maybe we'll find them.

Q. Did you know then what Studtkoff was?

A. Yes, I heard that it was the concentration camp for Jews and Poles. If something happened in Torran, they were sent immediately to Studtkoff. I had -- there was very, very bad, very slow time. Usually the family received the letter, this and this is dead, but we never believed. It was not dead, probably shot more.

Q. Were the Jews of Torran sent to Studtkoff?



A. No, I don't know. Maybe not all. In Torran there were not so many, but near of Torran there was Alexandrov and there were many Jews. Even immediately in the beginning of the war when I didn't work by baker, it was not so far so I went by foot to Alexandrov to buy some bread. I remember that the Jews had to wear their David stars and they had to go on the street, and probably from Alexandrov they were sent to Studtkoff.

Q. And Polish people from Torran, do you know any Polish people?

A. Who were sent? No. At the moment I don't know. I cannot remember.

Q. But there was talk in Torran what happened in Studtkoff?

A. Oh, yes, yes, you know among the people there was talking of course that the situation was very bad. The food and the hell, --as all the concentration camps, but exactly as you know, maybe you remember about my life, later then I was arrested and my knowledge about the situation of Polish people, Polish Jews in Torran was broken.

Q. Why were you arrested?

A. As I told you when I found the address in the \_\_\_\_\_ in the German newspaper, I wrote secretly the address and then I was fighting with myself whether to write to Willie or not to write.

Q. Which address did you find?

A. I find it \_\_\_\_\_. It was for the soldiers who were sent to the eastern front in Russia, \_\_\_\_\_. A very important address, probably for most all soldiers in the front. And I wrote a letter in my young German language. Probably it was you see, my mind it is very difficult to say the whole letter. It was that I love him. I'm waiting for him. I pray for him that he comes back and I never go to the same places. I didn't mention the shed. I never go to the same place. I wait, I hope you will come back as soon and I will be very grateful. Please

give me some news because I am so anxious about you. I cannot sleep. I cannot work and at the end, with my kisses your friend Teo. I wrote.

And it was a little naive to write especially I put my sender. Usually I couldn't do that but I was fighting if I send without sender what will happen. Maybe the letter will not come back. And if come back I will know that he is not there. So, I send the letter with my sender.  
(section in bold has been copychecked; get most updated version from Joan. 9/10/96)

**Q. And what happened then?**

**A. After sending I was still waiting. I was waiting for a reply, but the reply didn't come, never. Once it was September 19, 1942, I was working morning at this manufacture and the boss called me and told me that I'm invited to the gestapo. I have to go to the gestapo. I asked him, me to the gestapo? What for? I was so honest. I do nothing, what for do I have to go. He said please go there. We have received the order that you will go there.**

Usually I took a bag with some sandwiches to the work. My mother prepared me the sandwiches and I left this bag with sandwiches at this manufactory but he said take this with you. Maybe you don't come back. Oh, why not? If I come back I will have nothing. No, I didn't take, and when I went to the gestapo I remember this uniform, this black uniform with red here on the arm. He asked me first for the name. I told him that and then he took a typewrite. He started to write. He write I sitting also in front of him when the paper came down. I read from other side and I never forget the words it was written "\_\_\_\_\_ " In English it is "Order for prisoner." The first moment I thought I would fall down, and then he said you will stay now. What for? I began to cry. Don't play \_\_\_\_\_. And then he called somebody. They took me to the cell it was downstairs in the

cellar. To the cell and there was the furnace was only a wooden bed and a toilet and that's all. Even the door was scraped with wooden so I could put the handle like this. And I had to wait. The whole time I was sitting the night and I think what happened. What for, and the next day when I was called again to him, he showed me the letter. This letter which I wrote to Willie. Is this your letter? I was very honest. I said of course. This is my letter. I wrote this to him. You, you wrote this letter to a German. You loved him. I wrote him it was very good, yes. Then he said where did you meet him. He wanted to know exactly where we met at, what we had done, in which way. We seen only once or twice. I lied, I tried to lie but you say me and he showed me some pictures, other pictures of soldiers, not only soldiers, civilians. He wanted to know you cannot remember. You will remember.

\_\_\_\_\_ with trousers to beat especially with the \_\_\_\_\_. It was terrible and I cried. They put it in my trousers and they beat me when I couldn't breath, I couldn't speak they brought water and poured water on me and began once more again and again. All over, and always I heard only them, "You pig, you \_\_\_\_\_" So many bad words I cannot translate it into English especially in German.

Q. Say it in German.

A. In German \_\_\_\_\_. Terrible, so many words I hadn't ever heard before that. And every day I was sent to the cell there was given only once a day, I don't know from there they brought. At first in the beginning I didn't eat nothing. I wanted to drink only water. Sleep I couldn't also because I was so beaten swollen under my back -- when I was laying only on my stomach.

And so happened I don't know when, I lost even the dates, maybe about two weeks, everyday the same question. The last one they gave me something to sign. I don't know

**what. I was so tortured. For me it was everything I signed only to be free.**

**\_\_\_\_\_, when you tell us the truth you'll be free. I was so stupid. I told them also about Hitler, what Willie said, that Hitler is also homosexual. He wrote this. Yes, and you the Fuhrer. It was very, -- now I'm smiling but it was not for smiling. It was for crying.**

It happened so after two weeks as I told you I signed this what they wrote. I don't know. Then they took me by special closed car. It was a kind, we call this like a \_\_\_\_\_, which means you don't see nothing there, like in prison. When they brought me I had seen the round prison. I know because my brother immediately after the war, he was by the Germans also arrested by Germans but for very short time. Only reason was that he as a boy when he was going to the school -- it was not high school it was for the baker school, when he was going there, he has to train as a soldier, a Polish soldier. For this reason he was in the same prison. I never forget how my mother suffered. Sometimes she give me bread to give him and then I had seen she cried and she said "Oh my dear God it's better you take him." I had seen how the mother suffered if the son is arrested. Later when I was arrested I thought also that maybe she suffered also. He was only one month and she suffered and when I was so long time, but maybe we should go with my story further.

I was brought to this round prison. I was put in the cell with six or seven crime prisoners usually. When they heard because each prisoner had received a special card. I had received card. It was written paragraph 175. I didn't know what this mean paragraph and I showed it to everybody, but there was somebody oh \_\_\_\_\_ it is for the gays, for the homosexuals. And since this time I was very bad behaved in this cell. I was not human. I couldn't sit at the

table when the meal began. They treated me very, very bad. And I was sitting there until fifth of December 1942.

On the fifth of December 1942 somebody opened the door. The block meister took me to the Judge. I remember there was only my mother, no people and me and maybe five or six in black dresses. They were the judges. There was shouting and cried, I have to be isolated. I have demoralized the German military, me Pollock and how could I do that. I must be punished. I must be punished for long time and I was 17 years old. They punished me for five years exactly \_\_\_\_\_. I don't know exactly how it's called in German but \_\_\_\_\_ is a very hard prison.

Immediately then I met my mother. I couldn't speak. You can imagine how was the feeling my mother and me. When I came to the cell first I cried. But later I had to go -- I was sent to Koronovo. was not far from \_\_\_\_\_ maybe 50 or 60 kilometers. It was the worst prison in Poland before the war and during the war. Only for Polish and Jewish prisoners.

I will never forget they cut my hair because in Torran I still had my own hair. They gave me with some maybe yellow -- I don't know, it was here on the arm, and I was sent to the cellar with about 40 prisoners. There were maybe about five or six Jews together with me and it was terrible. My memories, especially in this cellar because the oldest of this cell it was a prisoner for a long life, murder and there was a clan. Around him he had a few prisoners. They made everything for him what he liked. We had nothing to say. We had to be polite what he -- even with the toilet. The toilet was only morning and then the food, when they delivered the food it was very small, but even if we received one spoon of marmalade, he took from us. We were given a little margarine, once or twice per week, he took also. So, that this time this is my worst time in my life. And then my leg began to be I have received a kind of \_\_\_\_\_. I

cannot explain in English. Due to the reason I had no vitamins. It was like it was spoiled this leg. It started from a small wound. This was this leg. From this to this here, this place. Nothing, in those terrible times but of course everywhere is bad times and after bad will come a little better. Even there, there was so that because our work we were living, we were working in the same cell. There was very stupid work but very dangerous, very dusty. We had to the ropes, we could resolve the ropes then we had to make the leather for the new shoes for the front they were sent. This was the job and once they looked they wanted one \_\_\_\_\_. Oh, I have to explain also here that here we could write the letters once every two or three months home in German language. Everybody doesn't write German. Me and especially my good friend, it was the Applebaum, exactly I remember, he wrote also German. Some of them gave us one potato or two potatoes for the writing. At the first moment I didn't want to take but Applebaum said yes take it. It is for them also very helpful when they have the contact with the parents or with family your letters.

And so we cooperated very good in this way and once happen that block meister came to our cell and asked the oldest men for somebody who can write and speak German. First he send someone from his clan but after a few minutes he came back and he said no. Exactly he said \_\_\_\_\_. Then when he came one more, "You have nobody here? Among 40 men you have nobody. I need a writer. I was standing and I said -- usually I couldn't do that and I think maybe I will be able for him. I said "Her block meister, I can speak German and I write German too." He was wondering I was so slim and young, where I could speak English. And he took me to his room. He gave me paper pencil and dictated. He dictated in German. I remember it was an office, exactly as you like I can do this in German, \_\_\_\_\_. He looked at this, yes, good. Go there. Take your clothes and

you'll come here. I went to the cell and I remember everybody especially those of the clan but my friends, they said, really, he agree. You are able to take -- he takes you? Oh that's very good. Go boy, with his hand and with this you are also good that God helps you.

When I went there it was a three men cell, much better, near the kitchen. Sometimes when I had a little more -- I received sometimes cigarettes. Cigarettes were very good like money for exchange. Because I didn't smoke -- I never smoked, I could make the exchange for the prisoners in the kitchen for cigarette I received some bread. Then I had the permit to go to other places. I belonged to the high society of this prison. I received better uniform, prison uniform, better warmer. Even the hair was a little longer than usual. As the flour sometime one had no water and me I was -- but I never forget about my friend Applebaum. I went and took with me some bread some food and I went to the cell and I wanted to give him this. Then I remember, I don't know exactly the name of him, he said since few days there's no more Applebaum. He patted -- he was in so high depression. He was ill. He had diarrhea and it was very, very dangerous. You know if somebody had this they couldn't stop and suffered. I suppose he thought that this is the end and he made this.

Of course I left his bread there. I came -- and that was not all because every week from Koronovo where the transport station to Sauxenhausen. So always thinking about it was one day I will also be sent there. Because that was the end of their life. Who was sent to Sauxenhausen never returned.

Q. Tell us a little bit more about --?

A. He was older than me. He was maybe forty, maybe, older than me. He was black, black hair. He spoke very good Polish. He told me that he lived in Lodz, this German city for \_\_\_\_\_. He had family, but he never didn't want to say me what the reason was that he

was in Koronovo. I thought maybe he was arrested before the war. I don't know, maybe political, I never knew. Usually later you received a card what was the reason of the prison. But this we haven't therefore I never knew. I never heard about this. His behavior, he said to me, boy don't be worried. You are very young. You will succeed. The war will be not long. You can be sure. He should be older because he told me also about first war. Maybe he knew this before. He was so sure that -- because I lost my hope. I thought maybe that Germany -- because always the Germans said Poland is forever forgotten, forever. And I lost my hope, but he gave me this trust in the prison.

Q. Was he Jewish?

A. Of course. You see I have to state, even in this prison, you knew immediately who was Polish who was Jewish. The David's star, they had this, this Applebaum. Therefore we knew, we Polish had only a number or maybe yellow on here, this stripe around.

Q. What was this yellow mean?

A. I don't know what this yellow means. It was prisoners, not like pink or no -- the differences of color when I was sent as a writer I received green. Before I don't know exactly the differences of color.

Q. Did people in the prison know that you were sentenced because of 175?

A. Yes, Applebaum knew. I told him, before I never hear this word homosexuality. I told him only that I had something with a man. I told him also with a German soldier. He wasn't astonished, only he smile, oh you are a young boy. It was stupid. You are still healthy. But my leg, you see, the war will not be so long. He told me always in this way.

Q. Were there other prisoners who were imprisoned because they were homosexual?



A. You see there were of course many, but some of them like the doctor for instance. He was working as a doctor because we had lazaret. It was for the very ill people, but there was no medicine, nothing. But there were some. When I was in the high position I met also another writer. I met also someone from theater, not from Torran, from other places. He was also for the homosexual. Then because we receive, everybody has a card and there was written for me for instance was written at this time not paragraph 75, only \_\_\_\_\_. I don't know how to translate this into English. I don't know. It is like because I have just now this year I received a document thanks to the red cross and I have even with me this document and there was written \_\_\_\_\_. I looked at a dictionary. It's terrible. It is in the Polish language, prostitution. I was not prostitution. Stupid. I cannot show this document to anybody. It was 16 or 17 years prostitution during the war, stupid. I was so angry for this document I couldn't sleep three days. I wanted first to write to \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_ is a gay national in Berlin. I wrote them. I have also the copy and I explained them everything that this documentary is wrong. Only one is exactly the date that I escaped from the prison in \_\_\_\_\_ in the island. It was the 15th of May 1945. This is correct, but even there was a question nation, there was written unknown. They arrested as a Polish. They cried, "You Polish sow." And then put "Nation, unknown." I was so angry when I received this documentation. If you wish I can show you later.

Q. If you go back to the prison, did you have contact with other homosexual prisoners. Did you talk about your situation?

A. You mean in the prison? No, because I had no experience. This was maybe no homosexual. I was also as we called this -- I didn't know exactly. Later after the war, I knew

what it means, homosexual, gay etc. but me I was really very shy boy and I didn't know this. I didn't talk about this and nobody asked, so that I never talked about homosexuals in the prison.

Q. Did you understand when during the interrogation, in the prison when the guard showed you the pictures of the other men, did you understand why -- what were you supposed to do with those pictures?

A. You mean after the war?

Q. No, you said in the beginning.

A. In the beginning when I met Willie --.

Q. No, no when you were arrested.

A. I think maybe they wanted to know that I had maybe more soldiers, not only one. This was the reason. Before they showed me some soldiers and civilians but I hadn't. I had only Willie. It was true, but they beat me. They wanted to know and maybe they should kill me because they didn't believe me. But maybe after two weeks they couldn't receive nothing more and they believed and I signed something. What, I don't know. After the war, especially later when I was a tailor then I tried to find the documents so I wrote to Red Cross, everywhere. I wanted to receive my documents. See, maybe I will tell you something. When I was a tailor and then when I was ill I didn't receive any indemnification for my time for prison. Then I think I have to do something, I must write to anybody and to fight for my rights. I spent as a boy for nothing so I suffered and my leg was -- my body was burned, and I want to call. First I wrote to ask for the indemnification. I explained that I was so long time the whole time in the prison for this reason and I would like to receive something, some compensation especially because I had to go early as a tailor. I couldn't work. I was ill for this reason and I had skin cancer and different illnesses, but I have received a reply very kindly that the money has been sent to Polish

government. I have to go to them and ask and they have to give me. But it was the communist government. They will never give money. Then I wrote once more that maybe some symbolic one mark only that I will have this satisfaction that he agree with me and I ask you for forgiveness. No, I received letter if I try more to write all letters will go to the paperbasket. I was so angry. Then I write once more. I will fight so long I will write to New York to the United Nations. I will fight for my rights. I black mailed a little because I knew I couldn't do that. Then what I have to do, then I find an address in Germany in the parliament there was homosexual bond organization. I wrote to them. I explained that I was so young. I suffered. I have paid with my life. My mother suffered and my family, and they explained we agree with you. We are very sorry, but really what we can do, we can only collect money for you for your research medicine. And I said no, I don't think you -- I don't need money. I want to receive indemnification. You must do something for me.

Then in Poland there was martial law, you remember and I said oh no, I cannot stay here. I must do something, and one day I received a very nice letter from Germany. A young writer wrote me a letter and he put this letter in a book about young Jews in Israel. He wanted to give me with this book a sample of his writing, how he writes, his style of the book. And it was written in this letter that he found it by this organization a homosexual by Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, he found my story. This story is very good for writing a book, and he asked me whether I agree for this book. If yes, he'll help me. He put inside 20 marks for the stamps and this was the first money that I receive as indemnification from my stay in the prison.

Then when I wrote him I agree, I bought used old typewriter and every day because I was not working any more. I was retired now according to my illness and I wrote him every day about my beginning from the prison everything that he needed for this book. I sent to him, he

sent me again, so about six months we wrote. He wanted some pictures. He wanted to know some details and when this project of this book was finished he came to me, to Warsaw. I gave him the signature and the book was printed in Germany. The reaction of this book was fantastic. I never believed, especially the young people. They wrote letters and they asked me, maybe I need something. They wanted to help me and they were saying -- I suffered only the reason was I love somebody, that I loved a man. It was very touching for me. Even until now I have contact with some of them, especially one doctor who delivers me always there the medicine and they contact -- they visit me. They come to me. I stay up to now with very good many friends and the name of this book is "Damned Strong Love" and in German \_\_\_\_\_. I paid really with my illness and with the memories especially. When I was sitting in Torran and I had seen my mother was watching and I couldn't say to her it was sometimes, it was -- for me it is very heavy to remember. Sometimes I say I can forgive German, but never forget. It is too difficult to forget. And thanks also many American soldiers because you see when I escaped in the British zone, I went to Munich because I thought I will go to Vienna. I will find Willie. I wanted to know what happened with him. I wanted to meet him. In the beginning it was too difficult. My leg was worse and worse. I received the displaced, the card, the displaced person card in Munich from the Americans and I was sent immediately to the American hospital. I was about two or three weeks. I don't know exactly now, but I know that after three weeks I was fit. I was so healthy and I was so happy that I was again alive.

Now, I want to go to Vienna. In Vienna there were Russians. I couldn't I wanted to go to Poland. I couldn't, because everywhere I heard that in Poland there are communists and their situation is not clear. What I have to do is sit and wait? No, I started to work and I worked by Americans. By Americans I learned a little English. By American I learned how is their life.

By American I learned how it is good because I was working in the canteen, I'm asking an officer. I'll never forget the nice apples, red, the conflicts and even I remember some words I learned, very funny like "hubba hubba" and it was really -- I had some friends and I met also one officer. He wanted to adopt me. He wanted you must come to America. I dreamed about America. I wanted to come here to America but he said you must receive the permission from your parents because they are alive. I received once the letter from my mother and my father came back. He was also in the forced labor camp in Germany and especially my mother asked me so much, come boy, back. Come on, it is not very good but we will be together. And I was fighting with myself. I didn't know what have to do, to go or not to go. Many friends said don't go, but my soul says, "Better go" and I went of course.

When I returned I regretted it because it was everything strange. Even when I went to this bath house where we were sent from Germany I didn't recognize my young brother. I remember he came and I said to my mother, "Mother a boy came." She said, "This is your brother." I cried but I couldn't go to Munich. I had to stay in Poland.

Q. Let's go back to the prison. You told us you were transferred to a small cell with three beds. It was a better situation. Did you stay in this prison?

A. No, no. Later, in the beginning I didn't know, but when the transport to Sauxenhausen the block meister came also to me and said you'll go to Stum. You must go -- no he didn't sent me to Stum only e took me to same transport. Me and some many four or five prisoners. They gave us you know how the hand -- and we went by and we went in special truck. Then on the way I heard Stum. Also, it is \_\_\_\_\_. In Stum, because my leg was so bad they sent me immediately to the lazaret. In lazaret it was a little better because it was not necessary to work, but they couldn't heal my leg because they had no medicine and I was there maybe a few

months, when the control always was there. Once he said, "Oh, you are too long. It is not sanitary, you must go out." I know why because the front of Russia was near and near and they wanted that we do something. It was very hard work. It was very wrong because once I was in a one man cell and we had always this card and it was written \_\_\_\_\_, what, I was with animals. I was -- I never had some dogs or calves. I went to the block meister, excuse me please, it is written here, "Yeah sure," he cried. But no animals. Please ride with men but never with animals, and they put this animals away and only with men.

Q. Were you the only homosexual prisoner there or were there other prisoners?

A. Only me. Then I was sent to \_\_\_\_\_ also there. I haven't seen more homosexuals there. There were some men who had stolen packages from the front from soldiers. When they killed the meat for the black market so completely different for everything. Some letters -- I don't know exactly the reason but homosexual I haven't seen. I remember only it was in winter in January 1945 there was so \_\_\_\_\_ because the Russian front was, it was 1945. And we had to pack everything and about two weeks we went by food in the strong winter and you couldn't stop because you could fall and be frozen. It was very strong. I remember the \_\_\_\_\_ was frozen. We crossed the \_\_\_\_\_ and the first maybe in \_\_\_\_\_ received some trucks or trains and from there I was sent to the \_\_\_\_\_. It was near Hamberg. It was an island. It was an island and I remember so many bombs there but I pray that maybe the bombs will fall here, even in prison I could escape from prison. But the bombs were to the city but never to the prison camp. Then at the end of the war, it was the fifteenth of May, 1945, I escaped from this prison. I worked there as a pork, \_\_\_\_\_. It was a rather good job but I have taken with me sometimes potatoes also, but thank God it was not so long time when we escaped. I went immediately to the British soldier. It was exactly in

\_\_\_\_\_. I remember near Linnenberg. Then they send me to Birken Belsen but it was no more a concentration camp. We were living together with Jews in this but not in the barracks. Only in the houses where the SS men were living. There food was too good. I was ill. I was swollen and my leg was also very bad, so I think no I have to escape here. I must go to Americans. There was no train and with some friends some other boys we went by train to Munich, but it was no train, only American soldiers, some transport. And when I came to Munich there was the Judenrot. They gave out a displaced card. They sent me to the \_\_\_\_\_. It was for displaced person. I was living there short time, but I wanted to be free so I met a nice Polish gay boy who lived private and this boy, he's still alive. He's living in Poland. He's older than me, but he's still alive. He's older than me. I met him very often. We speak about our time because during this time I learned English. I bought a book for myself and he liked also the American soldiers. Of course I met also some but I had no experience at this time. Later, when I knew what homosexuality. I learned later. The first time as I told you I was not so suffocated. It was more romantic. And so is my life.

**End of Tape 2**

### Tape 3

Can you tell us again, when you left the Koronovo prison and where did you go to?

A. Yes. As I told you a few prisoners were sent to some places at the beginning we didn't know exactly where we are sending. The first moment I thought maybe we are sent to Sauxenhausen, but usually the transport to Sauxenhausen were much bigger. At this moment, a few only went. Then we had seen some other prisoners, a new one and we heard that it's Stum. Stum, special for young prisoners. Young 25, 26, but not so many older. And immediately after arriving there, they had seen that I couldn't walk. They had seen my leg and they sent me to Lazaret. I was in the Lazaret with other prisoners, not homosexual there. There was one from Kriena, there was from Belgium. There was from Norway and German. This Ukrainian, I was a little friend because it was very easy, Polish and Ukraine language is similar so that we were like friends. We talk most than with other prisoners, and after maybe two months, because every time came control, especially one was very, very bad, probably he was from Hamberg, somebody said to me. I don't know exactly for everybody block meister we gave a special nickname. Let's say this horse Polish it was \_\_\_\_\_, it means horse head, because he's looking horselike. He said, "Oh, you are still here? You must go work. He is not sanitary. You will sin heathen." What I had to do, I had to leave and I was sent to one cell, one person cell. As I told you maybe before with it's description on my door, \_\_\_\_\_, with animals. I asked him to change because you can ride with men I had only with men something but not with animals. It was not so easy. It was \_\_\_\_\_, everything is the same, especially during the war. This is demoralization and it's just like animals. I had to go to work. It was very, very



hard, with other prisoners. The nationality I told you was most of them were Polish, some German, some English, and also from Ukraine. But Ukraine, I was wondering why from Ukraine, then after the war I can remember because Ukraine was treated a little better. They had collaborated with Germany and maybe the prisoners were better treated. It was the reason.

Frankly speaking, maybe it was not so -- only the work was very hard. The food was maybe just a little better but not much better than in Koronovo. Of course, there was not enough to be food, but better than in Koronovo. I don't know why, but one time they had to send me to \_\_\_\_\_. Then I also feel what happened here was a big change. Then somebody said to me that my mother applied -- I don't know this is kind of a group for German cities and like that. She wanted to help me. Then after the war my sister she told me she wanted to take the lawyers advocate. She had done everything to release me from this, and this was the reason that I was sent from Koronova to the Strum generally for the young prisoners. Not so the crimes like in Koronovo, there was completely different.

Q. Which kind of release --?

A. This is like German release, this belongs maybe for better treating. It was a kind of -- it was exactly a group \_\_\_\_\_, I don't know. I had never seen this. I had only after my release the my mother applied for this. Maybe it was the preparation that after the war we would be the German citizens. Maybe, I'm not sure, but probably it was this. Immediately the change was but before there was no change.

Q. All other prisoners in Stum were in this program?

A. Maybe also. I have never seen this documents with this third group of German list. Probably it happened the same. I think so, because when we escaped from this, there were only three Polish boys. One was from \_\_\_\_\_, one was from \_\_\_\_\_. I think so,

therefore, when I wrote the book, I asked the writer \_\_\_\_\_ to find old documents. First I wanted to find my full documentation. I wanted to have the same \_\_\_\_\_ that's happened in east Germany. He has done everything, he couldn't. What I received, I received only an option of one part of these documents which was as I told you, -- but it is not exactly the same.

Q. In Stum \_\_\_\_\_?

A. No, I was brought there. I didn't know nothing. If somebody said to me they had to say to me, "Your mother applied to this German list. You are now German." No, it couldn't be because I should be sent to the military. It's happened. I have seen sometimes, you know, they took them but from where I don't know. Maybe to \_\_\_\_\_ when they needed soldiers.

Ones that go free to the \_\_\_\_\_ they will go free but it was very dangerous and nobody returned back. But I didn't never. First I knew about this when I returned after two years after the war to Poland. My mother "Yes, I tried to do my best but you didn't --" She thought that I would be free immediately and even in these documents I received there was a mention that I had to be in the prison exactly five years. It was fifth of December, exactly five years.

Q. What kind of work did you have to do in Strum?

A. In Strum as I told you, it was very hard. They had prepared for the war some, you know.

We had to \_\_\_\_\_ (Speaking in German.)

Q. (Speaking in German.)

A. (Speaking in German.)

Q. So when you were in Stum you were not on the forced labor outside?

A. No, it was a prison. We were always in a group. We had to go with the block meister. After it was from early morning to evening. It was dark. We came back. We had received hot soup, evening first and the morning we left.

Q. How many hours did you have to work?

A. Oh, it was very long. Let's say from 8:00 until 4:00 afternoon. Because it was quickly dark. I remember this was autumn and it was very cold. Before I tried to do my best and it was you know, everybody had a place. You had to -- then I met also this Ukrainian Andre. He was Andre also and he came to me with some \_\_\_\_\_, you know he wanted to give me, he found that we were staying also in very good friendship.

Q. Were there any other gay boys?

A. In Stum I didn't find no gay boys, no Jews. In \_\_\_\_\_ the same, no Jews. Only in Koronovo.

Q. When were you ordered to \_\_\_\_\_?

A. It was maybe December -- before -- maybe December 1944. Yes, I was sent there and it was very fine block meister there. He sent me immediately to the job, the magazine. You know, where the dresses of the prisoners there. It was a rather good job because I was not so -- and then I met in Stum, I met also Hendrick. This was from Holland and we in Stum we worked also together. I was a friend with this Hendrick and when we came to \_\_\_\_\_ he was sleeping behind me because we have two beds, down and upstairs so that he was not gay. And he knew I was gay because in \_\_\_\_\_ and in later, it was written exactly paragraph 175, and he knew that. There was maybe for young prisoners, tolerated. They knew and sometimes they joked about me.

Q. What kind?

A. \_\_\_\_\_ (in German.)

Q. Tell me a story in German what they joked about.

A. (Speaks in German)

Q. Why was Hendrick in Stum?

A. I don't know exactly what the reason. I suppose maybe -- I don't know exactly. I cannot remember. For my reason everybody knew very quickly. But the others, the \_\_\_\_\_ knew. He had the stolen in the pocket, for the \_\_\_\_\_, the family sent, and he was hungry. He for this reason, it was very strong punishment, but Hendrick I don't know.

Q. How were the guards treating you at Stum?

A. The guards? As I told you, twice very bad especially the one when he came to the lazaret and it would you think it is here sanitary we're called \_\_\_\_\_ which means horse \_\_\_\_\_ and the other one went with us with this group to work for the front, he was very sharp. Sometimes somebody found something. I don't know when Andre found this \_\_\_\_\_ it was some kind of beating for this you could -- I don't know maybe he thought he didn't see it, because he was very, very --. At the end when they feel that the Russian front is coming they changed a little bit. We had days where we walked more kindly, not without the shouting. This is the reason they felt that the end of the war was near.

Q. Was this already in Stum?

A. No, no, in \_\_\_\_\_. In \_\_\_\_\_ it started then in \_\_\_\_\_. It was Sunday, yes, I remember, one day Sunday. I was in this magazine and we had to take and to make because the snow, and it was so the atmosphere was very very hectic. They feel that the war maybe the Russians are coming.

Q. How long did you stay in \_\_\_\_\_?

A. To the end. After this came the Russian soldiers. So, that it was in winter, half of January 1945.

Q. How many people were all together in \_\_\_\_\_ do you know?

A. Let's say maybe three or four hundred. When we were sent from the \_\_\_\_\_, there were two groups, two groups, and it was in winter. We had to go by foot and they give us attention. When we tried to escape they will shoot immediately. They stopped only from time to time in some \_\_\_\_\_, to sleep there. We had sleep only on the straw so without nothing. I remember it was winter, very cold. When we slept there even there was between the wood the wind with snow would come in and you wake and you had plenty of snow. But butter there instead.

Q. Did anyone try to escape?

A. Yes, tried, and we don't know what happened. Many, many tried. Maybe succeed or maybe not succeed. I don't know. We, when I escaped, we escaped we succeeded.

Q. Do you remember if anybody tried to escape from Stum?

A. No, no.

Q. And from \_\_\_\_\_?

A. No. It was too difficult. Probably nobody could in that. You see there was so surround and with they were watching and in concentration camp there was also the electricity. You couldn't do that.

Q. Can you describe the electricity?

A. Around the -- it was in \_\_\_\_\_ because in \_\_\_\_\_ were barracks. The barracks were specially built for us, I think so, because too many prisons were there. There was

no place and it was kind of a \_\_\_\_\_ before. And they make this for the security, for themselves.

Q. Were they wooden barracks or stone barracks?

A. Wooden. Wooden barracks. I was never after the war, I don't believe. Because even I wanted to find this certain Torran. What is also my -- this house is very bad. It's standing there. The baker house is standing, the prison is there, the documentation from the foundation \_\_\_\_\_ when he go there I will show them. They will make a documentation because me, I'm 71, maybe tomorrow or after tomorrow I'll die and there will be no documentation. It must be for the young people.

I can forgive but not forget, especially for the young. They must know how it was difficult in the war and what for, for what reason. Only for the fact that I like men. From the beginning, I'm not the child of God. I was born, -- I didn't know when things happened. Maybe just the first time when \_\_\_\_\_---, but it was playing. I didn't know. First, even as I told you it was not so suffocated, it was \_\_\_\_\_ in very childish way, a rather romantic way. Now, I know everything. I am old and I read book. Of course it should be like I had no advantages. Not only advantages, I even had three times friends because I like not to jump from one flower to another one. I had good friends. Even just know in Poland, but he's married and this is more difficult.

Q. It must have been also very difficult for you to go through all these years because you were very young. How did you manage. Where did you get the strength to get through it?

A. (Answers in German.) I lost my hope that I will stay alive. And especially in Koronovo, I had to be also absent in the bed or I felt that I forget to say how many insects there were. I don't know exactly the names of these, even the lice, but you know, it's terrible. I prayed and I was so -- it was for me sometimes if I should be dead. Sometimes I wished to be dead. You see,

then in Stum, and this again, I wanted to stay to alive and I feel that even in Stum, one day came very good information that in Warsaw, \_\_\_\_\_ this uprising, it was in August -- I'll never forget, it was August 1944, came information to everybody the Polish, you know in Warsaw, and I said "Oh my God, maybe it will be the end of the war." So, sometimes when came the news it was just great for us.

Q. Could you describe a day in \_\_\_\_\_ and how \_\_\_\_\_ looked?

A. Of course I can. The barracks were let's say maybe 20 for each -- in each barracks were living in two divided bigger rooms, 40 or 30 prisoners. There were also one barrack for the kitchen, one barrack is for the magazine. One was for the tailor and for workers like wooden work. What's more there, maybe -- and around the barracks as I told you was some of that sound, the electrician wire. They said I don't know, I'm not sure but they blackmailed us, if somebody tried they will pay with their life. Each corner was a tower, a watch tower. He was with a gun and that was -- and we had each day for half an hour we have to walk because you need fresh air and during the walking I met this \_\_\_\_\_ who told me I'll follow you. It was this and --

Q. When did you have to get up?

A. It was morning, very early. It was about six o'clock. First we have to bring this way, and to wash there was everything, washing in cold water of course. And not in the same barrack where you were sleeping privately. There was a barrack for washing. And you came to your barrack and the \_\_\_\_\_ brought you some kind of soup. It was soup like water and a piece of bread. Everybody -- for me came the block meister. He took me to magazine. Me and Hendrick we were together. We had a job we have to in the magazine make the order with the dresses and to describe the names for \_\_\_\_\_ everybody because everybody has private dressing.

After that afternoon, they came again. We stood there in this barrack. There was no central heating. We had only through -- they gave us wood, but it was warm rather, so long as you put the wood. It was warm. Sometimes the guard would bring some kind of tea that somebody put in the water. Some they drank, but only prisoners who had a special contact with somebody. I had no contact so I couldn't do nothing. I was living, as I told you, with Hendrick. He was upstairs. He was working for the tailor.

Q. Did your mother know where you were?

A. At this moment, she knew. She had received information that I'm -- but I never saw her. It was not allowed to visit to come, no, but she knew and we have also family, relations in \_\_\_\_\_ probably across the river somebody has seen me and wrote to my mother that I am alive, but she told me later, when we talked, after my return from Germany, she said somebody said I am alive and she wasn't sure exactly, but her hope was a little better. First when I wrote the first letter after the war, she was completely sure that I was alive.

Q. You were not allowed to write letters during the time you were in prison?

A. Yes. In \_\_\_\_\_, I don't know. I'm not exactly -- yes, probably we could. Maybe only letters, you understand, but at the end of the war when we left this, she -- she didn't receive any information from \_\_\_\_\_. Only the last, maybe from Stum or maybe I don't know. It was too long time ago.

Q. Did you receive letters from her?

A. If I had I would like to have the documentation. What I have some very nice proof that is in Koronovo when I was in better position, I had some relation with some other prisoners who worked in cafeteria, and they make very nice friends. I send this \_\_\_\_\_ so some of prisoners they were sent to make the job outside the prison. How did I do that? I paid, of course,



with bread and they sent to my mother and this friend I have -- and I put a picture of my mother there and from foundation he was before he came here he was home he made a picture.

Q. So you must have felt very isolated in these years not knowing how your family was, if they were alive?

A. Listen, you know, my father was not home and I loved my mother over everything, and I couldn't help. I had seen how she suffered when my brother was only one month. She had suffered so much, I have seen this. She cried, "Why you give me this?" You must understand that this painful on mother. She was so happy when I returned. Therefore, I tried to go as soon as it was possible and I am correct, so about -- I was together. I was living in Warsaw. All holidays, Christmas I spent with her and I help so that in this way I'm correct and satisfied. She suffered. She spent you know so she has -- I was the youngest, but then there came another one which she loved very much. Even after the war when we talked sometimes, she told me that a neighbor, she was something talking, and they asked "What is the reason you?" She said, "I don't know." But probably I thing so that the gay, Sigmund, maybe he said something. What happened with him, I don't know. Maybe he said something. Afterwards everybody knew. But my mother, she was very simple. She finished only four classes, but she never said to me "It's all my fault, or this is the reason." She had to suffer. No, she never said this.

Q. Can you tell us when in \_\_\_\_\_, when the Russian army approached, what happened?

A. In \_\_\_\_\_ what happened? When we had to go, it was Sunday, a very strong winter. Everybody was in a hurry and then we had to pack as much as we could. Most of them there was \_\_\_\_\_, and we went first through the \_\_\_\_\_, frozen. I met some Polish, they wanted to keep up. Maybe the people, they were members of my family, but I

couldn't recognize. I didn't remember exactly. Then we had to go. They shouted always, "Don't stop. If you stop, you'll see you'll die." Because it was twenty degrees below zero. It was very cold. I was very tired. I wanted to stop I'm sure. If I would fall, I could die immediately. You were frozen. You were tired. You better go, go, go. And always they shouted don't escape. If you escape, you'll pay. We'll shoot. Then because we had to count always. Always, lists, lists, lists.

Q. Did also people die on this march?

A. During the march I cannot no-- I'm not sure. I don't know. I remember only that the last day, there was not in this \_\_\_\_\_, only the school, a little warmer and then they said we will be going by train. It was not normal for person to -- it was for animals and we haven't seen nothing. They stopped sometimes and there was \_\_\_\_\_. I don't know and when we arrived in Hamberg but how they put us to the island. I remember only that the next day we have to go to work. The work, it was in the meadow and I remember that there were some French prisoners and they took at the beginning this is the green and they ate this. No, I know, this is very good. And it was 28th of February, rather a little warmer but not so warmer, and they picked up this and they ate it so I remember.

After a few days they needed some pigs. They were not for us, only for the staff for the block meister. And they needed somebody. I wonder, I never worked before in this way. It was very difficult because you had to make clean always. The pig were --, you have to do this. But I was satisfied because I share with the pig some how you call it -- this is a kind of flavor in potatoes and I took, I could be full and not so hungry.

Q. Do you remember anything from the train, how many days you had been in the train?

A. No. There was something, water. We left to go by boat, not ship, but I don't remember. This is from me just now. I knew only that the prisoners said we have run the water. He knew that there is a special, it was a kind of boat and this is how you put this with the rope so that we could go to the other side. But we were very anxious that somebody would shoot us. Probably it was 15 miles. They knew that they didn't want to do something.

Q. What was the name of this prison?

A. \_\_\_\_\_.

Q. How many people were there?

A. I don't know. When it -- it was near of Hamberg and Hamberg was always bombed, very often. During this bombing they opened always the door of the cell. Probably if something happened -- I don't know. It was opened but nobody escaped. I had seen only in the windows, you know, it was not far of this place, Hamberg.

Q. Were you there together with people that you knew?

A. No, no. In Hamberg, in this \_\_\_\_\_ a cell for one, only for one. Very small.

Q. Did you know anyone there?

A. No. You see, when I worked with the pigs, only me alone and still alone. The few Polish I met during the marching morning when we had to march to take this fresh air.

Q. (In German)

A. No. Maybe he escaped or maybe he was there because the last time I seen he was very ill in \_\_\_\_\_, and I don't know what happened.

Q. How did you escape from this prison?

A. From \_\_\_\_\_?

Q. Yes.

A. I remember I had to go and pick up for the pig \_\_\_\_\_, you know, because this is vitamins. It was so very bad job. My hands were always, you know. I'm making this and the three Polish boys were saying, "We're, escaping. Would you like to go?" "Of course, me too." I left this cart and I joined them. They knew probably. They had prepared. Then we went, there was small boat, and as I told you this boat had no \_\_\_\_\_ for this, only rope. Maybe they knew it was not so far. It was maybe ten minutes and we were so lucky when we jumped off this, we are now free. But we are hungry. First, we went to a \_\_\_\_\_ and I spoke very good German. I put that I'm from this and it was May and it was not so cold. One night we spent in the meadow. We slept there. We found some old clothes and I put a shirt and trousers like from the prison without the stripes and me and the other ones, especially the ones who lives in \_\_\_\_\_, was near of Torran and we went to \_\_\_\_\_. He give us eating everything and he said okay, we said then that we are how we call this, they say \_\_\_\_\_, that we are \_\_\_\_\_ and he says I need two jobs you can stay here, but because I had the experience with the pigs, he wanted me too. But we say we would like maybe we stay just a short time when we hear the news from our country, exactly and I suppose he said something because after you eat, better you go. Probably he had the feeling something wrong because it was not far from this \_\_\_\_\_. Maybe he had recognized our trousers. So he said, you eat and go. Then we walked in the direction of \_\_\_\_\_. We found some trucks with soldiers and even Polish in British uniforms were written Poland. Then I stopped, I shouted Polish, Polish here." And there was an officer and I told him that we are here that we are from the Prison. Please take here a seat we'll bring you to a special Polish displacement. And they brought us to some place a village. The Germans had to live from there in some houses and were living in \_\_\_\_\_. I remember very good this place

\_\_\_\_\_ near of \_\_\_\_\_. We were living there with the Polish people. Some were from the forced work and we have received from British soldiers. We had to cook because we are living in the houses of Germans. The Germans had to leave for us. But the Polish people, instead to work the soldiers they maybe will work in the garden everything. They do nothing so they send us to Birken Belsun. Birken Belsun was also near of Linnenberg. Many Jews there were but not now the prisoners free. We are living in the \_\_\_\_\_ because the barracks were destroyed I suppose. In this \_\_\_\_\_ I didn't feel well because we couldn't go out. Like in prison, I had enough prison. So, this boy from \_\_\_\_\_ and another one he said, "See we go out." It was not like in prison. We heard that there were some transports of soldiers to south of Germany, and we went.

I'll never forget it was in Hanover, I think so, and there was black American and I told him that I only German. He allowed us to come in. He came some things of food and soon by this truck, this train, we went to Munich because the transport of Americans went to Munich.

When we arrived at Munich, I said I will stay here. From Munich it is not far to Vienna to my friend. I will take that but the first steps, the Americans said you must go here to the Judenrot. It was in \_\_\_\_\_. They made a special office. We went there. We said we have written and we signed and we have received the displaced card. I have also here the original displaced card.

And from there, the Americans sent me immediately to the hospital because they had seen my leg. When I was fit, I wanted to go to Poland but I received the bad news from Poland that there are Russians. To Vienna I couldn't go also Russian and without working to be, then I started to work. First I received in Munich as kitchen help. It was very good. Then as a waiter I worked also in Dachau. In Dachau there was the war crimes for officers. It was a very nice job.

Then I worked there until the end of my stay. When I wanted to go to Poland the American said "Stay better here." And I received very nice recommendation. I have it in English here. He wrote, "Any recommendation will be \_\_\_\_\_. He worked and he's going at his own request."

Q. The first time when you met this British soldiers and afterwards, did any of them ask you why you exactly were in prison?

A. No.

Q. Did you tell anyone?

A. The Americans, no.

Q. Why not?

A. You see, first of all, as I told you, this is -- I didn't know this word. I said what for because I loved a German soldier. Stupid reason. Nobody could believe me. Now, if I was to answer, "I was a homosexual." But at this time I was sometimes I thought in my head, what for? I didn't kill anyone. I was in very good friendship with some of the soldiers, this is the reason I have to go to prison? When they asked me -- they didn't ask me. I told all of them I was in prison. There was nothing given to this question. This was nothing. A displaced person. They found me my country is Poland and I am in Germany. The war is to end and I am in Germany.

Q. Do you know what happened to Willie?

A. This is so complicated. Me, together with Lutz VanDyke, we tried to research everywhere. In Poland, in Germany, in Austria, and with no news, nothing. But you see, I have also this document. I received, it's stupid. The same name and everything is okay, even the age should be maybe the same, Willie Goetz. Only the question is he was born not in Austria, in Germany. It was written in German and what's more it is written that he is dead at the beginning

-- I was arrested in '42, and he's dead in '43. During the war -- I'm not sure. I have this document. Thanks to VanDyke. I have to state he helped me a lot. Through him I received even the document that I was in the prison from this and this time. When I went to no security, for insurance, for this time for the three years, -- longer because they give a better date, but for three years they came to the tailor and I have just a little more, but first when I went for this document. It should be translated, but this translator who writes for this translation, and for me they said, "You received this from Germany? This exception, they never send this." Yes, through a very good friend, I said.

Many things, he has done for me a lot. I am with him in very good friendship. He visited me. I'm staying always in contact. You must know I was very ill. One month ago I wanted to cancel my trip to America and he called me always. He wanted to send me money because I had kidney stones. Our health service is very bad. They sent me to the hospital and I knew in the hospital very bad service. They should cut me immediately and I didn't want, so I have a little money for this addition and from this money I make everything private. The special laser and it was private. I paid a lot of money for it because I suffered for four weeks. Then I thought I could do this. Even before I came here, first from the foundation, one of the gentlemen came to me. He wanted to make the picture. He made this frame of my mother. He made some documents for the documentary. He brought me from \_\_\_\_\_ one letter from young boy. I never seen him, a very nice written letter. He wrote me, "Dear Mr. Stefan, I'm astonished that --" I regret that I didn't bring this letter here --"I'm astonished that you never hated us. You have suffered so much. I read your book. I found your story very good but very touching. I want to help you if you need help then please ..."

Q. Did you have difficulty later on from the years you were in prison physically?

A. Of course, many. Liver and heart. With liver always. I'm taking medicine every day. But thanks in Hamberg he sent me always. This medicine I couldn't buy and not to pay because in Poland it would be too low, it would be not enough. Like he had private. You know I paid for this the last time I was ill about ten million lotas. It is in dollars about \$1,000 I had to pay everything private. He called me always, take private. Do this. If you need more I'll send you. The last time he sent me a very nice letter and said you are going here and I am to Moscow because he works in the Ann Frank Foundation. He knows me well. He know how I suffered. We worked together on this book so that we are like brothers. He knows my sorrows also and we plan in the springtime I would like to make a report of my visit here in the United States of America.

### **End of Tape 3**



## Tape 4

Q. How did you feel about what happened?

A. Sometimes I'm wondering that I'm still alive. That I succeed and sometimes I'm wondering what kind of reason that the people that do are ever able to torture the young people like me. I am catholic, I forgive but forget I cannot. I cannot. Sometimes there are very heavy scars even now. On Sunday I was invited to American friends. They never spoke. I have to tell them and in some places my voice was broke because it is everything fresh. Even during the writing of this book and when I read this book I cried because I have everything \_\_\_\_\_ especially twice. When I see my mother always standing watching the prison. She didn't see me but she came. She wanted to see me. I saw her, but she couldn't. Then the judge, it was terrible.

But, with my soul I'm correct that I return back. I could be here. Maybe I could have here very good possibility for everything and maybe I would even be millionaire but I spend my time with my parents and especially with my mother. She suffered so much, and the only thing even the education from the child she learned me how I have to be good and honest to other people. If somebody did wrong I think then she said don't you think and always my teacher when I was going to the school after the war, I have to finish my examination once it was written what I could do if I could. And I was written against all enemies. I'll never forget this teacher she wrote, "The word is very good, but don't forget enemy is destruction." And I know this is for -- it is very good that the young German people they cannot take the responsibilities for the old, for the Nazis but they are so good and I'm so touched when I receive so many letters and the

critique was so good. In all German languages, the reception of this book was fantastic. I'm sure it will be the same here.

As you know, yesterday, when we had this small journal interview, many ladies, they came to me. They gave me business cards. They want to stay in contact. They want also to print in the gay news, they want to show the world that the war and the stupid rules of the war in Nazi time must be over, never again. Never.

Q. When you were in Poland you didn't talk about your experiences?

A. I couldn't. During this I couldn't, I had to lie. I said always I was in the prison and you know the reason I give \_\_\_\_\_. Because if I did, I couldn't find job. It was for gays, it was very bad time. I suppose they knew something, there is something wrong because even I finish my studies but I couldn't receive very good position. First of all, I was always single. This is no good. Second, I was so long time in \_\_\_\_\_ until 1947. Usually everybody returned and me not. I know that sometimes even in some works where I was working especially they collaborate with the communists by drinking vodka they said you are so clever and you are so good, but you have something. You cannot advance. I knew the reason was maybe this, that I was a gay, a homosexual. That was the reason.

Q. Did you meet anyone later --?

A. Yes, I met in Torran. I was also in Koronovo but that even the last time I was in Torran with some of them was working in the war house and my brother went to him. He gave us a very bad time because he had some better quality goods or like that. I have seen him. I have met three. One was the doctor, he was living in Warsaw but he's now dead. About three, I met, gay, from Koronovo.

Q. Did they say the same thing about what it's like to be gay men?

A. There were more, but after the war I met them in Torran and one in \_\_\_\_\_.

Q. So there were a lot of gay men in prison in Koronovo?

A. Not so many, but there -- especially from Torran. As somebody told me there were about 80 to 100 people arrested for homosexuality in Torran. I didn't know that in small place so many but he told me so.

Q. Who told you?

A. The doctor. He knew, I know his name but it's not necessary. I know his first name because he was also in Warsaw and I met him very often and he told me. He had the possibility to see the documents because he was working there as a doctor together with the German block meister but he finished before the war. He was educated as a doctor. He could work there.

Q. Did you ever talk to the family about the years?

A. Never, and they gave me never chance to speak about it and to feel it. I'm sure they knew, my brother, but only you see one sister she said to me, \_\_\_\_\_ he's probably like you because he's married and he has no children and I'm sure that he's also that. I'm sure maybe he was also gay but it was little discovered because my sister said everything he had he wrote in the last will to one young boy, that was in village and his wife once told me also when I met her in Torran that she could receive a divorcement when she go to the church because she doesn't sleep together with people like this. So maybe it was the same in family. I think so.

Q. Did you talk with your parents or brother about what you went through in the prison?

A. No, no, we like it this subject -- even when we went to other families, oh you spent some time in prison what was the reason and I said, don't talk about it, this was a very bad time, don't mention it.

Q. Did you tell your mother about the conditions in the prison?

A. Oh no, I couldn't to make her -- no, no, never. I tried to do my best. Even when I was a student and came to my mother she went to bake and brought me some bread. She showed me that she loved me. This subject was omitted.

(Looking at pictures) That's me. I think I was ten years old and it was in Torran. This is the main street opposite of the municipal house. This is the \_\_\_\_\_ Monument.

That was my last holiday in Torran near \_\_\_\_\_. I was with Polish friends and I bake a cod fish which I succeed without a card, free of ration. I was here about sixteen years old. It was my last holiday.

It's me when I was working in theater as a gypsy in operetta. That was before when I was sitting and this made a picture. It was not on the stage it was in the \_\_\_\_\_.

This is very important documents. This is my displaced card which I received from American in Munich. The both sides, the first one and the other side it's very important. It has everything written that I am a displaced person.

It is written in English so that everybody knows that this is a displaced person's card and it's use.

That's me. I was here about 23, 22, no 21, maybe 21 or 22 when I was working for American as a waiter in Dachau. There is description "Kitchen number so and so." It was in Dachau as a waiter.

That was in Munich when I was working as kitchen help together with a Polish guard. They are working as a guard for American soldiers. He was Polish but in American uniform.

This is in Munich. I was here probably 21. Behind me is this house where I was living there. You see how the house it's windows were without glasses. So looked Munich after the war.

This is the documents when I was working for the American military as kitchen help as a waiter.

This is also one document more during my work by American in Munich.

This is my certificate of my working as a waiter in Munich or Dachau as a waiter for American soldiers. And there is a translation into German the same. It was my last job.

This is very important documents. It is the part of my documents in all the prison. I received these documents after researching five or more years and there is everything written. Only something is very, very stupid because it is mentioned "Nation unknown." How it is possible to write "Nation unknown." I was arrested as a Pole. I was beaten as a Pole and they mention unknown. It is a stupid part of the document but I couldn't correct it because I was glad to receive this very important document. This is the proof that I was in the prison so long time. It is there written. Everybody can see here that I was punished for five years of prison and that was so long that I have to be in the prison until December 1947. It means that longer than the war, but thank God I escaped and I was free earlier.

### **Conclusion of Interview**