

Interview with Tolé Johannes Madna
April 18, 2002

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: This is the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Tolé Johannes Hendricus Madna**, also known as **Rob Madna**. It is being conducted by **Gail Schwartz** on April 18th, 2002 in **Washington, D.C.**. This is tape number one, side **A**. What was the name that you were born with?

Answer: My born name was **Tolé Johannes Hendricus Madna**.

Q: And where were you born and when were you born?

A: I was born in **The Hague**, eighth of June, 1931.

Q: Li -- let's talk a little bit about your family, your family background, who your parents were, where they came from.

A: Well, my father came from **Indonesia**, he was born on **Maos**, on the -- the isle of **Java**. And he came already here in the first World War, 1916. And my mother was Dutch, she was born in 1907. My father was born in 1896. And he st-started to work here in a restaurant, and he married my mother in 1926.

Q: And what were their names?

A: My mother's name was **Wilhelmina** -- no, no, th-th -- **Johanna Ariana**, and my father, his name was only **Tolé**.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

Q: And so then they met and then their children, taw -- t-tell me about your s -- your siblings and yourself.

A: My eldest sister is **Vinny**. She was born in 1927. Then came **Davy**, she was born in 1929, and then i -- I came in '31.

Q: Tell me a little bit about th-the -- the -- the background, what -- what -- would you call yourself a middle class family? How much education did your father have, and so on.

A: Well, you could say middle class. My father was, I told you already in the -- working in a restaurant and -- but he had no -- not much education. He started to study the Dutch language and arithmetic here in **Holland**, in **The Hague**, whe --

Q: Why did he cut -- why did he leave **Indonesia**?

A: Well, he was adopted and his foster parents, you call his foster parents hi -- brought him here in **Holland**. And I was told that my foster grandmother owned a restaurant, but she couldn't quite get along with the climate, so she went back and sold the restaurant, but he stayed to work in the restaurant.

Q: Were your parents very religious?

A: Well, my mother was [**indecipherable**] Dutch affirmed, and that's Protestant, a kind of Protestant church, and my father had no religion at the time.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. And as you were gr-growing up, did you have any kind of religious background?

A: No, not at all. We -- first -- when we -- when I -- I was with my mother -- my parents divorced in -- in 1936.

Q: So you were five years old at the time. And did you go to live with your mother or stay with your father?

A: I st -- I stayed with my father and my two sisters stayed with my mother, and -- I forgot.

Q: Okay, and then w-we were talking about did you have any religious training when you were a child.

A: No, we'd -- at my mother's -- we prayed before dinner, but one day we -- we stopped doing that. We didn't know what to say.

Q: Though your parents had s -- a divorce, would you say that you had a close relationship to both parents?

A: Well, closer to my father than to my mother because there was **Mima Saina**, the nanny, and I considered her as my mother.

Q: Tell me a little bit about **Mima Saina** and her background and how she came.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: Well, I think she came shortly before I was born, from **Indonesia**, and started to work for my parents, and -- as a nanny for my two sisters and me and -- but we know very little about her. We didn't know her age --

Q: Was she a young woman though, when she came?

A: She was a young woman, yeah, yeah. And she couldn't speak the Dutch language, so we -- as a boy we -- I t-talked Malayan language with her, but I forgot all about it -- well, not everything, but most of it.

Q: So, as you say, growing up in your home you spoke two languages?

A: Yes, my father talked Dutch to us, though his Dutch was not the best Dutch that exists.

Q: And where did you first go to school?

A: In **The Hague**. I was on the -- you call it elementary school, I think? And that's a seven grade school, and after that I went to high school on -- on a level that is the same as a kind of **gymnasium**, and I finished that.

Q: We'll get to the later years in a moment, I'm -- wanted to talk about the earlier years. What kind of neighborhood did you live in?

A: Well, we -- we lived in the nice neighborhood, with my father first, I was born in the -- in the -- almost the center of the city and then we moved to some, you call it suburbs, suburbs. But then we went back in 1937, I think, to the center of the city,

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

and that was close to the street where my mother lived. But she used to live also in the suburbs, first.

Q: Mm-hm. And what kind of a neighborhood was it, was it pri-primarily Indonesian or Dutch?

A: No, it was a Dutch neighborhood. There were not too many In-Indonesian families in -- in -- in those days. Only the people that worked in the restaurants. There were the -- well, you have to divide the Indonesian population in two, the real Indonesian people and the half Indonesian people that has also Dutch blood. And that was another kind of class. And we were, in fact, real Indonesian. My father was real Indonesian so the-there was a difference. We didn't have the Dutch nationality. They called it **[indecipherable]** I don't know the word **[indecipherable]** subject, or s -- s -- I don't know the English words.

Q: Okay. And your mother?

A: My mother was completely Dutch, hundred percent.

Q: So you were con -- you, the children, were considered mixed Dutch Indonesian.

A: Yeah, but we are not completely Indonesian and -- nor completely Dutch.

Q: Right. It's half and half.

A: Yeah.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

Q: Yeah. And is that considered in society above a hundred -- i-in that society at the time, in the 1930's, was that half and half considered above a hundred percent Indonesian?

A: Yeah, that was considered ha -- above that, yeah.

Q: In your neighborhood when you were small, did you know any Jewish children?

A: Some. Th-They went to the same elementary school as I. It was not a p -- the religious school, it just a school for everybody. So there were a lot of Jewish children there, too.

Q: Did you play with them?

A: Yeah, of course. We -- we didn't make any difference b -- in those days. I -- they called me some names because I had the different color. It never really bothered me.

Q: Why didn't it bother you?

A: Well, I saw it as a joke. I -- I remember I -- just after the war I went with two friends on a cycle tour in **Holland**, and we came in the middle of **Holland** with all farmer's country. And well, I was -- when I went into the shops everybody was looking at me and I felt kind of proud. They saw I was different.

Q: What are your first memories of hearing of a man named **Hitler**? Do you -- I mean, you were born in 1931, he came into power in '33, obviously you were too young. Do you -- can you recall your very first memories of hearing about this man?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: Well, maybe when I was seven or eight, my parents used to talk about **Hitler** and -- but they thought, well, maybe it will go over. Just a short time, it -- then when the war came, we knew who he was, and just --

Q: You're talking about in September '39?

A: Well, then th-the war started with **England**, when the -- the Germans invaded **Poland**, but for us the -- the war started at the 10th of May, 1940.

Q: Yeah, that's --

A: Then jer --

Q: -- wh-when they invaded the **Netherlands**. For you, the war for you, right, right. Did you have any fear of this man before the -- before 1940, in the late 30's and in 1939, did you -- what was a child's sense of **Hitler** at that time?

A: Not much, th -- we didn't talk too much about it and I c -- I can't recall that we talked about **Hitler**. It started in 1940.

Q: Okay. Did you -- just to g -- to go back, and when you were in school you said you had Jewish friends; were there Jewish teachers at your school?

A: Not that I know of, no. There were no -- no, I don't think so.

Q: And what was the address of the house that you lived in?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: Well, I -- m -- the address the the -- **van Kins** -- with a **K**, **Kinsbergenstraat**, where s -- where -- where my father lived and my mother lived in the **Zoutmanstraat** with a z -- **Z**.

Q: Okay. All right, now it's May 1940 and you are ni -- just -- almost nine years old, close to nine. What is your very first memory of that time?

A: Well, it was a -- kind of exciting because there were airplanes in the air and there were parachute -- parachutists droppings in **The Hague**, German parachutists and we heard all gun sounds and -- so it was kind -- completely new for us and it was a beautiful day I can remember, was lot of sun. And I was standing with my father in the garden in the **van Kinsbergenstraat** and I remember my asking my father, are we going to win this war? And then my father said -- that was his famous last words always, let's hope so. And well, it was quite an -- it was a very short war, it so -- was only four days and we -- they -- we surrendered, or the du -- the Dutch surrendered because they threatened to bomb **Rotterdam** and after that they still bombed **Rotterdam**. So that was a short war, and -- but for a child it was -- it -- it's kind of a new experience and exciting. You didn't really -- really realize what the -- the consequences would be.

Q: Do you have any other recollection of those four d -- those first four days besides the -- the beginning of the days?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: Well, you didn't notice too much in **The Hague**. There were -- there was some heavy fighting in the country, but we didn't notice too much, there were -- there were no -- hardly bombings. Th-Th-The Dutch aircraft was wiped out in the -- the first day I think. So there was not much war in **The Hague**. Right after that was the occu -- occupation.

Q: And you continued to go to school. So let's talk about the beginning of the occupation. Now, you're living with your father and **Mima Saina** at the time, and the sisters are with your mother. Okay, so, you're -- you're -- continue to go to school?

A: Yeah, we went to the school, I was -- it was 1940 so I was about in the -- well, I went to school in 1937, so I was in the third grade, third grade and everything went on normal.

Q: What -- what about the summer of 1940, the -- the first summer?

A: Well, we didn't notice much, there was an distribution -- distribution of food and cigarettes and everything, but everything went well. There was no hunger in -- in those days and life went on.

Q: Did you sense any nervousness among your Jewish friends at that time?

A: They were still going to school, too, but I think til 1941, and then they were not allowed to school -- go to school any more. But there was one close friend, I forgot

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

his name, and his mother was a close friend of my mother, and he suddenly disappeared, and we never heard of them any more, they -- I don't know if they went into hiding, or -- my mother didn't hear from them, either.

Q: Did you, as a child, question why a friend suddenly disappears?

A: Well, we really had -- we heard soon about the -- that all kind of things against the -- the Jews were all n -- how do you call that, all --

Q: Restrictions?

A: Yeah, restrictions, and as a child you didn't think much of it. You didn't quite understand what was happening.

Q: What's it like for a nine year old boy to see it -- a soldier in a German uniform?

A: Well, the first soldiers -- the -- the German had that kind of way to gi -- to try to get along with the Dutch, because we were the same race, and they want to be friendly with us.

Q: Did you speak, or do you -- did you speak German at the time?

A: At the time, no, no, no. But they th -- didn't -- the -- the Dutch didn't like that. The -- the Dutch were never extreme. So they're always in the middle, and they love th-the -- the queen and -- though there were a lot of people angry because she left for **England**. Later we heard she was forced to go, she didn't want to go. And so there was a lot of national feeling all of a sudden and the Germans didn't like that at all,

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

and then they got more harsh against us, and -- but we didn't notice much concerning the food. Til 1944 everything went quite well.

Q: In April of 1942 the Jews had to start wearing a yellow star.

A: Yeah.

Q: What did that mean to you, when you would see that?

A: Well, it -- it was not th-the -- the -- what's the word? Strange. W-We found it very strange that people has to walk like that, you know? And that -- to become Jews, and I would -- I sho -- when I -- would have been a Jew, I would have refused to wear it.

Q: Why?

A: Well, it -- because it's -- it -- it's like a humiliation, you call it that? Like humiliation. And -- an-and it's -- a-and it's one of the worst things that can happen to a person, humiliation. But well, you -- you got used to it, but I -- I had to kind of feel sorry for them.

Q: You said, I think in 1941 I think the Jewish children had to leave the school?

A: Yeah.

Q: Where did they go, or what did you know about it and did you keep in contact with them?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: I don't know. [indecipherable]. I don't know what happened to them. The only family I know, the real family, were the **Munzers**. And well, they were killed in -- were very young, not going to school yet.

Q: Okay, let's talk about the **Munzers** because you -- you knew them before **Alfred** came to your house. How -- how did you know them and what was your contact with them?

A: My mother moved to the **Zoutmanstraat** in 1938 and the **Munzers** were already living opposite. **Alfred** told me today it was number hundred, and we lived on 79 in the other side. And my mother -- I'd -- I don't know how my mother met his mother, but I remember often go there, and to play some with the -- the little girls, and have dinner.

Q: This is before **Alfred** was born?

A: Before **Alfred** was born, yeah. So this was already 1938 - 19 - 1939 - 1940. And then things changed and I don't know what was really happening. My mother told me what was happening, that -- but that was 1942 when they went in-into hiding.

Q: Now did you -- do you remember if you went to their house after ji -- ji -- the Germans invaded the **Netherlands**?

A: Yeah, yeah. Course, yeah.

Q: You still went over to be with them?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: Yeah, we went to there, yeah, I can remember that. And my father, his father was -- **Alfred's** father was a tailor and my father bought a suit. So he knew ma -- Mr. **Munzer**, too. But I don't recall too many visits then. But it -- I think it went on and I -- I -- I really don't know any more.

Q: Why did you enjoy going over there?

A: Food. And I still have sugar in my salad. And I -- I first -- my mother always made th-the salad all -- very sour, and it's why -- why I still hate sour things. But she put sugar in it and I liked it very much. And she was very friendly, too. Very friendly lady.

Q: All right, now let's move onto the story about how **Alfred** came to your house.

A: Well, the -- my mother was asked to find a hiding place for **Alfred**, by his mother. And so she found a -- a place at my aunt's, my youngest aunt's, the younger sister of my mother. And he stayed there for a month.

Q: All right, we're talking about September '42, what are we -- what --

A: Something -- something like that, yeah, September '42. But he only stayed a month because one of the neighbors appeared to be a Dutch Nazi, so it was too dangerous. He -- he was crying a lot, he had bronchitis or something, and -- as a baby, and he -- they had to move him. And I talked to my cousin just before I went to **Washington**, the daughter of my aunt, and she told me that everybody was crying

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

when he had to leave, and was the first time she saw her father cry. And then my mother asked my father to have him for -- **Alfred** for a couple of weeks.

Q: How do you explain your mother and your aunt -- and of course la -- we'll talk about your father later -- willingly taking in a Jewish nine month old baby?

A: Well, my mother always liked to help people, always. She wanted to be a nurse all her life, but she came out of a big family and the father, my grandfather -- I -- I never met him -- forced them to work right away, to have jobs and shops and so she was not allowed to study for a nurse. But later on, when she was 65, she started to work as a nurse, though she th -- the -- for the money she didn't have to do it, but just to help people. And I remember my mother in those days, she was very agitated to -- really to help and warn us, don't tell an -- anybody about this, and she was really taking care to try to find places for Jewish people, but I don't re -- remember if she did this for other Jewish people, too, I don't know about that, but she did for **Alfred**. So he stayed for -- well, that was the intention, to -- for a couple of weeks in our house.

Q: So he comes to your -- he's brought to your house, do you remember the day that he came?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: Yes, I remember that, yeah. Just a tiny baby. And blonde, blue eyes. Didn't look Jewish at all. And I think, in the beginning, that was a luck, too. His Jewish features he got later. But the three weeks became three and a half years.

Q: So he comes, what was your first feelings when this new baby is brought into your home? You -- you had seen -- had you seen him before, because where -- had you visited them in the last nine months?

A: No, no, I didn't visit them in the last months, but we were excited. It's -- it was a kind of new thing happening, and well, what can you say when there's a baby coming? So it was kind of exciting.

Q: So it -- there was now your father, and **Mima Saina**, your two sisters, you and the baby, four children. And how big a house did you have?

A: Well, my sisters were staying with my mother, but from time to time I stayed with my mother and they stayed with my father. And sometimes the three of us were together and -- and my sisters loved it. Well, it's -- maybe females are more affected to babies than men. But yeah, they took care right away. And the house was not big.

Q: Where did the baby sleep?

A: The baby slept with **Mima Saina**.

Q: She had her own room?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: Yeah, she had the -- well, it was not really a -- it -- it was an extension of the house and there were several rooms connected to each other and she slept in one of the rooms and -- with -- with **Alfred**.

Q: And so she obviously took care of him when he was very young i-i-in the beginning and you continued to go to school while this -- whe -- af -- you were still at school.

A: Yes, I was still at school and everything went on normal til the end of 1944.

Q: And as the baby got bigger, what happened with the -- an-and was moving around, were there any restrictions?

A: Well, he had to stay inside, and he was looking through the hole where the -- the letters come in. And --

Q: Th-The mail -- you mean the mail slot in the door?

A: Yeah, yeah. And he looked through that, but he came in the garden, and he played in the house.

Q: He went in the garden during the day, when others could see?

A: Yeah, because we have pictures made in the garden, so he went to the garden, too. But my father told everybody who -- who was curious about the baby that he was a child of his former wife, so my mother. And -- but she had a new friend and

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

he didn't want to have the baby, so he -- my father took the baby. That was the excuse.

Q: And tell me how you as a young boy knew how to protect this child and not say anything when you were outside. How did your father present that to you?

A: Well, there were warnings and we understood that quite good. Th-The -- when my father and my mother told me that if the Germans would find out, that he would be arrested, my mother would be arrested and probably we too, and brought to camps, or th -- imprisoned, or maybe shot. So that was a warning enough, I think.

Q: Did you know what it meant at 11 years old to say you might be brought to camps? What does that mean to an 11 year old child?

A: Well, we didn't know about the camps then, but to be -- go in prison or to be shot, you realize that right away, that -- that -- it was not too difficult to realize that. And we kept our mouths shut, my sisters and me and all the people that knew about it, th -- a lot of the Indonesian community, th-the people that worked in the same restaurant as my father, they kind of knew about it. And -- but those people didn't say anything, just helps.

Q: Were you angry that your father put you under this stress of not saying anything?

A: No, no, because we felt th -- very soon quite strong for the baby. It was our -- our baby, and so we never had the -- the problem. The only thing maybe, it was for me a

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

little bit difficult, is that I came second in place. I was the first, I was **Mima Saina's** baby and now **Alfred** was in the number one, I f -- I felt at the time, but she took great care of me too.

Q: What did you call **Alfred**?

A: We called him **Bobby** and that is the name my father invented for him. And **Bobby** always thought it was the name of the dog, and as far I can remember, there was a dog named **Bobby**, too, and there was a name -- a dog named **Teddy**, but died already and -- but there was also a dog named **Bobby**, so --

Q: These were dogs that -- that you had?

A: Yeah.

Q: Not neighbors, but you?

A: Yeah. Just little dogs. Very friendly little dogs.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **Rob Madna**. This is tape number one, side **B**. As this baby, **Bobby**, as you na -- as you called him, got older a-and was moving around, you said he -- he -- some of the things he'd like to do would be to look through the mail slot in the door. What else did he do during the day as he got bigger and more physical?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: Oh, he was playing all kind of games and I -- I -- I think he was a happy child. Laughing and we played with him and everybody took care. He likes to sit on my sisters' laps and it was just a normal family life.

Q: And what language did he s -- learn to speak?

A: Dutch. Dutch language. With **Mima Saina** he spoke the Malayan language, and the sa -- I spoke with her Malayan. With my father we talked Dutch.

Q: So he grew up bilingual also, like you and your sisters?

A: Yeah. Correct.

Q: Mm-hm. As he got bigger, did you feel more close to him?

A: We always felt very close to him. We -- we all loved him very much and so it -- it was such a normal situation in the house to have him there, and we got used to him very fast and he was our little baby brother. It -- it was very easy, I think. I don't remember any problems at all.

Q: But you never spoke of him to your friends?

A: No, no. The headmaster of my school knew something about it, he was a very nice man, and my mother knew him very well, and he gave me always extra food for -- for **Bobby**. And [indecipherable]

Q: Were there any times when it -- it was dangerous, that you sensed a dangerous situation?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: Well, not in the beginning. In th -- I told you before, til 1944, everything went -- I only remember one day a -- a bomb fell in **The Hague** and that was just a minor accident, I think an -- an English plane want to get rid of the last bomb. And it dropped not far from our house in th-the -- in the neighborhood and I remember **Mima** saying that took -- everybody was up and awake and she took **Bobby** out of his bed and took him on his lap, swaying him and start praying. And -- but that was an incident. We didn't notice much from the war til '44.

Q: You didn't notice much of the war in your -- in **The Hague**, but were -- again, were you aware, or were you interested as a youngster of what was happening in other countries? Did you know what was happening?

A: Well, we didn't know about the Holocaust, but we had th-those legal papers that were sent by the resistance movements to people.

Q: Talk a little bit about th -- you had papers, did you say?

A: Yeah, we re-received letters and papers from the resistance movement. They were brought to the houses ille -- silently or secretly, and we read about the real situation in the front.

Q: Oh, these are newspapers, you mean?

A: Well, yeah, kind of newspapers, just small pages of paper that informed us about the situation at the fronts. And of course we had th-the -- the newspapers with the

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

ger -- the German news and the -- they had -- they wer-were winning all the time.

But I remember that in the war I already had a -- an -- especially after **D-Day**, I had a map of **Europe** and with a woolen thre-thread, is it called? And with pins I put on the front line and I knew all the names of the generals and -- and that was -- well, with the -- the illegal papers, I could see all -- they move there and they move there, and they move there, and --

Q: What was on the radio?

A: Well, al -- only the German news. It was, of course, forbidden to have a radio, so it was a kind of a dist -- distribution system with only two local --

Q: Stations?

A: -- stations. And -- but we -- we -- there were people that had the radio still, and were receiving messages from **London**. So we were well informed about the war.

Q: Did you ever see any Jews being taken away on the streets in **The Hague**?

A: Luckily not. But we heard about that. And then we knew, yeah, well the -- well, the Germans had -- well, they were just put to -- to work in **Germany**, so we didn't think much of it, that they would be killed, we didn't know about that.

Q: Was your father involved in -- in any other resistance activities besides doing the wonderful gesture of saving a Jewish child? Was he involved in any other activities?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: No. He just went on working. He was not a man that looked -- liked to take risks. He was a very peaceful man, and always s-said well, don't fight, and be quiet and so we were all surprised that he took this risk. But yeah, I think he -- he thought that it's a child that has to be helped, so we do it, not thinking further. He knew about the dangers, of course. But he -- I think he was very optimistic, like we all were optimistic that it would end right, you know?

Q: Did -- again, did you know -- you did not know of any other families that were sheltering children?

A: No, no, we didn't know about that.

Q: Did any of the Germans ever come to your house?

A: Only in the beginning of the war, there was a -- what you call a **razzia**, and a -- a German -- German soldiers were going from door to door to find men to work in -- in **Germany**. And I remember one day in beginning of 1945 that a German soldier was at the door, a very small German soldier. And he was from th-the air force, the ground personnel because the other Germans had to fight somewhere. And he asked for **mann**.

Q: Which means?

A: Men.

Q: Men.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: Are there men in the house. But he just asked for **mann**. And **Mima Saina** an- and I were at the door together and we looked at each other very puzzled and didn't understand, pretending not to understand and then he gave up and went away. And my neighbor, who was Indonesian too, was only -- we were the only Indonesians in the street, and he was picked up. But he came back the same evening, they didn't want us.

Q: Did your father provide for a hiding place for **Bobby** in case -- you said there weren't any problems, but in case there were problems, did he have a hiding place for him?

A: Not really. There was the cellar, but if you go in the cellar you could see him right away, it's a -- not, not really. Of course, h-he was put in the back room that if somebody would come in and found him, there were maybe some questions and well, then I think the problems would start.

Q: Well, that was going to be my next question. What about when friends or neighbors knocked on your door or came in, and you didn't know if they knew about the baby, what --

A: Well --

Q: -- how did -- how did your family handle that?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: -- well, th-th-th-th -- I told you about the excuse my father had, who the baby was, and that's wh -- the story that he told the other people. But some of them knew, especially the Indonesian co-community, and -- but there were visitors in the house, yes.

Q: And -- and the baby, or the young child was playing right in front of them?

A: Yeah. He was in there at -- when the people came in.

Q: And the general living conditions, wa -- how was the food supply?

A: Til September 1944, til the railroad strike -- then the Dutch started the railroad strike to -- to make it difficult for the Germans to bring all the tanks and all the weapons to certain parts, then it went bad. And we -- then the -- what we call the hunger winter -- the winter of the hunger started and lasted about -- well, started in October til May.

Q: This is '44 - '45?

A: Yeah. And it was a very severe winter, very cold, and I rem-remember there was a small wood in the -- in the neighborhood and when the war was over there was no wood any more, because all the people cut th-the trees in to -- to have heating and to -- able to cook something, or -- so th-the whole little wood forest went away.

Q: What kind of food did you have during that difficult time?

A: Very bad bread, very bad. And just -- I ca -- I remember I had four slices of bread

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

a day, and that was all. And that finally became two slices of bread a day, no butter.

There were some -- how do you call it? I don't know the words. We say

[**indecipherable**], that's when you replace something that it's not real, like milk wi -

-

Q: A sub-substitution?

A: Yes, the substitute.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And there was no sugar, there was no milk.

Q: Any meat?

A: No, no meat any more. In the beginning of 50 -- '45, no meat at all.

Q: Ve-Vegetables or fruit?

A: Hardly. But there were those what we call **haarkeukens**, that were kitchens for the people and you went there every day to get some food, just with a little butter --

Q: R-Ra -- did you have a ration cards? Did you have little coupons, little ration cards for food?

A: The whole war. But at the end of the war you had those cards, but you couldn't get anything.

Q: Mm.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: So it was -- and there was, o-of course, a black market. Am a -- I remember my mother in '45 went on the bicycle to -- from **The Hague** to **Haarlem**. **Haarlem** is the same name as **Harlem** and it's about 45 miles, to get some food. She knew some people, and I remember th -- she came back, but it was over eight, and you were not allowed to -- to be on the streets after eight, and so we were very worried. And then she came at the door with a German soldier. He had stopped her and then she told him I ha -- had some food for my children and he brought her home. So she was very lucky.

Q: Did your father have any contact with **Alfred's** family during this time, once the baby was given to you all? Did -- did Mr. and Mrs. **Munzer** have any contact with him or your family?

A: Well, th-the parents of **Alfred** went in -- into hiding too, first in the sike -- si -- si -- **seekeeatris** -- that -- **psychiatrx** house, but then they were caught and deported right away, so there was no --

Q: There was no --

A: -- more contact.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: I never saw her in the house before the end of the war, in our house.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

Q: Mm-hm. Well, let's -- let's talk about that now, the end of the war. How did you know it was the end of the war?

A: Well, we had to wait til the war really ends, and for us it was terrible to think that already in October the allied forces were only 60 miles from **The Hague**, but they didn't come. And we are expe -- ek -- expect them -- e-expecting them every day, you know, it -- but they couldn't cross the rivers without -- they had too many losses with soldiers when they should have crossed the rivers. It was heavy defended -- heavily defended by the Germans. So they decide to take the rest of **Holland** and just pass the -- th-the -- the places where were lived. So we were only liberated when the war was over, and I remember, I think it was the fourth or third of May? Fourth om -- of May, I think, and people were running through the streets, the war is over. The Germans have surrendered and everybody went on the street and nobody thought about the eight o'clock. And the Germans didn't d-do anything. I remember myself the sixth of May that we were in the city, and the first English soldier we saw was driving a -- a motorcycle and he even didn't have a gun, he had a pistol, I think. And on the other side the street, the Germans soldiers were on bicycles, heavily armed, because th-the allies said you have to take care of the situation til we come, but don't do anything. So it was very funny to see this English soldier, we were all around him, and see these German soldiers at the o-other side of street. And then it

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

was over, it was over. And nobody thought about hunger any more. The -- the 29th of April -- April, we had a wonderful bombing of **The Hague**, food bombing. And th-those big flying [**indecipherable**] dropped food on some spots of **The Hague**, so we were very -- we were very happy. And every time it is becoming end of April, I think of those days. It's impossible not to think of it.

Q: Did you know German by that time?

A: The only German family I knew was a family that fled from **Germany** in 93 -- '33. They were communists, but not well -- very well known by the Germans in **Holland**, so they started t-t-to make a living here in **Holland**, and they knew about it. It was very good friend of my father, and they helped, because they -- as the German inoccupi -- occupied the **Netherlands**, they had some extra things. So they helped with food and -- and he was a kind of guy who sold medicines and all kind of herbs. I -- I -- I know he cured me from a disease with all kind of herbs.

Q: Di-Did you know the German language by then, after being occupied by the Germans?

A: Just a little because th-that -- in 1944 I went to the high school, though in the first year of high school it was only one month, September and then we didn't go to school any more, til the end of the war. So and -- and German was one of the

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

language you had to do. Also the English language was still taught. English, French, German were the languages. So I learned some German.

Q: Whe-When -- during the occupation when you were on the street and you saw a German soldier, did you have to acknowledge him? Was there anything you -- that you were required to do, or could you just walk b -- right by him?

A: No, the -- my wife had the different situation, she was in the **Indonesia** with the Japanese and you had to bow. But th-that was not the -- here, no.

Q: So you could just walk right by?

A: You cus -- you could just walk right by, yeah. But they stole your bicycle. My father went out with my bicycle because his -- his bicycle was -- th-the Germans stopped him and they took your bicycle. And then he took my bicycle and he came home without the bicycle. So we had an ex -- the expression, the joke to -- we can hardly stop to say to a German, I want my bicycle back.

Q: You're still waiting for your bicycle.

A: Yes, I'm still waiting.

Q: So now it's liberation, and then what -- what happened after that?

A: Well, I remember **Bobby** going on the street for the first time with **Mima Saina** and wearing a light brown coat. I still see -- I can still picture. And with a Turkish **[indecipherable]** on his hat, and an orange sash around his waist. And he was

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

walking just really straight up, and **Mima** very proud. It was -- it -- it means something now.

Q: Was he excited or frightened to be in such a big open space after being confined in your house his whole life?

A: No, it just -- when he was with **Mima**, he was okay. So no, he -- he -- he an -- really enjoyed it, yeah. No, he was -- was nice.

Q: Did you really feel free at that time? Was it a different physical, emotional feeling once liberation occurred?

A: I think it's the biggest feel of freedom I ever had. Five years occupation is a lot, and -- especially in the last part was a very hard one, and you were afraid. There were a lot of bombings in **The Hague** afterwards, an-and -- and the march of 1945 was a happy bombing of the allied and they took the wrong spot. So a lot of citizens were killed. So the German propaganda tried to -- to make a thing out of it, but well, we accepted, and -- I saw the bombing from the balcony of my mother's house. It was a -- but we got used to it, because there were air raids every day. Started at eight o'clock in the morning, til five in the afternoon. But you get used to it, those things.

Q: Did you feel like a very old 14 year old -- I think you were something like 14 at the time. Did you f-feel like an older person?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: No. I was still a young boy, and my father said to me, what will happen to you, you will always be a **jungecha**. A **jungecha** means always be a young boy. And I felt young and not really older. I was very small. I started to grow a little bit more between my 14th and my 18th. And --

Q: Mm-hm. I -- I -- I meant more emotionally. I mean, you had lived through such difficult, difficult times that with that mat -- did that mature you, seeing what you saw and being in danger?

A: Of course, yo-you learn, but I didn't feel too much different, only freed, and we were very happy about that. And -- and the excitement t-to -- well, there was a very strong national feeling at the time, and sometimes not quite correct. What the allied did was okay and what the Germans did was always bad. Later on, when you learn about the situations that's happened in the war, and all -- all the other things, then you change your opinion sometimes about making war. Later on, I -- I thought it's ridiculous to fight such a war. Of course, you had to because you are fighting some crazy people. But when I thought about the generals that would send the soldiers to a coast, knowing that they will die, especially first groups, and then I always ask myself, how ca -- how can you do that? Break up all kind of families just because there is a difference in opinion in the world, you know, it -- it still is and I think it always will be.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

Q: So now it's the end of the war and how much longer did **Bobby** stay with you?

A: Excuse me. As I -- I recall, it -- it was in 1946 that his -- in the beginning of 1946, I think, that his mother and **Bobby** moved to another p --

Q: Wh-Wh-When did she come back, though, to the house?

A: It was very soon after the war was over, because she met **Mima** and -- and she -- yeah, she was there already, and --

Q: De-Describe what her first appearance at your house was like.

A: Well, it -- it -- of course, I knew her and **Mima** knew her and everybody knew her, only **Bobby** just didn't know her. And so it was kind of funny and well, she hugged the child of course, but he didn't want to have -- have anything to do with her. He wa -- didn't want to sit on her lap and I think that it will be hard for a mother that -- then, I realize later, much later when I was older, that it was hard for my mother that I preferred **Mima** to her, you know, that -- that was very hard, I think. But he went -- went on very well, and I think they had a very good relationship.

Q: So did -- did Mrs. **Munzer** move into your house and stay there?

A: Yeah, she stayed there and til the -- the -- I think the beginning of 1946 she had the -- she slept in the middle room with **Bobby** and we slept at the back. And it was very nice to have her in the house. She was a very friendly woman, and a very wise woman, too.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

Q: And then where -- and then she decided to leave and -- after a few months, and where did she go?

A: She went to a -- a block not too far from us in the **Archimedes** flat, **Archimedes** the -- the --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- the [**indecipherable**] man, I think. And I didn't go too often to there. I don't know what -- what's happening, but it was like we lived our own life from that time.

Q: Were you sorry to see **Bobby** leave your house and move in with his mother?

A: Yeah. I -- I did -- I remember that we -- we all felt sorry, but we u-understood that it has to be and -- and well, I started -- I was almost 15 and -- and no -- 15 in 1946, yeah, and I became a real trouble child then. Especially because **Mima** died in -- in -- just a few months after the war ended. She had the brain --

Q: Hemorrhage?

A: Yeah. And well, my world collapsed. I lost my mother, and -- and **Bobby** didn't ro -- realize it fully, and his mother was back so it was co -- a kind of compensation for him. He did -- he didn't know what death was, and -- but he honored her very much, but he doesn't remember her quite well. So i -- we were in -- yesterday we were talking about all -- many things and found new things, oh yes, that was that, and yeah.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

Q: So **Bobby** and his mother stayed in your house after **Mima** died?

A: Yeah, til the beginning of 1946. My father remar-remarried in 1946, and also his new wife and the children that came had much contact with **Bobby** and considered him as a brother, too.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. And then I understand they moved to **Belgium** in the 19 fi -- sometime after that.

A: First his mother i -- had a kind of store, selling all kind of things that -- like little things, you know, like rings and th -- in **The Hague**, too, and I visit her there, was there. And he came to my father with the bus. My father had moved to a other part of **The Hague**. And I remember him -- bringing him -- taking him to the bus. And I remember him, said I -- I want to give you some money. And I was young myself, in my 20's, 21, I think. And so I gave him a **gilder**, which was a lot money then. It's about a half a dollar or something. And he said well, it's not enough. So I gave him another **gilder** and another **gilder**. And **Bobby** s-said thank you, thank you. And I always gave him too much s-so that I hardly could the train and go -- go to **Rotterdam**.

Q: Just a g -- generally tell me then, w-wha -- about your father that -- in the next few years and what happened to you.

A: In the -- after the war, you mean? Well, I met my wife already when I was 19.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

Q: So you went back to school after the war?

A: Yeah, I went back to school and was not very successful because I was in music already and I liked to be a musician and not go to school. But my mother took care that I finished the school. And I'm very thankful, because later on I studied mathematics and it wouldn't be possible without that school. So in the meantime, and -- I was in music, too, and developed. So I became a professional in '52, after I finished my school, and did that for about nine years, eight years. But I -- I didn't like the way of living, you had to go abroad. And I -- we married in -- in '55, and we were very young, I was 24, and **Astrid**, my wife was 22. And there was son already in the year after. And a lot of -- and a long time when we played tennis tournaments they thought we were brothers. And I always said to him that, you know why? You have a old face, I think.

End of Tape One, Side B

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum volunteer collection interview with **Rob Madna**. This is tape number two, side **A**. And you were talking about after the war and your marriage. An-nd you had been a musician and w-were you playing or composing? What were you doing as a musician in the beginning?

A: I was playing.

Q: What -- what instruments?

A: Piano. Playing the piano and I was self taught and started to have contracts already and went to **Germany**, to **Switzerland** and **Denmark**. In 1954, four month in **Sweden**. So I had a l -- lot to do. But I didn't l-like the way of living and also, well, I was a fall blu -- full blood jazz musician and you have to play commercial mu-music, and entertaining the people, I didn't like it. So I decided I'll go on with my musical career, but I do something on the side. And then when I s -- that's -- and then I decided just st-st-start with mathematic study, because I always wanted to be a teacher in the first place. And in fi -- '59 I -- 1960 I started to work in the school, h-high school, as a teacher. And I did that for 25 years.

Q: A h -- a high school mathematics teacher?

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

A: Yes. And for 25 years, and the last four years of those 25 years I was assistant director of the sc -- school. We had one -- we call it a **hector** and we had five bi -- because it was a big school of 1700 people -- pupils, and we had five assistant **hectors**. We call them **conn hector**. And I didn't apply for the job, they ask me for the job. I said well -- I was like my father, di-didn't like to take risks, you know, but I learned a lot in those years. But during all the years, I developed my music and did a lot of television, radio shows and made some records, and --

Q: This is playing the piano?

A: Playing the piano, yeah. And I started to write music because a friend of mine who was already in **Holland** a famous writer said, you should write. I said, I don't know how. And he said, I know, but use your fantasy. And so I started to write and learning from other people and t-talking about music and learning and listening to music. And I learned very much of all the records we got from the **States**. **Astrid** always liked **Frank Sinatra** much, so we had a lot of **Sinatra** music with **Nelson Riddle** arrangements. And I learned a lot by how f -- the **[indecipherable]** leadings were going. And so I started to write, and wrote for th-th-th-th -- a kind of jazz symphony orchestra too, with violins. I never wrote for violin before, but the same friend said, use your imagination. So I started to do that, til '85 when I was offered a full time job at the **Hilversum** Conservatory, the jazz school, jazz department. And I

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

hesitated because I thought, well, is it wise to make your hobby your profession? But I did, and I'm still working in school. It's now the **Amsterdam** Conservatory, after the [indecipherable]. And well, I'm still playing. I'm playing this year in July in the big festival in **The Hague**, the **North Sea** Festival where a lot of American musicians come. So they invited me this year, too. And then I'm 71 years old, so I can't complain.

Q: And you have two children?

A: I have two children, a son of 46 and a daughter of 43. I'm not a grandparent yet.

Q: And their names?

A: My son's name is **Arthur** and my daughter's name is **Helen**.

Q: Tell me about your father after the war.

A: Well, my father continued wor-working. He was a man who likes to work. The -- the only time he had off was Wednesday afternoon and then the family gathered. My sisters came to my father's house and we always had a kind of party, eating and have all kind of cakes and pastries and it was always a nice day. But then it -- it changed when he had a second marriage in 1946 and the children grew up, th -- my half brother and two brothers and the half sister. And -- but I was in the house, and lucky for them because I was th-the guy who took the discipline things. She couldn't manage the children and my father was always working, so i-if there was a problem,

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

I was th-the big brother, I was fi -- 15 years older than my youngest brother, I took care. And I still have contact with them.

Q: Did you all talk about the war a lot after it was over?

A: With my father, yeah. And well, my brothers and my -- my sisters, we talked a lot. We always have a -- a lot of memories when we meet and they bought books about **The Hague**, who it was -- how **The Hague** was in the 30's and beginning of 40's and then all kind of things. We t -- we talk about that, yeah. So there's always - the war is a very important part of our life. Was -- we talk often about it, and we talk a lot about **Bobby**, too, and --

Q: What -- what relation did you have with him at -- then? He moved away with his mother to **Belgium**?

A: Yeah, and then I didn't see him for a long time. He had more contact then with the **Madna** -- the new **Madna** fa-family. And then he went to the **States**, I heard about that, and it wasn't til '73, I think, that we came in contact again. He was studying, he had to go in the army, he was in the air force, and -- and we heard about that. My father told -- but I didn't have direct contact with him.

Q: So he stayed in letter contact with your father?

A: Yeah, yeah. He informed my father about everything. And then we start to meet again, he came over to **Europe** and we were very, very excited an-and there were --

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

there are many pictures of those days and -- and -- and after that there was much more contact. And now we have really m-much contact the last -- last few years. Calling, and --

Q: Yeah. Just -- can you tell me a little bit about your wife's background, just generally who she is and -- and how she came to **Holland**.

A: Well, the -- she came in **Holland** in 1950, she was born in **Indonesia**. And they were -- the family was isolated th -- in the street. They had -- didn't have to go to the camp, but they couldn't go anywhere. So the -- the house was their prison. And she - she brought the [indecipherable] and the Japanese [indecipherable]. She's from 1933. So she -- she -- she lived the war too, you know, she knows about the war. And then after that there was the period that th-the Indonesians took over and this was the worst period, even worse than the Japanese period. So they came to -- they came to **Holland**. Those are all German family. Her name is **Mueller** and we have all kind of German names in the family, like **Hess** and **Funk** and **Uchman** and **Luther**. And well, I me -- I met her, I think she was three months here in **Holland** when I met her in a jazz club. She didn't want to go but her cousin said, let's go. And there -- there's where we met. And we stayed together from that day.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

Q: You had said that when you first became a musician you had traveled to **Germany**. What was that like for you and what are your thoughts about **Germany** today?

A: I remember one incident, I was working in **Germany** for the first time in 1953, in **Cologne**. And I remember I ate in the intermission. And we had a -- a -- the tough job. We started nine o'clock in the evening, until five o'clock in the morning, for 23 marks. That was -- wasn't bad money in those days. And I remember that I woked up to see the night, because it was summer. I went in with daylight and come out with daylight. So I went up to see the night. But I remember while eating in the intermission, there were two waiters talking about **Hitler**. And that -- hm, I -- I think he will come back. And I got so angry, and then I said, and then we will definitely kill him. And they become so afraid, because in those days, if I would have told the English authorities about them, they would get in trouble. So they quieted down and be-be-became like slaves, they acted like slaves, you know. Didn't dare to say anything whe-when I was in the neighborhood, but I remember that made me very angry to hear that. And **Cologne** was bombed heavily, it was ruins. I worked in **Düsseldorf**, too. But I kind of like **Germany**. It's a beautiful country. We always make the joke, it's a pity there are so many Germans here. But you know, I -- I'm -- I've been teaching germ -- Germans since 1985 at the conservatory and a lot of them

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

became my good friends. And I know you can't blame them. But still I -- I told about my attitude in the war, and I told them about the two sisters, **Eva** and **Leah**, of **Alfred** and told them about **Alfred** and they always feel very uncomfortable th -- when you talk about it. I said, I don't blame you, I blame that system. But --

Q: **Al-Alfred** lost his two sisters.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. So you're comfortable when you're visiting **Germany**?

A: I feel comfortable, yeah, because it's -- it -- it's a beautiful country. Only when they raise the voice I'm getting angry. I even told a German student of mine who was raising his voice -- not against me but to somebody else, and said, I hate it when people raise their voice, and especially when they're German. And I told him why. Because if a German raises his voice, I see right away a uniform around his body, wa -- an **SS**. I said, I hate that. He said, oh, so sorry.

Q: Do you think you are a different person today because what -- of what you lived through as a young -- as a -- as a child, what you went through, the war, the sheltering of a child. Do you think that has made you a different person than if you hadn't experienced those times?

A: Oh, I'm sure. One thing is, for instance, I hate to spoil food and to take too much on the plate so that there's something left. I hate that, because we were so hungry we

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

even ate tulip bul-bulbs in -- in the -- in the last part of the war, because there was no other food. And they didn't taste bad. Taste il -- they're kind of sweet, but I say s -- tell it to one of the people I met here, yeah, they were talking about growing tulips. I said, oh yeah, you grow the tulips. We ate them. But, of course the -- I told you before that in -- especially in these times, the end of April, beginning of May, the war comes back to you and the ar -- yeah, the memories. I think the war was -- yeah, a mi -- a major experience in my life. And I never want to -- to have that again in my life. If -- I was in the army myself and it was -- I had to go again in the army in '62 just for a -- a few weeks, and then the ticu -- **Cuba** crisis came, so we were very [indecipherable] but luckily it didn't -- it worked out well. But I think the experience -- you have to tell younger people about it because I always say, when you never had a toothache, you don't know -- you can't talk about a toothache. And if you never experience war or hunger, you can't just -- can't talk about it. But you can tell them the story that way that they kind of feel it, you know? Because there were a lot of young people said, can't you forget that? I remember in -- though, a nice German musician was in the band I was playing in and he ca -- explained this -- the way to **Germany**, we had a gig in **Germany**, you know, in the -- understand the word gig? Because it's an kind of music -- musician expression. And he said, oh it's very close. I said, I know it was close, they were pretty soon here, you know. And

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

then he said, can't you forget about it? I said, not my generation. You have to wait.
So.

Q: Are you more religious, less religious, not religious, whatever, because of what you went through?

A: I'm not religious. I don't believe in religious of people. There are so many rules. I can't live by the rules. I can't live by the rules. Th-The only thing I think my religion is don't hurt other people. Don't hurt them, and try to -- when you are getting along with people, you must see them, you must listen to them. I met a lot of people here and they are very friendly, but they don't listen to you. And I met, luckily a lot of people that listen. I was impressed by th-the Jewish community here. I saw the whole **Bar Mitzvah**, th-the -- the ceremony there and I was impressed by the belief of people have and -- but I don't have that, I di -- can't believe in things. Maybe I'm too much a mathematician. I-I da -- I need proof or something, but I believe in the -- I can understand why people want to go in religion if religion helps them to -- to make th -- to let them have good life and help them in other kind of things, I won't oppose to that. It's good, you know? But I think I don't need it. I have a strong belief in -- in myself and to -- to look in the mirror constantly and make the necessary **changements** in the -- I have scars, I call them mental scars, of all the things I did to people I didn't want to do. And they sometimes pop up, you

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

know? All of a sudden, you sit in the car and [**indecipherable**] sorry, then they pop up. And I think that's enough. And -- but I can live with that, but th -- I learned from that to -- to have friends. I'm not a real national feeling person. I think **Holland** is a great country and I'm very happy that I was born there. We have a good security, a good living there. But I hate to watch soccer and get excited, you know, for the national team. National feelings makes me -- I -- gets an awkward feeling of we are people -- people, and I have my friends everywhere. Any kind of religion I don't mind. And I don't mind if they're homosexual, or -- if they're people and they are good people, they are my friends. And that's the way I want to live, and maybe that's my religion.

Q: I know that you, when you are at the Holocaust Museum, and we saw that wall where people had saved, at the end of the exhibit where they list the rescuers, we talked about there were so many people from the **Netherlands** listed, column after column after column for such a small country. How do you explain that?

A: I don't know. I don't know. I didn't know that there were so many Dutch people involved. I thought there was a complaint that we didn't do too much for the Jews. Moby -- maybe the people as a whole, but there was maybe the silent group that nobody talked a -- my father didn't like to talk about it, that he was a kind of hero, you know, and he always, ah, it's nothing. You know? He didn't want to have a

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

medal or something, you know, that's -- you th -- he didn't think it important. And -- but there are probably more people like that, and well, the list shows it, Yeah.

Q: Mm. Mm-hm. Were you affected by the visit to the museum?

A: Well, a lot of things I saw already. I saw a lot of movies on the Discovery channel about **Germany** and they still are going on and also the Holocaust or the -- the **Hitler** period, and I see them all and so I knew a lot about it already. And well, it always -- it -- it's, when you look at it -- I really get angry if they deny it, that there was a -- a Holocaust in th -- in there. I think they are the greatest idiots to deny it. And -- but it doesn't look real when you see all those corpses of those skinny people, you know, lying there. It -- it -- it -- it's not real, it's like that's a drawing, you know, you don't believe it. And the American soldiers when they came to the camps, they didn't believe it either. But this -- the -- wh-wh-what kind of brain you - - do you have to do this, you know? Maybe a lot of Germans, well they didn't like to do it either, but they had such a fear of not -- to become in -- the same prisoner, you know? Maybe. But I think in that case you have to make a decision. I would refuse. I think I would refuse to do it. And maybe you get killed, but I th -- I think I wouldn't be able to live with the thought I didn't do anything, that this -- if you see this and then you are th -- fellow soldiers kill people and just shoot them, you know, and I can't imagine that people can do that. I wouldn't do it.

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

Q: You sound like you've inherited something from your father. How d -- just again, how do you explain his willingness to put himself at risk and his children at risk, to save another person's life?

A: Well, it -- I told you before, it surprised me that he did it. And th-though it was supposed to be only three weeks and **Mima Saina** didn't want him to go, **Alfred**, so he agreed. He is th -- he is the boss of the family, but he agreed, you know, so he must have felt a lot for the child, too. And well, decided to do it. I -- I can't explain it, myself. But he was a peaceful man. I don't think -- he couldn't stand that **Bobby** would -- would have been taken by the Germans and would suffer, you know, and die or something, I -- I don't think he would -- he's cra -- he was really proud of **Alfred**, really proud.

Q: What was their relationship in later life?

A: Well, it was still Papa **Madna**, and it -- it was the only father he ever met, so yeah, it was a very good relation and it was very lucky that he saw him just one month before he died, he visit him. And he was ill, and -- but when I visit him, 10 days before his death, he was very healthy, he was good looking, and -- and he said well, you know -- I had a long talk with him. He said, it's enough for me. I have to -- to swallow too many pills. And I said, well, you will o-outlive us, I told him. But then 10 days later I got a phone call from my brother and he said well, that he died,

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

so -- and -- and **Bobby** came to the funeral, and at the funeral ceremony I had as many difficulties I as -- in the beginning as I had with my tears in the -- at the ceremony this time. But when I overcame that I said well, he was a man who took the risk to save a child's life. He let the women do the work, that was always -- he did -- the women had to raise the child, he only had some wise remarks for us, don't do this and don't do that, but he was not the kind of father that really took care of the children mentally. He took care of us with clothing and food and -- but he didn't like to take risks he said, but some-sometimes he was difficult. I didn't really have a good contact with my father. Later, at the end maybe. But, he said well -- but he took the risk with him, and he was sitting there, yeah. Yeah, it was some moments.

Q: Is there anything else you wanted to say before we end?

A: No, I don't -- th-there are maybe no -- more things, but there are so many. And we noticed when I talked to **Bobby** last night that there were o-other things we all of a sudden remembered out of the house, and th-the funny things that happened. But we -- we talked about the funny things.

Q: Do you still feel like he is your brother?

A: Oh yes, very much, very much. And especially the-these days when -- he brought us here at four o'clock yesterday and we had a drink in the bar, and then he picked us up at 7:30. I said, you know, I already missed you. So you have a good contact

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

and I -- I told him, you spoiled us so much I -- I don't think that I ever can go back to a normal life again. It's hardly possible to pay anything and no, it was really an experience and I think we are even closer now than we w-were before. Also with **Joel** we have a good understanding and they are very lovely people. So it -- I hesitated to come to **Washington**, and -- but I am glad I did. I didn't think that I would ever go to **America** again after my visit in **Boston** and **Miami**, because not too many things, and I met those -- and we met some congressmen yes-yesterday and they say hello to you and they say nice things and -- and I always had the feeling that they didn't know we were there, you know. But we met other, nice people, real nice people that talked to us and -- and listened to us, so -- but I met the other kind of American, that is -- say, you have a nice day, but without meaning. T-Too many of them and that makes me -- well, also the things I don't agree with. Like I -- I didn't agree with **Vietnam**. I didn't agree with a lot of things. The -- the power and th-the -- be friendly but still that superior feeling they try to express. Also the music. We met at an -- I remember that the delegation from **Miami** that visited our school because we have connection with the University of **Miami**, the music department. They thought, well it's always nice to have connection in **Holland**, you know, **Europe**. But they thought they were much better, and it wasn't so. They were, really when they heard our students, [indecipherable] oh, how is this possible? So that

Interview with Tolé Madna
April 18, 2002

gave me some anti feelings, but I know for sure that it's the system sometimes I hate, but I met so -- so many nice people, too. Musicians. I met a lot of American musicians, played with a lot of American musicians, also famous guys, and they were very friendly. And when I met them sometimes seven years, they knew exactly who you were, huh? So it's people, and not a nation. But I hope everything will go well. And **Israel** has a difficult period now. I hope everything -- because in **Holland** they are changing also, little bit. It's a-about 50 percent a-against and 50 percent -- because we have also a lot of Moslems in **Holland**. But I think -- my opinion is that **Israel** has to fight back because they are surrounded by enemies. And I'm still for **Israel** and maybe not for **Sharon**, sure for **Peres**. And th-they are not really united. Th-They think different. They want peace, too. And maybe there are Palestinians that want peace, too. But I don't want to go in politics. I think I have -- we have to bring the luggage down, eh?

Q: Well, thank you very much for doing this interview. We're very grateful that you did make the trip to the **United States**. So again, thank you for what you did many years ago, and for doing the interview. This concludes the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **Rob Madna**.

End of Tape Two, Side A

Conclusion of Interview