

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Berendina Diet Eman**  
**November 6, 2003**  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Berendina Diet Eman, conducted by Joan Ringelheim on November 6, 2003 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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

## **BERENDINA DIET EMAN**

### **November 6, 2003**

Q: Good morning, Diet.

A: Good morning.

Q: It's nice to see you finally.

A: I'm happy to be here.

Q: Thank you. Wh-What is your name?

A: Well, if you want to know how they baptized me, it was Berendina Roelofina Hendrika Eman. And I was only five pounds, I think that's a crime to a baby.

Q: Five pounds?

A: Yeah. I think that's a crime to a baby. But my mom lost her mother when she was 11, and then she got a stepmother who brought them up, they had five kids, and they got still from the second marriage. So she thought when I was born, and she didn't think she would get -- I was seven years after the other kids. Sh -- I thought I would be the last one, so she named me after her stepmother, Berendina. And then she thought, "I should honor my real mother, too, Roelofina." And out of that second marriage she had a baby sister that she adored, Hendrika, so I'm stuck with thro -- three names.

Q: So how did Diet come?

A: Now, then -- in the Netherlands, little kids always the name ends in an E, that means you're little, that -- they chop that off i -- if you're big. But they called me Dinie, Berendina, Dinie, chopped off. And then, to their big surprise, 13 months later there came a little brother, and we were always together, and one day an aunt picked me up, and I was away the whole day, and he was crying the whole day, and he just started talking, Dietdee, Dietdee, Dietdee, and they didn't know what -- what he wanted. But when I was brought back, Dietdee, and then they knew he called me Dietdee, so then I was Dietdee, and then it was they co -- chopped off -- you know, so --

Q: They chopped off the E.

A: -- and -- Diet, and when you write it our way, here they call me Diet, so -- because that's how you write it.

Q: But it's really Diet, is it --

A: Now -- in the -- in the Netherlands --

Q: In the Netherlands.

A: -- it's an E, that's how you say the E, Diet.

Q: Now you've had a number, although I don't want the stories associated with it, but you've had a number of -- of false names.

A: Oh yeah, a whole bunch.

Q: Yes, ho-how many did you have, three, four?

A: Yeah, I think -- it depends with which group, if I thought that my name was getting -- but all of us in the Resistance had false names.

Q: False names.

A: And with some I was Toos, and with some I was Dinako, that is another abbreviation. And then I left there, and I was -- I was nearly arrested on the name of ar -- I had to find another name again, that they knew my false name.

Q: That's when you became --

A: And then I thought -- the guy who made the false papers, he said, "What do you want to be your name?" I said, "Well, I'll take the name of the queen, Wilhemina." And that's the name I was arrested on, so --

Q: Right, right. I want to know something about your family. You had three siblings, yes?

A: Yes. Two much older, that were the big ones, and we were the little ones.

Q: And Albert?

A: Albert is the youngest.

Q: Is the youngest. So he was the one who was calling you Dietdee, right?

A: Dietdee, yeah.

Q: And Stephana?

A: He is 13 months younger.

Q: He was how much, thir -- thir --

A: He was 13 months younger.

Q: 13 months.

A: We are very close, still.

Q: Really close.

A: Yeah.

Q: And Stephana, Fanny?

A: Stephanie, yeah, Fanny, they say Stephanie. No, in the Netherlands you say Stephana, but here it would be Stephanie, and then I had a brother after that, and he had an old Dutch name, Arjen, A-r-j-e-n, Arjen, it's a beautiful old Dutch name. So they had both of one name, and then Albert came, and he only has one, and I am stuck with those three.

Q: And what was the difference in age between you and Fanny, and --

A: My oldest sister was eight years older, and then -- so seven years with my other brother.

Q: Right. And what was your father's name?

A: Gerrit, G-e-r-r-i-t, Gerrit.

Q: Herrit with a G.

A: That's difficult to say here, because I think it's the translation of Gerald, you know.

Q: And your mother's name?

A: Johanna Maria.

Q: Johanna Maria, that's beautiful.

A: Yeah.

Q: And what did you father do?

A: He had an interior decorating business, he was wallpapering, and floor covering, and he had a man who did all the upholstery, and he did everything in interior decorating, and he had people working for him, and he loved it, because I remember in -- when he was in his 80's -- you know, loads of people say that you die -- if I would come back, I would be something different. And I said -- Father was in his 80's, I said, "Dad, if you would come back?" He said, "I would go exactly the same."

Q: Really?

- A: He loved his work. And he was recommended by a very well known architect, and that architect worked for the lower nobility, you know, we still had dukes, and earls, and whatever. And he always recommended my dad, so he had [indecipherable] royal library, my father always had. In the summer they closed it, they had to check the curtains and everything, so -- he had a good business.
- Q: So he o -- he owned the business?
- A: Y -- he started it as a young guy, and just --
- Q: Right.
- A: -- because he loved his work, so he gave quality --
- Q: Right.
- A: -- work, and they recommended.
- Q: And did your mother work as well?
- A: Mom took the phone calls, but Mom -- she had four kids, and at the time you ha -- didn't have laundry machines, or you didn't have all the stuff we have, so it was a full time job.
- Q: Were you comfortable financially during this time?
- A: We had -- we were not wealthy, but we were comfortable, we never had -- except for the war, hunger, or whatever. No, it was -- we had a good life.
- Q: Did you want --
- A: They sent us -- we had music lessons, and you know, that --
- Q: You played piano, didn't you?
- A: Yeah, I -- I was not very talented, but Mom insisted all four of us had to take -- my brother is really good, he can play any instrument he sees. He could be a professional cellist.
- Q: Really?
- A: He plays beautiful, oh. And that was his life, but you know, then he wanted to go professional, but people said to him -- now, he studied for fun six hours a day, forget it. I mean, I thought an hour study every day at piano was already long enough, after all the schoolwork. But he just loved it. And -- but they said, "Now it is your love, and then it becomes your work." So then he went for awhile in Father's business, but he didn't like it. And he is now -- he studied psychology, and then he married a girl that got a job in

Sweden, in a -- in -- she was dietician, and Anthroposophy, that is the study of Rudolph Steiner, they believe in reincarnation, and that is what they are. And then he went to work there, and it's all what he knew. He made -- now he -- he got higher up, and higher up, and then a father of a kid -- they -- they had lots of kids from other countries, in Scandinavia Anthroposophy is very big, and there was a Danish girl there, and at one point there was trouble in Sweden, he was in Sweden, and they -- th -- they were [indecipherable] to him, and he said, you know, you start something like this in Denmark, and he did. And he started with six kids, and now it's one of the biggest things, and the government asks, take our kids, take our kids, and it has grown. But he has only the very severest mentally handicapped children, who miss a part of their brain. And they have taught them everything. I mean, it's as in the Bible, everybody has a gift, and those kids just as well. And one is musical, and another one can paint, and another one have [indecipherable] things, silversmithing, they do everything. And they have an artist staff, and my brother directs, and I couldn't believe it. There's -- the -- the television theme, and the radio themes [indecipherable] were playing for us. They do not Mary had a little lamb, but they do the children's symphony of Haydn, and none of those kids can read a note of music, I said, "How do you do it?" He says, "Come along." And then he has a teacher who plays flute, and the kids who want to play flute, look, and they play and they make a few mistakes when the teacher is playing, and the second time they do much better, and the fourth time they playing without any mistake, and so all the instruments, and then they do it together. No, it's terrific, what he does.

Q: Te -- tell me about your parents, what were they like as people, and being your mother and father?

A: My father had a terrific sense of humor. And he was such an honest businessman. I only had very good examples, because you know, when the war broke out, the Germans took everything to Germany, but my father had a big supply of drapes, and whatever, he had a big supply. And then all the others, you know, they raised their prices, they could just double it, or what. My father said, "I've worked 30 years for those people," and he just put his normal thing. So I saw that he was not out for money, he was for honesty, and he loved his customers. And Mom, Mom was his sweetheart, and the -- I mean, it was a real -- they were 64 years married when they finally died, and --

Q: 64 years?

A: Yeah, 64 years. And I can only say she was always, you know, benda -- baker came at the door, and the milkman came at the door, and the man for the benzena -- you had those little things, or whatever, it's not gasoline, kerosene, came at the door, and then in the war, there were no cars, I mean it was with a horse and a -- and a cart, and when it was ice cold, Mom always said, do you want a cup of hot coffee, or hot chocolate, or something. So I had good examples.

Q: So did you spend a lot of time with your parents, were they with you a lot?

- A: Father was very busy, because in the spring especially, everybody wanted Eman, sometimes that he left the house at six, and came home at 10. So we always had our hot meal in the evening, if Father would be home. But he tried every time -- it's his own business, it's difficult to break out, but I remembered it for a long time when we were early teenagers, that he tried always to be home Friday or Saturday night, and then we did games and things, and we could invite our friends.
- Q: Uh-huh.
- A: And the other -- our house was always the center of young people, and we had an organ, and the piano, and the cello, so there was a lot of classical music.
- Q: You had an organ and a piano?
- A: Piano, and --
- Q: An upright piano, or a --
- A: An upright piano, it was a very [indecipherable] Steinbach. And the organ, that were those Dutch, little -- that you still had to --
- Q: That worked with the foot, yes.
- A: So -- but we had that, and we all had to learn music, oh.
- Q: So you -- you would say your childhood was a very joyous one?
- A: Yeah.
- Q: And you were close with your --
- A: Parents. Now, when you are early teen, you know, you get rebellious --
- Q: Yes.
- A: -- and you -- you -- and I remember that if we had a mood, you know, if you came down, and you are in a bad mood, and Mom would just kindly say, "Oh, we don't loo -- want to look at that face. Go back to your room, and come back when you can have a [indecipherable] face." And then you got back and you say, "What am I doing [indecipherable] thing? It was very -- you know, but when you a teenager, you sometimes become difficult.
- Q: Yes. And school, did you like school?
- A: Yeah.



Q: You did?

A: I was a straight A student, it came all easy, yeah.

Q: Really? It came easy to you?

A: And mostly this in languages or what we call [indecipherable], what is it? Sciences. But I could -- I -- I think that God gave me a good speller. Brains [indecipherable] brains, it was all very easy.

Q: Did you have favorite subjects? Was language it -- were --

A: The languages were my favorite, yeah.

Q: Was your favorite.

A: And we had -- it was like I told you, every day an hour in each language, French, German, English and Dutch, and for the finals you had to -- to read 10 books in each original language, so 10 in French, and -- and you had to memorize three poems, and not Mary had a little lamb, but of Longfellow, or something, in each language. [indecipherable] from the Germans. And our exams were not [indecipherable] the school, they had -- you had the parochial schools, the Christian schools, and the public schools. And I lived in The Hague, and when it was exam time, it was June, then -- or July, then, this section of The Hague, whatever school you were, had to come to a big gymnasium, and there were all tables, and the papers were face down, and government guys from the Department of Education, they were walking -- you were not to talk, you were not allowed to go to the bathroom. The bell rang, and then you could turn your paper, and then you had so much time for that subject.

Q: Right.

A: And you enter the next subject. And you have two days in writing, and then one day oral, and the oral was three weeks later, mostly, after the [indecipherable]. And it was also for government guys, [indecipherable] and then you came in the gym, and there were all little round tables, three guys sitting, French, English, German, math, geometry, geography, and history, and then each half an hour. And you came to the French table, and then they said, "Which books have you read?" So you have to sh -- in French, and then you have to show it. And they said in French, tell that and that episode out of that and that book. And you had to do it in French, which is very hard, you know? And so we're -- and then this poem, and then you have to recite the poem. So [indecipherable]

Q: I realize I forgot to ask you two questions. One, what's the date of your birth?

A: April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1920.

Q: 1920. And you were born in The Hague?

A: In The Hague. And that was also the birthday of our crown princess, Juliana. So -- and then all the flags were out, and the schools were closed, and every morning there were parades, and my Mom always told me, "That's for you." You know, it was the big disappointment when I found out it was for Juliana. But I was still happy that I was born on her birthday, so --

Q: That's funny. Tell me from -- I read your autobiography, and the place of religion in your life is really extremely significant, or maybe it's just God, I don -- I don't quite know how to --

A: No.

Q: So if you can tell me about your - the way in which you were raised in terms of religion.

A: Now, we went to church, and our denomination, Christian Reformed has two services, but my parents said one time we want you to go, the second time, you may. So there was no to force like some parents do. And they always, you know, you went to catechism, and you learned the Bible, and it was really a life thing, you know, and you had to -- and I still think, I mean words are cheap, but then you have to do, and that's why I went -- we all went in Rothenberg, and I'm really proud because after the war, years later, I had to go -- in the Netherlands after the war, the queen made a new department, like you have here, agriculture, and to -- now whatever, all the departments. And our queen said we have a department of war documentation. And usually th-they still were looking for witnesses, and by chance they found me in America, and I could help a little bit, so I was asked to come to the Netherlands, and I spoke to the big shot from this war documentation, and he told me that our denomination, Christian Reformed, and it's really small, were the highest in resistance, and also had given most of their lives. And I think we are very principled. And sometimes it goes to the -- too stiff, you know, that -- but that you have to want. But it was really [indecipherable]

Q: Is -- is Christian Reformed a part of a -- the Protestant religion, or is it --

A: Yeah.

Q: It is?

A: The Reformed -- the state church in the Netherlands is Reformed, and then automatically, like in England, the queen and the king are the head of the church. And at one point, I think in the 1800's, there were people who said yeah, but if you are born a king or a queen, doesn't make you a Christian. So they said, well, that's not right. And then there were other things, a few more, I don't know exactly what, so they separated from -- but it's very close, it's only that -- you know, the [indecipherable] and we have been very lucky, because our fe -- our royal family are Christians and they are always members of the Reformed church. But it's very close to the Reformed church, but it's smaller.

Q: But Christian Reform is not the Reformed church, it's a different --

A: It is a branch --

Q: A branch --

A: -- that broke off from the Reformed church.

Q: And how would you characterize Christian Reform, and ho-how does one differentiate that from --

A: Now, they are very biblical. See, because I know here in America the Baptists honor the New Testament, because they say that's the time that Jesus was born. But the Christian Reformed see it, it was a fulfillment of the Old Testament, or the Torah, as the Jewish people say. So we had really to study the whole Bible, and at our meals, I mean every day, and Father always started each meal with prayer, because if you read the Bible, when Jesus ate, it always said, "And Jesus, looking up, thanked God for the meal," and then he started eating. So, I mean, it's practically putting up, and I remember that our breakfast could be that we had to go out in -- in -- you know, my brother, maybe to leave earlier for school, and Father sometimes left at six, but the [indecipherable] meal was always that we sat at the table. And then my brother, who is the cellist, is studying, and we -- we had a l-large house, and he was on the third floor, in the music room. And then we all sat at table and Father wanted to say a prayer, and Albert wasn't there. So they go out, "Albert, you have to come, Father is sitting." You know, I felt like [indecipherable]. And then he did the few, and he forgot it, and we had to call him again, so -- but then, we had had our hot meal, and then Father always pulled the Bible out and read a small part of the Bible. He skipped what I call the dull part, you know, this one begat that, begat that, begat that --

Q: Right, right.

A: But -- so we knew the Bible, and every [indecipherable] it was a sacrifice that they sent us to the Christian school, they said, "If we don't support it, they don't." So every Monday morning, had to learn the psalm that you had Sunday. The parents were [indecipherable] if the kids [indecipherable] for Monday morning, you had to say your -- what you had to memorize. And looking back, you know, then you hated it, but in the camp, and in the prison --

Q: It helped.

A: You -- it -- I knew so many things by heart, and it came, and it was such a strength, and a hope for me. I'm really grateful for that.

Q: But when you were growing up, you were not always so --

A: No, sometimes you thought, oh, you know -- but -- and -- and you had pastors who could keep your attention, and some your -- I remember that I -- we had a church that had a roof, an all wooden, beautiful wood, and then they [indecipherable] just to decorate it, and I was counting.

Q: You were counting.

A: Yeah, that was -- if it was not an interesting sermon, but I think orchids do that.

Q: You mentioned that you had a big house. How -- how big, because the -- the houses that I saw, at least in Amsterdam --

A: No, no, th-they -- it was when we lived in The Hague, my Mom -- my Mom's father was a pilot in -- a pilot at sea, you know, to bring the ships in. And he was always at sea, and a lot of our family were seafarers. So I think Mom brought a bit, and she always wanted to meet, but that's not good for a business. So then I think we moved west from a house to a bigger house, and that was very interesting, it was all -- it had steps, and then a platform, and then there were two doors, and the right one was ours. But on the other side, where the street was, it had steps down, and there was souterrain, and -- it's called. And then you had -- came in the -- the lower floor, and there was Father's work store, and there was a big family kitchen like the farmers have, and the -- behind it was a -- a yard. And we had -- they made a little pond in it, and we had little goldfishes. And then the first floor had in front, the room where the organ and the piano were, and in the back, the living room. The second floor was Father's and Mother's bedroom, and the room where my Father received his customers, and then the floor up there, there were the girl's bedroom, and the boy's bedroom, and there was an attic. So it was more height, you know?

Q: Right.

A: And then, at the end of the yard, there was a ya -- what do you call it? It was not a river, it was much smaller, but it was a little stream, and behind that there was a big -- how you call it here, now? [indecipherable], a big -- I think this is called a kaserne. All -- the cavalry, the horses were there, and that was a --

Q: A barracks?

A: Armory, armory.

Q: Oh, ah.

A: And that was where we loved it, because it was, you know, open, and space, and trees. But in the morning, he [indecipherable] from the [indecipherable] and then -- and sometimes you heard the horses, I loved it, oh.

Q: Did you have pets?

A: Yeah.

Q: You did?

A: We had two -- we had two cats, and a dog. And later I got two turtles, one was called Ole Tuft, that's a Norwegian name, and the other one, was [indecipherable] the time of Ethiopia was Haile Salas.

Q: And so you called it Haile Salas? Yes?

A: And I think I was nine, and I was always brushing the dog, and also push -- polishing his teeth, and anyway -- and I felt so neglectful that I never did anything for those turtles, and when I called them, they stuck their neck out, and they had -- so I took furniture polish, and I polished them, and they were so beautiful shiny, and three days later they were dead, and my father said that I had clogged up all their pores. But I think they were beautiful in their deaths.

Q: Better in death, that's -- were most of your friends of the same religious denomination that you --

A: We lived in that street, and we were all teeners, and we had such a fun [indecipherable]. A little bit further lived a family with three boys, and we were all -- so you had -- yeah, in Germany, the stuff was getting -- is Hitler, so one of the boys then turned out to be a Nazi, and the oldest was a Communist, and the in-between was in-between. And so they were different, and of course, was another couple, a young girl, and her brother, her older brother, Paul and Jopie and they -- they were nothing, and now they were just --

Q: In -- in The Hague, were there -- were there many Jews living in The Hague?

A: Yeah.

Q: There were. Jewish population.

A: We had a large Jewish quarter, with synagogues, and very beautiful old synagogue there was, there were a lot of Jewish people. But you know, that is the beautiful thing of the Netherlands. In [indecipherable] they were persecuted in Portugal and Spain, and they were killed and burned by the Inquisition. And in England you can read the books, that they look down upon the Jews. Germany definitely, Austria definitely, France also a little bit. And [indecipherable]. So they came, and in those years, loads of them came to the Netherlands, and they said -- you know. And so we had loads of German Jews, and -- no, of Dutch Jews who had been there for centuries.

Q: Mm-hm. So they were -- they were very integrated in the --

A: Very integrated -- because I was working at a bank later, when I had my first job next to Herman and [indecipherable] -- he was Jewish, but later he told me he didn't even know it, his parents didn't do anything on their religion. But we had so many Jewish people, and y -- that didn't make any difference.

Q: And did you grow up, and have friends who were -- who were Jewish kids?

A: Who were not Christians, yeah.

Q: And there was not -- there was not a problem between --

A: You didn't even think about it.

Q: Right, uh-huh.

A: They were your friends, or they were not your friends --

Q: Right, that's --

A: -- you liked them, or you did not like them, but it was the only [indecipherable], you know, it was no difference, that was --

Q: So, when you were 13 years old, and Hitler comes to power in Germany, are you -- are you very conscious politically at that age, or is --

A: No, at 13, not really.

Q: No. So --

A: And then Hitler was in the beginning, you know, he started in Bavaria, and so on, and we heard about it, and we really thought well, a big screamer. We already knew he had a big mouth, and he was always screaming.

Q: Right.

A: But then h-he grew in power, and then when Hindenburg gave over, I mean then he was the boss, and then we realized. But I -- then we started to realize, but still not to the extent that it really --

Q: Right.

A: -- we really were made aware by the danger -- we heard that the Hitler youth was, and I was [indecipherable] vacation, I think was 15 or 16, at the eastern part of the Netherlands, we were somewhere at the farm, and that we learned -- we had lots of friend -- with my two girlfriends, and we were biking, and the border was not controlled, it was close to the border, and we met a couple of German kids, germ -- and they were in the Hitler youth,

and they were fanatic, and fanatic. And I was surprised, I thought aw, you know. But my girlfriends were open for it, they listened, and they were very impressed. And then later, in '38, so it was maybe two years later, you know it, that Kristallnacht, that those -- and in the he -- at that time, I remember in the papers, they pretended that it was a spontaneous uprising of the young people against those Jews who are doing all this criminal whatever.

Q: Right, right.

A: But it wasn't, it was very organized, but [indecipherable] later -- that turned out later that they found that. So, and then yeah, they killed so many Jews, and they took prisoners, and they burned the synagogues, and that is when really we were aware of the danger of the Nazi [indecipherable]

Q: So it was 1938 when you became --

A: '38. November nine was the Kristall --

Q: Right, right, but a year before that, somebody comes and lives with your parents --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- a person who becomes very significant to you. Can you tell us about it?

A: That was funny, because my parents always tried to help everybody, and what do you call it in the church, the guy that takes care that the ha -- is clean, and whatever, the janitor --

Q: Janitor?

A: -- or whatever. He didn't clean himself, but that was a couple without kids, and they once in awhile came to visit us. They had no children, and my parents invited them now and then. So one day they ask if he wanted to come, and he talks to my parents, and he said, "I have a friend, a Friesian," they were often [indecipherable] and they're very proud, and he says, "And he lost his wife, and he has 10 kids, and now the oldest has gotten a job in The Hague," with -- they start with paying so little. See, now the kids go either in the dorms, or in an apartment or something. But there was no way at that time. So he asked if that guy could come in our house, and my mother said, "I can't have a boarder." She had [indecipherable], the phone was always ringing, and people came that they wanted to talk to my dad, and she was very busy, and you had no laundry machines, no nothing. So she said, "No, I can't." And then he said oh, but -- well, you know. So in the end, my father says, "I need to talk to Wilmer, that's her decision. She has a," -- and then in the end my mom said, "I can't have a boarder, but I can have another child." So he ca -- and I was so furious because The Hague is very old city, and you know, the -- the houses at that time didn't have a shower and a bathroom. I mean, you had a toilet, but that -- you had everywhere those -- what do you call it, those basins when -- where you washed yourself, and Saturday night you could either go to a public bathhouse, that you had to pay, or you

could wash yourself from top to toe, but that was -- at that time, it was 1938 and so. And then, with my brothers, my -- at that time, in '38, my oldest brother had already left for Indonesia, he -- he was in the Air Force. Anyway, you ran in your house in your underwear, and in your slip, and whatever, and that were your brothers, but if you have a strange guy, you have to put your gown on, and it's totally different. So I just hated it, to have -- and he had a nice -- I didn't want an intruder in the house. And then I was so angry, I think, that I didn't speak to my mom for days. And then she said I am so angry about it [indecipherable], I hate it. And I thought, well, I'm going to dislike this guy, I mean, he's an intruder in our house, and I thought -- his name was Hein, now that is a farmer's name, I hated it. And I thought in -- in the Netherlands -- in here it is beautiful, but in the Netherlands it was horrible if you had red hair. Then they called you carrot top, or all the lighthouses had red -- or a lighthouse. So the kids really unmercifully [indecipherable], and mostly they had freckles, of course. And then you'll see he has a red hair, and freckles, and boo -- and I was so -- I thought, well, I don't like him. And then, he would --

Q: Wait a minute, I'm -- I'm afraid we're going to have to continue this after we stop the tape.

A: Okay. That he broke your heart?

Q: Yes.

**End of Tape #1**



**Tape #2**

- Q: So we were talking about Hein coming to your house.
- A: Oh yeah.
- Q: What -- what -- his name is Hein, and his last name?
- A: H-e-i-n, Hein. And --
- Q: It's Hein.
- A: -- in -- in Dutch we say Hein. And I think like in German, you have Heinrich, you know?
- Q: Right, right.
- A: That's a German name, so this is -- and it's a name in Friesland, that's in the northern part, and he was from there.
- Q: And his last name?
- A: Sietsma, S-i-e-t-s-m-a, Sietsma.
- Q: Sietsma.
- A: All the Friesian names end of ma or sta. That's so funny -- in that province there.
- Q: Really? Huh. So, did you adjust after a few days to his being there, or did it take you a while to?
- A: I remember that I said I'd -- he would come on a Saturday afternoon, I said, "I won't be home." And Mom said, "I have to do a few -- a little bit of shopping, but I'll see he would come late in the afternoon." And I'm home alone, and the doorbell rings, and there stands this handsome guy. But then it was Hein, I had to open him, and I was alone home, and I hated him. And I'd made up my mind that I would hate him. So, even if he looked very nice, I hated him, because that is what I had decided. And I wasn't nice to him at all, and he fell in love with me, and he told my mom. And then later he made friends at the office, and he went to a study group from my church, young men, so then three of them rented an apartment, so he was -- I don't know, maybe half a year in our house. But my parents got to love him like a son, and I tolerated him, because I'd made up my mind. You know how stubborn you can be.
- Q: Yeah.
- A: And then when the war -- when he -- they were all mobilized, you know, when the threat in '39 came, and the end of '38, so -- and he had to be at the river, the IJssel, that goes

parallel with the German border. And there were bunkers near the water, so -- oh, and [indecipherable] and they were often there. And because he had been so long in our house, our family wrote him that was the only thing they had. See, now they have those nice military homes where they can go for reading a paper, and play piano, and do card games, there was nothing. They slept in [indecipherable] and everybody was mobilized, people with businesses, and there was nothing. So I remember that in the pulpit, and in the papers, it said open your house for the military, and invite them. So with that -- that armory right behind our house, Momma wrote a note, Christian family with organ and piano, somebody wants to come is welcome, for in the evening, reading the papers, or -- and then the two Friesians came, and they later told that they quick had taken the paper off. So they became like brothers, and Hein was there alone on that -- so we wrote him all the time. And then I had also to write my little note. Father wrote, Mother wrote, Albert wrote, my sister wrote. So I -- and then you have here only one word, dear. I-If you write a business letter you start dear, but also if you love somebody, but we have different words. So the first letters that I wrote was Beste, that is distance, you know, Beste. And then I remember when it really got dangerous, I all of a sudden thought, "Oh my God, if he gets hurt or killed," and then I realized I loved him, but it -- it was really -- and I thought -- but in the Netherlands, you know, I think the girls right now, they go after the boys, but you didn't do that back then. And I loved this -- stupid, idiot, I was -- and all my girlfriends were in love with him, and I thought oh, this is terrible, I -- and I told my mom, she said, "Well, he was in love with you, he told me." But then she had told him, she's not yet ready for it, because -- this is crazy, I -- I really don't dare to tell this, but I must have been 17, and he came in our house, and I had those two girlfriends, and my brother and his friends, and I was a tomboy. And then Saturday afternoons when we had off from school, we often had school Saturday mornings still, we went on our bikes outside The Hague, and we have so many canals, and ditches, and trees everywhere, and we had the greatest fun that we took a run, and then tried to jump a ditch. And every time a rider went in the [indecipherable] always one of us would fall in. You --

Q: You mean, with the bicycle? You would try to run a ditch?

A: No, no

Q: Oh, you would run --

A: We put the bicycles on the meadow, and then we took a run --

Q: And then you -- I see.

A: -- and jump. And we climbed trees, and we had so much fun, we play -- I don't know, I think I was very late that I was mature. But anyway, then Hein ask me all the time, Hein [indecipherable] let's go for a bike ride, let's go for -- to the dunes, or something. And, no I -- I didn't like him, you know, that was my -- so one Saturday afternoon, my friends all had to go to their grandmother in the city, that they could go on a bike, but it was maybe two hours. So they weren't there, and Hein asked again, and oh well -- well, I've nothing better to do. So I went, and I told the girls, he asked me again to bike -- go

[indecipherable]. So then they asked me when I came back, how was it. I said, "So boring, we never climbed a tree." But he was I think 18, close to 19 and was much more mature. So that was the only thing, and then when I realized this, then he -- he wrote us back, and then one day I got a letter, and it was directed to me, and then he wrote, "My next leave, I want come to The Hague." And he had been before, but it was always for the family, you know. He said, "And this time it's not for the family, it's just for you." And I was happy as possible. So then he came, and then it clicked.

Q: Right.

A: With [indecipherable]. He was a wonderful person, always living for others, and thinking that he was so selfish.

Q: Were you working in -- in the bank in 1937? [indecipherable]

A: It was a big, beautiful old bank in the center of the city, and I was -- I had there, with the informational section.

Q: And was that the same time that you met Hein?

A: That I met --

Q: Or was that afterwards?

A: No, I was -- I stayed there shur -- they paid very little. And then I got an offer to work somewhere else, and they paid better, so -- and I took those Spanish lessons, because see, that degree was four years, and I can -- languages come fast, and you just sit in your class, and you have a couple [indecipherable] you back. So I found a profess -- professor who said, "I'll prepare you for that exam," -- I asked him. I said, "Then load me up with homework, and I come once a week, an hour that you can check, and whatever." And I had to pay him, I think three quarter of my salary, but I did it with -- just within two years. So -- and that was worth it. And then I still took another exam, but I needed -- with money for my -- because I had hardly any left for myself with pocket money, so when they offered this -- it was -- with the other one, was a government job, and it was for the father of a youth friend of mine, who lived three years across from me. So she said, "My father needs a secretary," so then I went, and they paid better. But the war days, I was in the bank.

Q: During the war?

A: Right, days of the war.

Q: During the first five days of the war?

A: We had -- well, see we fought. Denmark didn't get one bullet. And Sweden let them go through and attack Norway. Norway fought. And Belgium didn't have an army.

Q: Right.

A: And I -- we later learned that Hitler had like all travel agents [indecipherable] you know, [indecipherable], from us go 10 days to Europe, Wednesday morning for the Netherlands, Wednesday afternoon for France, Tuesday for Switzerland, and so. And Hitler made a schedule for the war, and he had given Monday for the Netherlands, but he forgot that we are very stubborn, and we fought five days.

Q: Right.

A: In the afternoon of the fife -- fir -- fifth day, they bombarded the open city of Rotterdam in the center, where there was nothing military. Hospitals, museums, churches, cathedrals. And thousands died, and it was -- and then their general said to our general, "If you don't surrender [indecipherable] to The Hague, I'm [indecipherable]." And he surrendered after five days.

Q: So -- right.

A: But those five days of the war, I was in that bank.

Q: In the bank. So you've known Hein now for three years, when the war comes in 1940 to the Netherlands [indecipherable]

A: Two and a half years, it came at the end of the [indecipherable]

Q: So -- right. So you essentially, within six or eight months, you realize you're in love with this guy. And this is the first time you've had a boyfriend, am I right?

A: Now, you had -- you know, when we went -- playing robbery so-called, you had friends, but that was nothing, you know, you didn't kiss or anything, but --

Q: This was serious.

A: -- but that was just special friend. I remember that there was a guy that I was at that Christian high school that was quite far away, and it was 45 minutes on the bike to go home, and then all of us [indecipherable] and I saw Tim from our street, and biking next to me. "Oh, how nice to see you here. I had to go here," and so -- like it was casual, but he came then, maybe they are 15 or 16, that was -- you know, the -- Tim was my friend, but nothing else. But if he -- you know, we had -- we did funny -- fun games, and if there was a fair, like a country fair, or so, you went with the whole group, and then --

Q: Right. But this was quite different?

A: Yeah, that was different. This was [indecipherable] just --

Q: Were the girlfriend jealous because it was clear that he was in love with you?

A: Yeah.

Q: I bet.

A: Uh-huh, yeah. But then they found their own boyfriends, so -- but I know that a lot had a crush on him.

Q: So he was whe -- he was in your house for about six months, and then he was in an apartment in The Hague?

A: An apartment with his two friends.

Q: And did you end up seeing each other a great deal at that point?

A: It was so funny, because one was from another city, Zwollen, and if his girlfriend came over, and he was engaged, but it was no proper -- so they always -- the girlfriend from -- they [indecipherable] slept in our house, my mom was always -- it was really like the holiday, and we never knew. And the other one had a girlfriend who lived in The Hague. And we three girls are dear, dear friends. We hit it off so right. So we were mostly with the whole group, and I'm still now -- the two other guys died, later, from old age. But for all those years I was their friend.

Q: You're still friends?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: With all of them.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And they all loved Hein. And I remember when I just came out of the concentration camp, the first couple was going to get married. So I stepped in in the church, and I -- but then I disappeared again, because they were still looking for me. Yeah, it was -- you know, I had wonderful friends from that time, because it's a friendship that goes real deep.

Q: Right.

A: I can honestly say I loved my s -- underground friends more than my own sister, who was not really --

Q: More than Fanny?

A: Yeah.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: She was not [indecipherable], not that it matters, but she was a total different -- she even scolded, and her husband, too, you stupid, why do you do that, it'll cost your life, and this and that. So --

Q: She said that to you?

A: They both --

Q: They both said that?

A: -- her and her husband, who she married later, and they said, "You are stupid," and whatever. But she lived in another part of the country, and there was curfew, and if any of our group was in that area close to 11, that you had to be off the street, they could always sleep on their couch, but they called you stupid [indecipherable]

Q: Now was she very different when you were growing up, as well?

A: Yeah. She -- see, I was this tomboy --

Q: Right.

A: -- and she was 15 - 16, and she liked high heels, and underwear with lots of lace, and -- and then she -- they said to Mom, "Forbid her to climb those trees, she is," -- this and that. So -- and then, when Mother went a weekend to go to her mother, then she was the boss because she was eight years older, and I was maybe 14 or 15, and she was 22 or 23, and I had to obey her. And I always said, "You -- you are a much worse mother," you know, from you I may not do [indecipherable], you know, and she thought that I was wild, and well, in my --

Q: You were.

A: -- my tomboy -- yeah. You know, so we di -- were totally different.

Q: But her fiancé was -- was killed in the beginning --

A: She was engaged.

Q: -- right?

A: And -- and she would have gotten married the year of the war, in September. And they all were drafted, and her fiancé had -- had signed a contract that if he went so many years in

the -- like here they do sometimes, and then you get free university study, so he had signed up. And he was just ready to get out, and then the war broke out, a-and -- so he was -- had to stay in that service, and he was assigned to a small airport, Ypenburg, just outside The Hague. And then the morning of the war, Hitler had the evening before given a big speech, and I had heard it as ma -- and I knew German. And he said -- because by that time, they had taken -- France was already occupied, because they had been able to hold it in '39. And then he had taken Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, that was beginning of the second World War, they had marched through Sweden, Norway. So only that sliver of the Netherlands, and Belgium were not occupied by [indecipherable] Franco was Nazi, whole Europe was Nazi. So we were very, very nervous, and -- and Hitler said, "I know that the Dutch are scared, they don't have to be. They are very unimportant, and I don't need that piece of land." And then he said, "And they were not in the first World War, and I will respect their neutrality." That were his literal words. And while he was saying that, at nine PM, his troops were already marching to our borders, and to our bridges, so he was a big, fat liar. And I think that that made me so furious that I thought, "How did he have the guts to say this on the radio while he knew this," -- from -- that made me so mad. And then, five days later, when they came in, with their goosestep, and their helmets, and their tanks, and their proud faces -- I remember that they marched in [indecipherable] out standing the bank, and the tears were streaming down our cheeks. And that's when I made my vow, I'll never, never speak one word of German. We have not invited them. And then -- and we saw what they were doing to our Jewish people. I got really to -- to hate the Nazi system.

Q: Did you not expect the Germans to come into the Netherlands, in spite of the fact that they had attacked Poland, and they had gone into the other European --

A: I think that our government -- I, as a girl of 19 didn't think so, because we hadn't been in the first World War. But I later had, and it was nearly hilarious, that our government was bringing itself in [indecipherable] to stay neutral. So they had built bunkers towards Germany. So they built a few bunkers along the coast against [indecipherable]. You know, it's really laughable when you think about it, that they were trying to be -- to be neutral, but --

Q: Neutral. So it must have been a big shock to you after you heard Hitler's speech, when you saw the troops come in.

A: Yeah, I remember that night. See, in the Netherlands at that time it was so funny, because you know, the -- the one -- like I say, it was really, the housewife was missing, because everything was made from scratch, now we go to the store. You had a store to go for your meat, a store for your veggies, a store for this, for your tha -- dairy. So it took you time, an household was a whole day of work. And Monday was always laundry day, and all the women in the Netherlands, and Tuesday, I think they do -- did the ironing, and Wednesday, in most houses, they did the living room, and on Thursday -- but Thursday was always the day that -- well, there were no vacuum cleaners, but everybody had rug beaters, and everywhere you heard bang, bang, bung. They hung it over things in the yard, and then they beat the rugs. And I remember that I woke up that night, and it was pitch

dark, and I heard a noise like beating, but very fast. And half asleep, I thought, which idiot is beating the rugs in the middle of the night? And [indecipherable] it's much fast -- and then I heard my parents stir in their bedroom, they must have heard it, too. And we got up, and we went outside, and over our head was a battle between planes, and shooting. So then we went back in the house, and turned the radio on, and we heard that they had invaded our country. And then the next morning, yeah, we are so faithful in all we do, and I remember, here we were at war, and then Adriaan was killed -- I mean, Adriaan was the fiancé of my sister, because [indecipherable], and we didn't know that, so he was one of the first ones who was shot, and killed, the early morning of May 10<sup>th</sup>. And I step on my bike and I went to my office. And I'm in a big street, what then was a big street, I was now in The Hague, and that wasn't so big, but it was still a light street. And I was stopped by Dutch police. And I thought, "What's this?" And they said, "Say Scheveningen." And I said it, that was the city where -- where Milosevic is now in the prison. And then I had to say Schapenscheerder. I don't know if you can say that.

Q: I don't think so.

A: But that is the guy who shears the sheep. And the Germans couldn't say those words. And then I could say it, and then they let me go, and they said, "They are everywhere as spies among us." Because about a year and a half before the war, two years, you could get -- the families could get a German maid so cheap, and they lived in your house. But all those German maids, a lot of them were spies. And for a long time, every time from an air base, or an army base, or whatever, uniforms had disappeared. And they -- it was still -- now you don't see it any more. I mean, in Vietnam, and in Korea, you don't see the enemy, they just measure, and I -- shoot a bit farther, or lower, they [indecipherable], but at that time they still saw each other, and our guys didn't shoot at the whole groups if they came in our country our own uniforms, so it was, oh, I remember, I was so mad, and I still -- I think I have that, that if I see injustice, my hair goes up.

Q: Did you have a fi -- a -- a fairly large army, or a very small army?

A: No, small.

Q: Very small.

A: Small, was small.

Q: And when was Hein drafted into the army, in '39, or f -- or -- or '40?

A: I think the very end of '38, or the beginning of '39, I'm not sure, but it was around that time.

Q: Uh-huh. So he was in the army about a year before the --

A: Yeah. And then he was pulled back, and he was in place called Ede, and I remember that Ascension day, that's the day [indecipherable] really was at that church, you know, it's



[indecipherable] any more, but he said come here, and that was in the middle, and there is a little -- we are so flat, we have only -- but there is what we call the grebbeberg, that's another word you can't say, but that was a little hill, and that was in the middle. And I was so happy that he wasn't at the border any more, I thought that's the first thing. And so that day we spent, and he got from a friend a motorbike, and I was scared stiff, and he had a good day, and then I went back to The Hague. And then a few days later, the war was --

Q: War's on.

A: So then I found -- and I was worried stiff because the most were killed at the grebbeberg, and I didn't know what had happened to him. And I have it with me, then I got a smudged card, a post card, I think dated May 13<sup>th</sup>, or was in the middle of the war days, and it came from Rotterdam. And he had moved [indecipherable], I didn't know that, from Ede to Rotterdam, and he was in that bombardment.

Q: He was?

A: He was. He was in that bombardment [indecipherable]. I didn't know it.

Q: So I guess it was a good thing that you didn't know it.

A: No, oh --

Q: You were worried enough as it was.

A: Oh, it was horrible.

Q: Okay. I've just been touched, so we're going to change the tape.

End of Tape #2

Tape #3

- Q: Diet, your brother Arjan, your older brother had joined the army and was in Indonesia?
- A: He was a reserve officer in the Netherlands, where they all, after their training they were -- had jobs. And he had -- it was a time of unemployment -- that was also to promote -- that Hitler had so much success, there was such an unemployment everywhere, and he had a job, but very dull, and then at one point he got a letter that reserve officers were asked, volunteers if they wanted to go to Indonesia. And he had such a boring job, so he went, and he was in the air force. And he was shot down when the Japs came in, and he had a big piece of shell in his hip, and they took it out, and stitch it up, and they thought he never walks again. So they put him in the hospital, and they really didn't watch him, because he couldn't walk, he was heavily wounded. But then it healed, and he had his -- I don't know, I guess his [indecipherable] or whatever, and he practiced at night, because he wasn't watched. And then at one time he escaped. And later I heard he had told other people, "I know that my little sister in the Netherlands [indecipherable] in the resistance." He knew me, and he was a lot like I was. And I always thought, if he can do anything, he'll do it. And it's true, he found a lot of his guys again, and then around the city of Brondong, they did whatever they could, resistance. But then he was hiding in Kampong, that's where the Indonesians live, their villages, and the settlement. But somebody knew that, and they betrayed him, and he was arrested again, and then he was tortured to death, we later heard. But he was really tortured to death by -- in a terrible, terrible prison, the Sukamiskin. And nobody who went in there ever came out alive.
- Q: So he was captured twice, he escaped the first time?
- A: He was shot down first.
- Q: Right.
- A: And then he was captured after he --
- Q: So do you know about when that happened [indecipherable]
- A: No.
- Q: You don't.
- A: I don't know really the date. We don't know the date --
- Q: Right.
- A: -- but we heard it from the Red Cross. And we had an uncle there, with his whole family, he was a professor at the museum in Brondong. And that was his home. And this uncle had a daughter who was studying in the Netherlands for teacher, and at that time the [indecipherable] was six years, because you had to go by boat, there were no planes, you

had to go by boat through the Suez Canal, that took six weeks. So that daughter in the Netherlands didn't have a home, so every vacation, Easter, Christmas, New Year, she was in our house, she was like another sister. But when my brother went there, he had reversed it, it was his home there, his -- and they -- there were two other girls, and they were there. They went later in those horrible camps, but they told us what happened.

Q: And when did you find out about this, after the war?

A: After the war. [indecipherable]

Q: After the war, so you di -- you had no idea whether he was okay, or he wasn't okay --

A: We didn't know [indecipherable]

Q: -- the whole time.

A: The only thing that you could once in awhile do was via the Red Cross, send a letter to non-occupied, or allied countries, but it was heavily censored.

Q: Right.

A: We'd never got to Indonesia, no it was no way.

Q: So that was very tough on your family, I would imagine.

A: Yeah, first my older sister, then my brother, then me. [indecipherable] mother.

Q: Right.

A: Having the [indecipherable] couldn't help.

Q: Right. What did you think when the queen and the government left the country, and went to England, at first?

A: We were so disappointed, and so sad, and so furious. I have Hein's diary, he was furious. And we all felt -- you say the father of the fatherland we call the kings. She was the mother of -- and we said, which mother leaves her children alone when they're in trouble? That's when you have to be there. And we loved th-the Belgian king, he stayed, and he stayed with his people. And you know what? The queen left with the whole government, and they left us, and they fled, and they were [indecipherable] no, because those ministers left their wives, and children in the Netherlands. It was really our government that went to England. So that was our official government. And then the very serious Christians, you have obey what God says in the Bible. And in the time of Jesus, they were occupied by the Romans.

Q: Right.

Q: And it's -- so a lot of denominations decided this is what God gives us, we have to obey Hitler. But we thought further, and we thought, well, our official government, and our queen -- all the hoyal -- royal families always crowned by the grace of God. It's a very serious ceremony when they are crowned. And our government was in England, so we felt that we had total freedom, and yet obey what they told us. And later they told several underground to blow up that munition, blow up that bridge, and [indecipherable]

Q: So did you wait? I mean, how long did it take you to decide that when the --

A: Maybe a few months.

Q: A few months.

A: Because see, we also heard that we were a very wealthy country. They paid very low taxes because we had Indonesia, with rich, rich, it's got everything, copper, tin, pewter, you call that. And rubber, and oil. So that we had -- the royal family of the Netherlands was considered one of the wealthiest in the Netherlands, too. They had [indecipherable] that they could take our national treasury, but they took all the gold bars to England, so [indecipherable] found nothing, and then -- no, we -- and then the Belgian king, he had several palaces, they always had several, and then, okay, you stayed here, you go to Larpen, I think it was called, and it was a big, big garden, giant garden, with a wall around it, and you could never speak to these people. So did he serve them? No. I mean, our queen did really the wisest what she could do. So then that took some all months before they realized it.

Q: And how were they communicating back? Did they --

A: The government?

Q: Yes, well from England.

A: There were secret sendlers with the Netherlands, and so on. And our ministers were all there. But then later -- see, in the beginning, the resistance, you don't know where to start.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean, you don't know. And that were all really little groups decided something has to be done, and when they did, sometimes they [indecipherable] and very much later, years later, they got together, and they formed the L.O., the Landelijke Organisatie, the [indecipherable] and they asked us also to be a member, but we thought was danger in being in a large group, and we had -- we were self-sufficient, we had stolen all the stuff. So we said no. We knew all the people we worked with, and we trusted them, and we didn't take part. But that's --

Q: So tell me how --

A: -- that secret sender.

Q: Did -- when -- when you saw the Germans come in, did you very quickly think in your head, we have to do something, or did it take -- did it take time for you to --

A: No, I remember when they marched in, I thought we have to do anything to get them out. But you didn't know what yet. But you hated them.

Q: Right. And did you talk with friends immediately, or --

A: Now, then it happened that they started slowly, and I later read that Hitler had told Zize Ingot, who we got as governor, and that was his reward, that he had betrayed Austria, and that Hitler had told him, the Dutch are Aryers, blue-eyes, blonde hair, that was his ideal, and treat them with gloves, because they might want to be a province of Germany. Now, when I read that, I laughed so hard, I thought he has forgotten one national trait here, very stubborn. And that was -- in a marriage it can be a problem, but here it was good, so what Hitler told us to do, we didn't want to do, simply. So now -- and then s -- be -- as punishment, because we didn't obey, we got curfew. Now, we don't like to be told to be home from 11 to six, so that was the first thing that [indecipherable] us all. Then all the transp -- nobody had a car, and that was not poverty, only businesses like Sears, or whatever, had cu -- big trucks, but for the rest, nobody had a car. So we had trams, terrific connections in -- in the city, and in all those buses. And it was a few pennies, they went every three, four minutes, or you hopped on the tram, stepped over on the bus, and there you were. That was the whole -- and then the [indecipherable], of course [indecipherable]. But all of a sudden the Jewish people weren't allowed to use those any more. And then they started -- the Jewish people weren't allowed to visit the non-Jews, so Herman couldn't come any more. And we couldn't visit Jewish people. And they were telling us then -- because they were telling all lies over the papers, and over the radio, we di-didn't even bother any more, we turned BBC, that was the only -- that was forbidden. And if you still listened, you won't be -- I always tell the kids here, you [indecipherable] half the year to jail if you caught you listening to the BBC. Now, it's ridiculous to go half a year -- and then we still listened, so we had to hand the radios in, and it went. So I mean, we got more and more irritated in the [indecipherable] so and so, so have to get out of this country. But then, you'd still didn't know what to do, till Herman called me one day, and he said, "Diet, I want to see you." I said, "To heck with Hitler, you come to our house." He said, "I don't dare." Anyway [indecipherable] to my house, either. And then we met somewhere, and that was when the Jewish people started to get those papers, you have to leave your house, leave everything behind, and it was always in the curfew, hours that we Dutch couldn't do a thing. And then --

Q: So the Jews would have to be out during curfew to go to Westerbork? They would be sent to Westerbork?

A: Dee -- that was always during the curfew.

Q: So that no one else would be around?

A: We couldn't be in the street --

Q: I see.

A: -- and we couldn't make a big riot. And they were allowed -- and you know that from all your interviews, they were only allowed to take a little suitcase for each member, with a change of clothing, a fork, knife, spoon, cup, and a blanket.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Now, I mean, if you think -- and that still makes me now furious, you know, but you think, they have a right to be there. Some of them were there since 1500. They had worked, they had done, they had earned their house, they have worked hard, and you have not only in money value, but you have things that are handed down from family tradition, and kids who have pets. I mean, they had to leave everything behind, and I was saying, what was their crime? Their crime was that they were born Jewish. And is that a crime? I mean, I would say, that's what God decides, the color of your skin. I could have been born in Nigeria and be pitch black. I mean, you have nothing to say in that. So it was such a terrible injustice, we had never seen anything like that. And I think now the people was really -- are getting kind of -- you know, it's just the fact that I've seen -- it's so horrible. And that night I saw Hein, and I told him, and Hein had read the book that Hitler wrote, *Mein Kampf*. And then he said, oh he [indecipherable] because remember -- and I forgot to tell him that you know that, the night that they invaded our country, that -- there was no place in Europe any more, there was no place. Many of those German Jews committed suicide. And the next day, I wished I had kept those papers, your heart broke, obituaries of father, mother, children, all the ages, they had all the German Jewish [indecipherable] and they committed suicide. And that was so horrible. And then -- then Hein and I talked, we said, oh, and [indecipherable] Hitler hates them, he's going to do something terrible, but we still didn't know that they would be killed.

Q: So you're not hearing anything from Europe, because by then they'd attacked Russia, and they start killing Jews. But you haven't heard anything.

A: Was that in '40? '41?

Q: No. No, no, '42.

A: No, this is later. But this was -- I think that the Jewish people got their notice the very end of '41, beginning of '42.

Q: Right.

- A: And we had not heard anything about that, that came later, that's I think June. The -- this was that Herman had to leave, and then we said that can't happen, but what could you do? I mean, I was twen --
- Q: So let -- let me go back for a moment. There's a big strike in 1941, the worker's strike in February.
- A: In Amsterdam.
- Q: In Amsterdam. Did -- di -- you had heard about this?
- A: We heard that later, but it was, of course not in the papers, although they shot a lot of people, because like here you have now Rumsfeld, and Cheney, and so -- that when they march in our country and they weren't obeying the right way to do things, and we heard - I later heard we were the only country where they did it -- all our own mayors and government people are kicked out and all replaced by Nazis. And so [indecipherable] by Germans. So that was already unusual. And also they took right away, 70 of our top guys, and they were put in a prison, but it was a big monastery in Bravong. And that's -- it had -- it was from the middle age, had meter thick walls. And that's -- and they were hostages, and they told us, if you do anything, those guys will be shot. And they were. Some of them -- so they did, because several of them were shot.
- Q: I see. So you -- you have this -- the Germans come in, so talk between 1940 and '42. So on the one hand, you're saying that the -- the Dutch hate the fact that they're there, want them out, and at the same time, it's very difficult to know what you do when you have such a force as the Germans were. So you're caught in this dilemma.
- A: You -- we didn't know first what to do.
- Q: Uh-huh.
- A: But, you know, when this happen, that Herman told me he had to leave, and that's where my religion and Hein's religion came out in the first place. They were the con -- the people that God had chosen to bring forth Jesus, the Messiah, it was for us. In the second place, it says in the Bible, who touches them, and even if they believe that Jesus is the Messiah [indecipherable] they are the apple of God's eye, and who touches them, touch -- touches God's eye. And then also, we thought it was such an injustice, and Jesus said, do unto others what you want others to do unto you. So we felt we had to help, but we didn't know what to. And Hein had read that book, and then we got talking, he said, "Oh, it's terrible," he said, "he'll go and do something terrible." And then all of a sudden Hein says, "I have an idea." His father was principal, out in the country, in farming community, and they were all Christians, and all Christian area there. And all those kids had -- from the farms, came to his school, and Hein was the oldest of 10 kids [indecipherable] I don't know, [indecipherable] that he was born, probably. He was born in the other place, but he lived there his whole life. And those farmers gave him all those years, the eggs, and they bought the eggs, butter, everything. So Hein knew all those

farmers, and also from the kids who came to school. And Hein says to me, "You know what? If I hop on the train, and ask any of those farmers if they will take Herman till the war is over, I'm sure they do it." And we thought, at that time, that was [indecipherable] times, the war would last a year, maybe a year and a half. So -- and then I called Herman, and I said, "Herman, we have an idea." And I met him again. And he said, "Yes, please." He said, "And can you do my sister, too, Rosa, she is so scared." And I said, "What about your parents?" Because I knew -- he said no, my parents say -- and this is really ironic, "Germany is an -- an civilized country, and it won't be so bad, we probably have to work hard, and how long will the war will last," -- we all thought it would be short -- and then come back. And they did not want to go in hiding, and not be a bother to others. But Herman said he was dating a Jewish girl, and the father had already died, thanks to the Germans, and the mo -- she was an only child, and he says, "Ada is scared, and her mother is scared." So that was four. And then all of a sudden, they spread the news, and I think within two or three weeks we have a list of over 60. And we -- Hein went to the farms, and they didn't know me then, but he went, and they all said, "Sure, sure, send them, send them." And that's how it started.

Q: So how come people were so willing, di -- were the -- the Nazis not in the north? Were they not occupying Friesland?

A: They were.

Q: They were there. And then but --

A: But that was in hiding. And we didn't bring them to Friesland, we bought them to the middle of the country Nijkerk, that is -- I don't know if you have a map --

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: -- but I have a map of the Netherlands.

Q: Right.

A: It's a bit east of Amersfoort.

Q: Yes.

A: And there, see our country, the south [indecipherable] is mostly Catholics, and they did it, too, and north of [indecipherable] are mostly the Protestant. And -- so -- and Hein knew all those people, and they were all from -- I didn't know they sent their children to the Christian schools, and so -- and they were --

Q: And they didn't hesitate?

A: No. They thought it was just normal, nobody -- I really -- I can still not understand why here in America, I feel sometimes very uncomfortable because I tell here my story, and



you all think it's terrific. And I'll tell you, I wouldn't dare to tell my story in the Netherlands, they would shrug their shoulders and say so what, you did it [indecipherable]. No, honest, I thought everybody I met at that time was in the resistance, so I thought the whole Netherlands was in the resistance. [indecipherable]

Q: But that's not true.

A: No, because this high government guy later told me, he says that in the first place, that our denomination was the most. And then he asked me, "Who do you think is the second group?" And I thought, well we have the same [indecipherable] maybe you know the Communists. And that's true, you have to be on fire for what you believe --

Q: Right.

A: -- and they were. So that is really interesting. You know, we didn't think it was so special, you know? It was just what you had to do.

Q: But you knew it was dangerous. And certainly the farmers had to know it was dangerous, be --

A: Now, they -- you know, in the beginning, we didn't know how far -- who the Gestapo was.

Q: You didn't?

A: No, you did not realize how -- but then you found out also, that they had officially black uniforms, and they were men and women, and all ages, and most of them didn't wear the black uniform, they were dressed like you and I. So you had to really watch out what you say, to whom, because I could say to -- well, for instance, the -- for the first time executed 18 guys. Now we were shocked, shocked. I don't know if you've read that poem of -- oh, that is so beautiful, the 18 -- that was a -- a -- a poet who was shot the next morning. I can never read it without starting to cry. But when that happened, you know, we were so shocked, and then we realized you had to watch out if you said to another girl, isn't that horrible from the 18 guys, and she was a Nazi [indecipherable]

Q: Wow.

A: -- you didn't know the person real good [indecipherable] terrible things like that.

Q: Did you have to worry about some of your friends?

A: Well, me?

Q: Or people you thought you were f -- who -- who you thought were friends? That must have --

A: I found that out because this -- there were two girls that we always went jumping over the ditches, they were from my church, and they were -- one was my age, one was a year younger, and their brother was a year younger again, Daniel, and we were all -- and then my brother was friends with Daniel, and we were as a whole group together. And we went together to catechism, went to church, and to everything. And it was the habit after church that the parents -- my parents had friends, and they came one Sunday to our house for coffee, and then the other Sunday there. But those friends and I we s -- we played piano quartre main, four hands, and so one Sunday it was in their house, and we had fun, and until dinnertime, and the next Sunday in our house. And when I -- I think I told you that there -- there was nothing for the soldiers, that they had invited the pulpits and so come to our house, so we had Dutch soldiers. And they were like brother and sister, and I said, "Are you going to do it?" And they said no, we have five kids, it's too busy, we don't do it. And the first Sunday after the war it was in our house, and the second Sunday I went to their house, and I couldn't believe it. You had to go up the stairs, and then over the piano was a big portrait of Hitler. And you had those doors that were gliders, that opened -- they had double doors, and I heard in the other room German speaking, and I look, and I see German soldiers. So then I knew that they were all Nazi. And I had right away, after the war, I'm always a fanatic, I bought a little flag, and like now you see over [indecipherable] after 11/7, that I put it on my [indecipherable]. And I was so shattered when I saw that, and I said to them, "As long as this hangs in this house, I can't set a foot here." And I turned around and I went downstairs to get my bag. And I think Daniel had told me, the flag of my reich, so he didn't even feel Dutch any more. And I heard later that Daniel fought at the [indecipherable], so he was not just in name, and both the girls went to Germany and served there with [indecipherable]

Q: Really?

A: [indecipherable] m-mice, very [indecipherable]

Q: Now, were they in the Malakka Club?

A: They were also in that group, yeah.

Q: In -- in that club, at first [indecipherable]

A: We had such a fun -- I couldn't be -- I wrote a letter to them, I've never mailed it, I wrote it in my diary, but I was shattered, absolutely shattered. I couldn't believe it. But see, then later I realized when we met those Nazis [indecipherable] at the border, they were [indecipherable]. And my brother later said, "Diet, you guys never s -- talked politics, but I was in dan -- Daniel's room, and he had a lot of stuff from Germany [indecipherable]". So my brother was not surprised.

Q: Right.

A: But I never knew, never talked about it. And we had [indecipherable], and many pastors who spoke out on the pulpit, and priests, too, were arrested.

Q: Right. Now, the Dutch government opened Westerbork as a refugee camp because there were so many refugees coming in.

A: The Nazi Dutch.

Q: The Nazi Dutch.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yes. And this was when? In 1939, in 1940?

A: No, it was after the war.

Q: It was after the war.

A: Because before it was really a camp for -- see, there was such an unemployment, and people got their money, but they wanted them to do something. And so they had several work camps, that the guy who got money from the government could do something useful, let's say in a very watery place, they were really filling with earth that it could be used for growing stuff or something, you have so many more -- more s -- more [indecipherable] or something. And so the -- it was originally a work camp for the -- for the --

Q: For refugees?

A: -- people who were getting welfare.

Q: But --

A: And then they had leave, and they could go home. Then they are rebuilding [indecipherable], and only that [indecipherable] or many more of those worked, and [indecipherable] and whatever.

Q: And so when does it become a place where they send Jews, after the war?

A: Where they sent the Jews?

Q: Yes.

A: I think that might have been the end of '40, when then they started telling them to go to Germany, and they didn't go. And that was also th -- because the Jews from The Hague had to report to a big station in The Hague, and they went in [indecipherable] but then, like me with Herman, and so there were a bunch who didn't go, and others in the area where that camp was, I think they were told to go there. And then twice a week [indecipherable]

- Q: And what -- did Herman say what he was afraid of? Why wouldn't he go to Westerbork? Did he have a sense that something terrible was going to happen?
- A: Yeah, th-that the German Jews committed suicide [indecipherable] that told us a lot. And we had over the years heard about the Kristallnacht, so we knew that Hitler -- it was not just any more words, before we thought it's a big mouth, and words, but now they were doing.
- Q: But you still don't know that they're killing Jews?
- A: No.
- Q: No idea?
- A: I really think I found that out after the war.
- Q: Uh-huh. So no rumors even coming through?
- A: We heard that there were -- no, that it was very bad, and that many people died, but we thought of hunger, and of dysentery, and of sicknesses. But that they were systematically killed --
- Q: You had no idea.
- A: But I read a lot of books, and I think this is [indecipherable] Mila 18, that they think that people escaped [indecipherable], and I just got a few weeks ago, and I was shattered, and that was from a man, a real man, maybe you -- oh, what was his name, Kurt something, and he was [indecipherable] Christian in Germany, and he hated it, and he had to be a mi -- of the party, a member of the party to get a job, and he spoke out, and he was kicked of the party. And he got more and more [indecipherable] of the evil of the Nazi system. And yet, how can I actually do something? And he signed up with the SS, but every job that he had done -- I [indecipherable] to give you the name, because it's --
- Q: It's Gerstein.
- A: Yeah.
- Q: Yeah, Kurt Gerstein.
- A: Oh.
- Q: Yeah, it's quite a story.
- A: Oh. And you ne -- he even got to the Pope, and the Pope didn't do a thing.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I think they got messages to England, to America, and nobody believed them. I can't be -- oh.

Q: Do you remember before Herman gets his letter that Jews had to wear a star. Do you remember seeing --

A: Yeah, that's what -- at the same time that they weren't allowed to use the -- the trams, and the trains and everything any more.

Q: Right. So it's -- I think it's difficult for people to understand how restricted life not only became for you, but even more so for the Jews, they couldn't go to parks, they couldn't go to -- be on the tram, except -- they couldn't even go on the tram at all, right?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: N-No. And they weren't allowed to go in parks, to concerts, they weren't allowed anywhere, except they weren't allowed to shop in the big stores, only their own Jewish stores, which of course got hardly any in supply.

Q: Right.

A: No, it was really -- it was terrible. But later [indecipherable] I c -- I could identify with when they were looking for me, you know, that you couldn't go here and there, and whatever, so -- I don't know. Oh, it was a terrible thing, and that really happened.

Q: What are you seeing in your eyes, right now?

A: Well, I can't understand really, that one human being can do [indecipherable] to another human being I mean, how hard would you have gotten inside? And then I heard that those [indecipherable] Germans who -- because here you are in a country where there is justice, it mightn't always be carried out like we want to, and we've made mistakes, but the idea is a judge has to give a sentence that's according to [indecipherable], and here -- and we can't understand it, you were totally dependent on the guy who did your hearing, on his mood. If he had -- that morning had burned toast, he might sentence everybody to death that day. I mean, you were totally in their hands, and you had no -- there were no right, there was no right. It's so terrible. And that you always have to watch out what you say, to whom you say it. It's against anything that's freedom. It's terrible.

Q: We have to change the tape.

A: Okay, you got a [indecipherable] again.

End of Tape #3

**Tape #4**

Q: When Herman came to you, and you and Hein talked about what to do, you had already started a group of some kind, right?

A: We were --

Q: Or the -- actually the HEIN group --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- although it's not have anything to do with --

A: No, we were the -- I -- in the office where I worked, there was ma -- one man who was really fanatic patriot, and you know, I know what he did is -- we listened to the BBC news, and we took shorthand, and we typed it out and spread it, that's what we felt we could do for the people who were scared and handed in their radios. And also, I know that this guy always took part of the Bible, and say, read that, and it was always from the Old Testament, you know, punishment, people who attacked Israel. So it was kind of a -- a stimulants, you know, y -- we do God's will, because in the Old Testament was -- anyway it was the -- we were with a group, and there was an other man, and he was married to a Jewish lady, and he never -- that was the uncle of Herman, and he was also starting to be interested in helping those people.

Q: Is that Ben?

A: His name was Uncle Frits.

Q: Uncle Frits.

A: He's probably -- Ohm Frits, he's --

Q: Uh-huh. That's F-r-i-t-s, yes?

A: Yeah, and he was -- we -- we were discussing what can we do, but till that time, really, the only thing we felt is spread the ne -- noi -- news of the BBC. But then, when they started on our Jews, n -- we knew was more important stuff to do. We still did that, but when we hid the Jews -- but then, it became difficult because an -- at the same time, because the Germans were occupying all Europe, and they had also drafted the women, they might be the first. But in Germany itself were only very old people, and very young people. And the war industry was going full blast, and the fields need to be worked, and there were no of that age group. So then, in all the occupied countries, you might have heard that in Norway, and in France probably too, but was always a handsome young man, with beautiful white teeth, blonde hair, big, blue eyes, come to Germany, terrific pay. And that was on the walls, and in the papers everywhere. And there was a lot of unemployment, but we didn't want to go to Germany. And then, at the same time, that

was when they started on the Jewish people, and because the people didn't go to Germany, because we didn't want to go to the country where -- a few will always go, for money, you know, but that's a small percentage. And then they got mad, and they said okay, you didn't come when we invited you, now it's forced labor. And every male between 16 and 45 had to go, except from the Catholic church, a priest, and from the Protestant church, the pastors, and some teachers didn't have to go, but a bunch had to go, because what they did, the people didn't go, and then they surrounded, for instance, a high school. Now, there are always boys of 16 - 17. So they went in the morning happily to school and never came home, they were sent to Germany. And the universities were all in that age group, so they were surrounded, and we had many Jewish professors, they have brains, and they were very beloved, and they were kicked out of their jobs, they weren't allowed to have their jobs any more, so their students went on strike, and all -- they were -- so all the students, if they were -- they surrounded the university, and they were -- so then everything closed. And so only girls went to school, and the university were closed, also out of protest, strike. So some of the teachers had to go to -- and then they still didn't want to go, so a lot -- just think that in America, every male between 16 and 45 has to go in hiding, and that's what happened. And they went in hiding, but a small group didn't know where to go, mostly somewhere in your circle of family or friends, there is somebody where you can go and hide. But those guys couldn't come in the street any more, because you didn't know if you saw a young man or a woman that they were Gestapo, so they were -- they really had to go in hiding. But the thing was, because nobody went to Germany to work there, in the fields -- there was hunger in Germany, and they loaded in all the countries the trains full, and the food went all to Germany, and we had very little. So they started a ration system with coupons, I have some in my -- you probably have seen them. But anyway -- but the only way you got the coupons, and they lasted a month -- it was about a card this size, and it was so little, a German guy with an appetite wouldn't even have anything to eat. And it was very little, but you only got it when you went to those offices. And there were Dutch people working but the supervision all was kicked out, and all replaced by Germans. And you only got your new card -- your new sou -- coupons if you showed your I.D. So those young men between 16 and 45 never could get coupons again. And the farmers, because you know in [indecipherable] they helped their own group, they did not help others, really, only the dental family -- the dentist family. But many, Corrie ten Boom, were hiding Jewish people, and many groups were hiding, many. Catholics, and Protestants, and Communists, everybody. So, but those guys -- the farmers had already -- who dared to, had taken Jews, but then we had to go to villages and cities and say, will you take a Dutch guy. And that was considered less dangerous than taking a Jewish person. But they told us we can't, because we know they don't get ration cards, and my own kid is asking for another slice of bread we can't give him, and a potato. We can't feed an extra mouth. If you don't have ration cards, then they don't get it. And then from some other group, you know, at that time -- now people travel, but at that time, if a farmer and his wife lived here, and they had two sons, then they got farms close by. They all stayed close by. And nobody traveled, and all the mail they got might have been a bank statement, and a per -- something of their church, but they didn't get any other mail. And here we also made a big mistake, we put a father and mother here, and a son there, and a daughter there, and they started writing each other. And that was for the mailman who delivered it, and the



second letter, or the third letter, you have somebody here? And that was suspicious. And then, this was big news, there was no television at that time, the radio was va -- so Farmer so and so gets all the time mail, so then they maybe think, do you have somebody, you get all the time mail, I hear from the mailman. So they got scared, and some were arrested, farmers, and they have --

Q: Some of the farmers were arrested?

A: Yeah, because they had also a side -- see they -- we had such a well registered country, every family in every village, in wherever you lived, had a card system in every town hall. And if a baby was born, the father had to go to the town hall, and say there's a new baby, this name and that and that, and that went in a card system. And if somebody died, you had to go, a card was taken out. If a whole family moved to another city, that -- you had to report it, and the whole -- but that card system, at that time -- now they can't do it any more, but everything was on it. Your faith, your religion, your job, your whatever you were, your age. So they had all the Jewish fing -- on their fingertips, that they knew exactly how many Jews we had. And of course, then they saw that they were not showing up in the amount they had to show up, so they got mad. And everywhere, like -- with -- for the labor, there were signs, if you help a Jew, you -- you will be treated as a Jew. So then the farmers -- and some were betrayed because of the mail, and they got scared, because the I.D.s, the identification cards that we all had to have the end of '44, the beginning of '41, that had a big, fat, black J printed on it, too. And they had gone to the farms with this thing, and then the farmers came to us, and they said, Diet -- or, I had fal - - the false name then, "Diet, can you get us I.D.s without a J, be -- if there ever is a raid on our farm, that we can say, we didn't know they were Jewish, we thought they were city people who were hungry, came here for being -- for better food." And then the people in the city said, "We will take the Dutch guys if you had ration cards." And then we were in a bind, because you know, by that time, I think we had hidden about 80 Jewish people all over. And this -- the farmers were scared. We got together, we were a real small group, and we knew all each other from long ago, and we were a Christian group, and we went on our knees, and we prayed to God, and we had -- Lord, we can't just now say good luck and find your own way. We have to go on, but now we don't know what to do any more. And I remember I always was jealous of Moses, he got a manna from he -- and he got water from the rock, but the heavens did not open, and we did not get a whole bunch of cards. And then the only way to get it was to take it, because, you know, there was no other way out, and it was really life and death for those people. So then, after praying, it became clear to us, we had to do a robbery on the German offices. Until that time, if you treated -- helped a Jew, you were treated as a Jew, but if you did a robbery on the German office, that was the death penalty. And when I speak for high schools, or universities, I always say when I say this, "This is not advice kids," I said, "but if you do an ar -- a robbery, you better have arms, and revolvers." And th-the British had, over our lakes, dumped at night, you know, big containers full of -- we had weapons, the resistance, but having a weapon was the death penalty. So then it really became dangerous, and there were a few brave guys that were called the knockploegs, k-n-o-c-k ploeg. And they volunteered to do that, every month again. And we found always a village, or a somewhere, where we knew somebody was working, sa -- a Dutch person

was good, and that we can make a dra -- a drawing, where are the guards [indecipherable] a guard, how many, is -- how is it locked, you know, that they had to shoot it open. But that -- before they went in, that they knew the whole situation. And then before --

Q: This wa --was this your group, or this is another group that's stealing for you?

A: That -- were three guys who did it for all groups.

Q: For all groups? Only three guys?

A: Well, later -- I knew three --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But I -- there were more, and one later was arrested, and he was terrible tortured. And I think then somebody else, you know --

Q: Took over.

A: -- there were many guys who were willing to do that.

Q: Well, let me go back for a moment. When Hein says I can go -- where are you -- you know, and find farmers, did he go to people he knew?

A: Hein?

Q: Yes.

A: For the farmers, yeah, all people --

Q: In that area. So everyone at -- so he would just knock on the door --

A: He went to those farmers, and then he had his best friend Ab, they were our two leaders, and Ab was eight years older. And he had a job, he was a representative for a grain company, and Ab knew a whole other bunch of people. See, Hein knew the parents of the children, but Ab knew all his customers, and he had a big territory.

Q: I see.

A: So he knew many places, and --

Q: And Ab's name, his full name is Ab --

A: Albert van Meerveld.

Q: Right.

A: And was a street in his village in Barneveld named after him, he was also killed. And --

Q: So these two, Hein and Ab were the two leaders of the group?

A: Ab -- were the two leaders of our group.

Q: And how many of you were in the group, do you think?

A: Now later, see, they were -- some were arrested --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and later we were around 15.

Q: 15.

A: And we had two places, Nijkerk and Barneveld, it was the ones that -- was Zwijndrecht, near Dorduf that was the other group. And we met each other, and then we kind of merged. They were decimated, we were decimated, and then together, but we always kept contact, but -- from the Zwijndrecht group, they did a lot in spying, and they got really order from England to blow up munitions stuff and so.

Q: Right. Now, when you brought people to the farms, did you expect somehow everything would be okay?

A: No.

Q: You didn't? Because you had an enormous amount of work to do in terms of --

A: Oh, I remember I had once to bring a very Orthodox Jews from The Hague to Duchorn, that is a village outside Apeldoorn. I had -- the man could have been, you know, in children's Bibles, you see Father Abraham, real Jewish looking, oh he looked like that. Was written all over him Jew. And of -- in the first place, the stem had to -- star had to go out. And this man was Orthodox, and later I learned he had his Tallit, you know, his prayer thing in his pocket and he lost it, and he wanted to go back for it, oh. I had to twice change trains. Miracles happened, because I had to bring him, his wife, and his 16 year old son first to Utrecht, there we had to switch to a train to Amersfoort. In Amersfoort we had to switch to a train to Apeldoorn, and then we had to walk I don't know how many miles to a -- a hotel that was in the woods, and the people had -- nobody had money any more, so they were totally broke, they had nothing. So Hein and Ab went there, and they said -- they first sends them out if they were good, and they were good, you know, that they were por the Netherlands, and not Nazi. And they said, well we can give you customers, and we will pay for that, and they have the ration cards and everything. And it was so isolated, so we could bring a whole lot of Jewish people there, but on a Sunday. I was still working in my office, I had to bring this guy. And he had a suitcase so heavy,

that I don't know -- have you ever read that an accident happens, and that it was in the -- in the paper some time ago, and it has happened several times, and that one woman is under the car, and the other woman passed, and it was life or death and she lifted the car, have you ever heard of such thing?

Q: Yeah.

A: Now, I said a prayer. I couldn't get that suitcase, I said, "God, this is all they have in this right world," and I could lift that suitcase, I don't know how. And then in -- then we si -- went from one train to the other, the guy loses his Tallit, and he wanted to go back, I said -- I told him beforehand, I said, "Listen, you sit here." Martin, his son had to sit there, and his wife there, and I am there. I said, and if you are -- I gave him a newspaper, I said, "The whole trip, keep that in front of your face, because that is," -- and I said, "if you are arrested there is no point that [indecipherable] and I go on with your wife and son." But these were horrible things. And we got there, oh, and then I went to my sister, and we had to walk, and we walked into the woods, oh, no, and another night they had told that if I came at 11 PM at the certain station, again Amersfoort, there would be a cab, or a car, and two elderly people, and there was nobody. Oh, no, no, it was -- it was more a miracle if it went all right. It was a miracle.

Q: I would imagine it was, because you have people's lives in your hands all the time. How did you bring -- let's just talk about Herman for a moment. Herman gets a card to go to Westerbork. How many days does he have? A few days?

A: He had quite awhile.

Q: He did have?

A: Because then he was really not ready, and he told Rosa, and I still see Rosa all the time, she is a sweetheart, she's now -- she's a few years older than I am. And she says I -- just when I heard it I said, I will go. And so she was really the first one, although we had offered it to Herman, and she went alone to Amersfoort, and there they picked her up and brought her to the farm. And she was there a long time, but then became the -- she sor -- she was wandering a lot, and then here, and then there, and she was really half dating a non-Jewish guy, and later she was in the part in Zwijndrecht. But she said, "When I closed the door behind me, I really had no idea that I never s -- would see my parents again, and how dangerous it would be." You know we -- we -- we all underestimated the danger, I think, and maybe it was a good thing.

Q: Maybe, because maybe you wouldn't have done it if you really knew the danger.

A: That's what I don't know. I think later we were willing to [indecipherable] so that we will be [indecipherable] they were looking for me under two names. And then I was arrested on my third name, and I knew if they found out who I really was, was the end. And you know, I can honestly say, and this sound crazy, I have three times I -- that I thought it's the end of my life, and I was so young, and at home my wedding dress was hanging. And

I think you get a special grace from God, you can say it's okay. And that's a way when it's over, because sometimes I thing now I'm not as close to God as I was then, but I think when it's my time, I'll get it again. You know, it's -- but I think when you really feel you have to, you want to live like God wants you to live, that's -- and you just do it and trust. Well, it's not always easy to do the right things, that's what I tell the young kids when I go to schools and universities, that whole life's making choices. You every day will do a fork in the road, and I say pick the right road. And that might ask sacrifices. And I had to speak for the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, about two and a half years ago, or three years ago, and I said to those guys, I said, "In the profession you have chosen, it might easily be that you have to make the highest sacrifice, your life." And I think, who knows now [indecipherable] how many of those guys have already given that sacrifice.

Q: But your belief in God during that wartime period when you started --

A: Oh yeah.

Q: -- was absolutely essential to you.

A: I can tell you, if I had [indecipherable] Psalms, oh, David went through everything in this life. And when I read those Psalms you know, I thought oh, I don't know, there is a Psalm 27, the lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear, and I thought, yeah, that's scary. I was fee -- and then it said, when an army comes against me -- because David was fleeing for Saul, and then he wrote it, and he said, when an army comes up against me, he will put me on a rock, and he will hide me [indecipherable] and I also, I always knew that's what God is doing with me, I mean really I shouldn't be sitting here, so many of my friends were killed, so I feel that I was spared for a purpose, and you have to find a purpose, and have the time all to see the purpose.

Q: Right.

A: I have to try.

Q: Did you read the Bible during this period, or did you know so much?

A: No, you did -- not allowed to have anything, so it's good that in our church we had -- we went to the Christian school, and every Monday morning we had to learn a little part of the Psalms, so Monday -- Su-Sunday night, I could easily learn, so my parents didn't have to bother, but later I was -- you know, we hated all that we had to do that. And [indecipherable], oh, what a lucky thing because it came all back to me.

Q: It came back.

A: You know, I -- I -- I would have gone absolutely -- I think I would have been in [indecipherable] in an institution if I [indecipherable]

Q: If you didn't have the --

A: Because later, in that concentration camp [indecipherable] it was impossible.

Q: So Diet, tell me -- I don't know, th-there wasn't a normal day, but once the people, th -- these Jewish families are put, either singly or together, on a farm, then what is your responsibility, and the responsibility of your group? What did you have to do?

A: Now, we brought the mail along, because that was what they were living on, the mail from their children, we -- so, because the po --

Q: So they didn't go through the normal mail system because it was too dangerous?

A: No, because that was so suspicious for the mailman, and then also, the Gestapo opened if they thought that somebody is suspicious, they opened the mail, so that was double. And I had to see that every month, even if it was at the farm, the food was scarce, and bad, so they still wanted raf -- the ration cards, so after the robberies, we had to see every month, with every Jewish, and if it was very poor people, we gave them two cards or so. And we had to, if an address became unsafe, you had to find another place and transport them. And that one Jewish guy, who was our falsifier, in normal life he had been a draftsman, and he was terrific, he falsified everything, so he had a room with his wife --

Q: Is this Ben?

A: [indecipherable] where I later was a lot.

Q: Wha -- what was his name? Was it --

A: His name was Uncle Ben.

Q: Ben, uh-huh.

A: Uncle Ben, yeah. Kanis was their last name. And he was very good, and I was often there, because this one had to have a new paper, and that one had to new paper, so we were constantly busy. And at the farms, you know, that was very smart because they had little kids. And the neighbors, the doors were always open, you walk in and out. So the little kids were told to say, neighbor, we have buurman, that's the man, and buurvrouw, that's the woman, you say here neighbor. But it was just so if the little kids talked about the neighbors, the -- the real neighbors didn't really -- were not surprised because they thought, oh, they're talking about that -- you know, you had to think of everything when you had little kids.

Q: How often would you go to these farms?

- A: At least once a month, but mostly more. And because you know, for the cards, but at some -- and also, I was allowed to sleep there, so even if I had nothing to do there, but I was in that area, then I could always sleep in, on the bed somewhere [indecipherable]
- Q: Was it easier for a woman to be traveling around doing this?
- A: Yeah, the men could always be stopped for the forced labor. And so after the first robbery, because all our men were in that age group --
- Q: Right.
- A: -- Hein was, I think, 22 probably, his brother was a year younger, 23, and Ab was in his 30's. So they would right away have been -- so, but after the first robbery, we could give -- all the Jews went without a J, and Uncle Ben was working like crazy. And all our guys took also new, and they were all pastors, so we --
- Q: They were all pastors.
- A: Because they didn't have to go to Germany. So then, when they were stopped in the train, and it happened regularly, they were pastors, so then they could go on.
- Q: So if there were 15 people in your group, did all 15 go around giving out these -- the ration cards, and the I.D. papers?
- A: Well, I worked mainly in -- in Felmaloond, around Amersfoort and Utrecht. But in the south they had other things too, because they were really -- yeah, I know that there they got orders from England, that was a secret sender that they had to blow up a munition depot, or a bridge, or something. So they did also Jewish people, but they -- they spread it. Some they [indecipherable] and that was --
- Q: But that -- this was a totally different group, that wasn't your group?
- A: No, we merged --
- Q: Your group was --
- A: We merged.
- Q: That was the group you merged with?
- A: Yeah.
- Q: But you didn't want to do anything that was --
- A: I didn't want to do any killing.

Q: Any killing.

A: No.

Q: Or sabotage.

A: And when we were in the beginning, they asked us -- they asked us tha -- Hein had to go right away in hiding in 1940 already. And he was put in a house, and the girl was engaged, they said, to an Italian. And then all of a sudden another guy said that Italian is pro-Nazi, that's dangerous. So then they brought Hein to another house, and that guy -- anyway, they said that Italian was dangerous, and they asked us -- that was a Communist group, and they asked us to stab him on a dark night in the back, and kill him, and throw him in a canal. And we were not convinced that you have to be -- I could do -- I couldn't do it, but I could let a guy from the -- who had the guns, I could ask him, and then they will do it. But I wasn't convinced that he was such a traitor. But later they asked me in the German interview, if you absolutely had known that's a traitor, and he asked, "Could you then have?" I said, not myself, but then I -- if I [indecipherable] you, he would betray a lot of people, and had betrayed, then I could say yes [indecipherable]

Q: So you could get someone else to kill him?

A: Because ho-how many lives would be saved then, you know?

Q: Right, right.

A: So. No, I -- I just wanted to -- but it had to be done now and then. It's terrible.

Q: Were you working at the same time you were in the resistance?

A: No, in '43, H-Hein asked me, I think the end of '42, he says -- in The Hague, he says, "I have met a guy, and he is also with a group." He said, "and he has an address ra -- that is desperate," and he says to me, "don't you go there." He says, "but it's very dangerous," it was in the heart of The Hague, he says, "and they won't even let you in that house, you have to have a password." So he give me the password. So I went there with it -- the password, and if you think that we had two you -- Jews on this farm, and one there, and one there, all spread out, and I remember I had to go up the stairs, and I say the password, and they let me in, and that was a house, a little apartment in the middle of a big apartment house, and it was built for one person, one living room, one bedroom, a shower and a bath, a kitchen -- small kitchen, and a hall, that is all. And this woman, that was in her 40's -- in her 50's, Mies, Mies was her name. And she had 27 Jews in that apartment.

Q: This is on Reinkenstraat --

A: On the Reinkenstraat 19.

Q: Yes? Ri -- rik -- Reinkenstraat.



A: Oh, and I couldn't believe it. And I said, "You will be arrested." I said, "Do you know your neighbors, are they Nazis?" She said, "I don't know." And then when I talked to her, I saw she had a warm heart, she had to help, but she did not use her gray matter. And she didn't see the danger, and she -- her father was a Dutch guy, and her mother was from Indonesia. And I don't know if you spoke with the people that -- Indonesians speak staccato, and she's, "I feel so sorry for those people, and on Saturday night I put records on, and then they may dance." Oh dear lord, I said, "And you lived here all those years alone?" "Yeah." "How long?" "Eight years." I said, "Did you dance when you were alone on Saturday night?" Because I could hear in the apartment next door, it was not insulated very well, and at one I heard that they flushed the toilet, so I heard the water go through the pipes, I said, "Do you hear that?" She said, "Yeah." She didn't think -- I said, "Now, when you lived alone, how many times did you flush the toilet, that the neighbors can hear it?" I said, "Now you're 28 people, that thing must be going the whole day." I said, "You have to," -- and she didn't see at all. And I promised her --

Q: I -- we have to stop the tape.

A: Oh.

Q: So, we're going to go --

A: Mies, oh.

Q: -- right back to this the next tape.

End of Tape #4

**Tape #5**

- Q: Diet, I'm sorry for the interruption. So you're -- you're at Mies's apartment, and you're noticing that she's taking no precautions. So the toilet can flush, God only knows how many times during the day.
- A: Yeah.
- Q: She's playing music, and people are dancing. Now how did -- how -- why were you sent to her house?
- A: Because Hein asked me, and Hein had met the guy who brought all the Jews there.
- Q: Oh.
- A: His name was Bram, I think an a -- abbreviation for Abraham. And later that -- that guy -- but he did not have the help we had, the ka -- the ration cards, and he didn't know what to do, he brought them there, but there they were stuck. So Ab promised Mies to find places, and I said, "Listen, I'll bring you in the first place 27 cards without a J, and I'll bring you ration cards, and then I'll find places, and keep two, at the most three, and that's how maybe you will see it." Because she didn't see the danger. And -- and --
- Q: Was she just naïve, or stupid?
- A: Yeah -- she couldn't say no. She --
- Q: She just couldn't say no.
- A: She couldn't say no, and she had a golden heart, but she did not see the danger.
- Q: How did she feed 27 people?
- A: Well, that was -- that we brought the cards, and this Bram brought there bags of potatoes, and brought stuff what he could get on the black market.
- Q: But -- but the ration cards for the food, she can't go out with 27 cards.
- A: No, but she had a maid, a young girl from Strafenhaagen -- Strafenhaagen, that's a difficult word.
- Q: Yes.
- A: And before that was her cleaning lady, but now her whole thing was that four cards she could take, and buy there, and she was in on it, and four there, and five there.
- Q: I see.

A: So that girl was daily doing the shopping, and --

Q: And going to different places, I see.

A: -- I think that the Jewish people cleaned a bit. But this girl was only sent out to do shopping in all different places, for four, five or six, or something.

Q: Right.

A: And that was her -- and she only worked there till one o'clock, and I always came after five, and her name was Jaantje. And I have never met Jaantje, and I heard so much about her, and Jaantje heard so much about me. And now for the German fer -- film, we met.

Q: For the first time?

A: Imagi -- yeah [indecipherable] was funny.

Q: Huh. So, did you find places for these people?

A: Yeah, I found -- that was that guy that lost his Tallit, and loads of them, and I brought them away, and I had her down to seven, and I started a big sigh, I thought, now we get somewhere.

Q: Right.

A: And I got back the next time, and she had eight new ones, 15. And a few weeks later she had again in the 20's. And I thought, this is desperate, and I said to her, "Mies, I'm scared to come here, because if there," -- I said, "you will be arrested, there's no doubt in my mind." I said, "And you know," -- when you were arrested, what the Gestapo did is they didn't just take you away. They let you sit there, and of course you were part of a group, and with a revolver near your head, if the phone rang you had to take it, and just pretend that there was nothing, and the next one would come, and the next one. So I knew about it. I said, "Listen, I'll give you one word, potato," or something, or sugar, something easy, I said, "and I call you a few minutes before I come here, every time. I'm scared." I said, "One day the Gestapo sits here, and I walk in their open arms." I said, "And I won't -- that if you answer me that you use this word," -- I can't remember what I gave her, but something very simple. I says, "And if you don't say that word, I'm not coming. That means for me the Gestapo is here." But I wasn't there, but Bram was there, and Bram was that guy who had brought all the Jews there, and he was just bringing a big bag with potatoes and food, and he had asked Hein, he said, "I know that Diet doesn't want to give her name to," -- Mies didn't know anything. I said, "Mies, I don't tell you what," -- she wanted to know who I was, said call me Toos. Where do you live? I said, "I'm not telling you." I said but -- she said, "But if I need you, what can -- how can," -- I said, "I'll call you the moment I get up in the morning. I'll call you an hour before my lunch break, and I could come here on my bike in my lunch break," I said. "And I'll call you two or three

hours before curfew, and if you need me, I'll be here." I was there for weeks on end, I don't know, months maybe, four or five times a week. The old Jew of -- in her eight -- in -- in his 80's, died. Can you imagine, how you have to bury that guy, I think it's in the book. But I tol -- Hein was fortunately in The Hague, because he was often not there. He said, "Oh, I'll take care of it." So they wrapped him in a rug, and everybody was changing, your beautiful crystal -- what do you do with crystal, you need to eat, so they went to the farmers and exchanged it for grain, or whatever, and so when Hein and his friend carried that rug out, the neighbors must have thought, oh he's exchan -- getting a rug for potatoes, or so.

Q: Right.

A: And they had a hand car, and they pushed it. And I didn't want to know anything that I didn't have to know, because I was so afraid that one day I would be arrested, that they will do -- one of their tortures was pulling your nails one by one, and then your feet, and anything, I thought I -- only what I have to know, I don't want to know anything else. And I said to Hein -- Hein said we should bury him in a big [indecipherable] close to the [indecipherable]. That man was good and he had a big -- a walled garden, and we were -- they were allowed to bury him in the back of that garden [indecipherable] and after the war you can bury him in a Jewish cemetery, because the Jewish people like that. And I never asked him, and I had such a conscience trouble when Hein never came back, I thought, oh, I should have asked him. And when I spoke to that Dutch guy from the resistance, he says, "Do you have questions," because he had questions about a traitor, and I knew something about it. And I said, "Yeah," I said, "that Jewish guy," -- and he said, "Don't worry, he was buried in the Jewish cemetery," so that was good that I know that. But then -- then she had so many, and one day Bram was there, and they were all arrested.

Q: They were all arrested?

A: They were all arrested, and I made my phone call, and I had told Mies, she had -- she let them use the phone, I said, "No, you shouldn't. You -- you're living as a lady alone in your 50's, and you answer the phone." I said, "You can't -- you're too -- too dangerous." So she had obeyed that, and I dialed and a man answered, and it was 11, so I thought an hour before my lunch time, I thought there she goes again. So I hung up, I didn't say a word. And then around two o'clock I phoned, and a man answered. At three o'clock I phoned, a man answered. I thought, this is not good. So I took one of my coupons, and I went to a store across, a food store, and I thought, if that has happened, I knew how they did it, big trucks with guys with machine guns, and helmets, and the house surrounded, and so on. And I thought that will be the topic of conversation there. So I took my bread coupon, and I went there with money, and sure enough they were all talking about that there are -- they were all arrested, and Bram, too. And then Hein and I -- I didn't dare to sleep at home, because I had never given Mies where I was, but I did not know that Bram had been there, see? I'd never met Bram. I didn't know

Q: But he knew you?

A: He never met me, but he had my father's phone number.

Q: I see.

A: Because Hein had asked, if there is an emergency, how can I reach you [indecipherable]

Q: Right, right.

A: And Hein had given Bram only my phone number --

Q: I see.

A: -- but he had never met, and he didn't know where I lived, he only had my phone number. But he was the only one, so it must have been him. But anyway, that night I thought well, I don't know where I slipped up with Mi-Mies that she still found out where I was, so I didn't sleep home, and I let Hein know, and he slept somewhere else. And this went on for maybe 10 days, and nothing happened, so I moved back home. And then co --

Q: Was that the first time that you left the house --

A: That I slept --

Q: Elsewhere.

A: -- I went regularly to the office, but I didn't sleep at home.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And -- because I thought, you know, I can't take the risk. And when weeks later, Hein and I had decided we would get married, and we took out our wedding license, and then you have to go again to the town hall, so on my card was written took out a wedding license with Hein Sietsma, on his card, Diet Eman. And also, it was very strange, that was May '43, May fourth, and I had a real feeling -- our love had grown so much, but something in my heart said, "And you'll never marry him." Strange, huh? Very strange. And I thought -- I can't see that we ever would break off, but -- and I didn't dare to tell him. And then, a few weeks later, we had just taken out our wedding license, and that -- the town hall in The Hague was a big, very [indecipherable] with marble steps, and I think that by that time, I had told him. I said, "Well, it must be true, but," I said, "I always had the feeling we would never get married." And [indecipherable] there is only one thing, either you die, or I die. He said, "Do you have that feeling?" I said, "No." I didn't dare to say -- I didn't know what, but it was somewhere -- subconscious. And when we walked down those marble step, and he had bought me a big bunch of red roses, and I had them in this arm, and he had my arm, and in his left hand he had the papers that we will get married in September, because then you got coupons for [indecipherable] and

for some [indecipherable]. And I remember that he take my [indecipherable] and he said, "Don't you still now believe it?" And I said, "Now I believe it." And inside a voice was screaming no, no [indecipherable] it was so strange, it -- it's scary. Anyway --

Q: Was this before or after the bicycle trip where you heard this voice?

A: It was before.

Q: It was before the bicycle trip. So this happened --

A: In '43.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: It started slowly to -- inside. Strange, huh?

Q: That -- that it wouldn't -- it wouldn't happen.

A: I -- I -- I'm really scared when I have those feelings. Some time ago, I had a terrible feeling -- that same feeling, so had me like a stone, and it concerned my kids. And then -- my daughter doesn't ever want to upset me, and a week later I found out that she had to have a biopsy, she had done a pap test, and it was not good, and she had to biopsy. And that was -- that I -- it turned out that they don't really know, so she has to have another test, and these doctors [indecipherable] she goes to another one. But it's very strange, and you know from the book that the night that Hein died --

Q: Right.

A: It's horrible.

Q: It's horrible. [indecipherable]

A: And only with big things in my life, I have that.

Q: Not small?

A: No, not little things.

Q: And then on a bicycle trip you heard a voice, and what did the voice say?

A: Twice. The voice said, Kijk nog mar goed naar hem. Have a -- have a good look at him. Strange, huh?

Q: Very strange.

- A: It's scary. It's scary. On the other hand, I think that God may be preparing me [indecipherable]
- Q: It was what?
- A: That God maybe prepares me for something that's coming, I don't know. But anyway, then we went home, and then a few weeks later, that's when Mies was arrested, and that I didn't sleep home. But then, after that, when they -- my father wrote of my brother -- he had false papers that he was in the food supply. He opened the door, and there were two Gestapo guys, but he didn't know it. First they pretended that they needed me for somebody who needed to go in hiding, but my brother didn't fall for that, because they didn't come to your door and ask for a place. So then -- and one didn't even speak good Dutch, he was German. And then, in the end they said, "Well, where does she work, we need to speak to her, and it's very urgent." And he had to [indecipherable] where I worked. So the moment they had left, they called me and they said that two guys, they can't speak good Dutch, and they were needing to speak to me, and it must be Gestapo. So I picked up my purse, and you know, I always think before you ask your boss, may I go to the dentist, I'll be back in an hour. And I worked for the father of my pi -- young girlfriend, who -- when we were young, and I knocked at his door, and I said, "I have to leave, and I'll see you after the war." So I picked up, and I never went home again. And that was May, '43. So for two years, till the end of the war, because the Gestapo came all the time to my parent's house, I couldn't go home any more.
- Q: So then what do you do? You leave your -- you -- you leave your office, where do you go?
- A: I went straight to Hein's office, because then they knew about him, too, we had taken out a wedding license. So then he went, and he --
- Q: He's working at Shell, still?
- A: He was working at Shell. And he went to Ab, the other leader, and I went first to some friends, and then later -- my sister had just had a baby, she was married, and they never -- they were so busy, so she says to -- I -- I went there on my bike, and she says, "Oh, can't you stay here four or five days, and take care of the kids?" The young kids. And then my husband and I can go out and have some time for ourselves. So I stayed there I think a week. And then the guy where we always had the meetings, the patriot from our country - - from our office. I was in The Hague with another address and I saw him, and his wife said, "My sister in Eindhoven needs a maid, and she's very difficult, and she goes through maids like nothing. I can ask her if you can be there." And I'd never been in that setting, so I thought, hey that's totally no connection. They might still connect my sister. So anyway, then she said oh yeah, she needed a maid. And she had three kids, and the youngest had a -- I've forgotten the name, here, or tosis or something. He had that he had to measure od -- my friend [indecipherable] from the office had a son who was mentally retarded. And they found out as a little kid he should have had loads and loads of fat, and butter. But it was a d -- a disease that they had just discovered, and the kid of this sister

had that same disease. So every day on how you weigh the mail, the -- the envelopes, so much grams of grease and fat and butter he had to eat. And very little other things, so much bread. But it was all measured. So she had her hands full, and she was -- she had a good sense of humor, but she was a difficult woman, and that's why she went through so many maid. But that little boy's name was Rudy, and he was three years old, and he was a sweetheart. And I had to take care of him, and it was terrible because it was so important that he got all that fat, and he never got mentally retarded if he had -- if he vomited, I had to scoop it up and feed it again to him. And his mother couldn't get it in, but I did all crazy things with him, and then he started laughing, and he ate it. So -- but I was there a long time, and she was very difficult. And I was not a maid, you know, I had never -- when I left my home I didn't even know how to boil a potato. So the --

Q: So were you -- were you required to cook, as well?

A: Well, she did the cooking, but I had to clean and do the whole thing, so -- but I learned there a lot, and later on the farms I learned so much, oh --

Q: But just [indecipherable]

A: I started out there --

Q: You didn't have your real name then?

A: No, then I was Dineke de Jong, that was -- but I didn't go because I knew one family there whose son was also in the resistance, but I didn't -- for them, that they were in risk that they had somebody in hiding, so I never went to that church or anything. But I remember it was a very close by, it was on the [indecipherable] in Eindhoven, and there was -- at the other end of that plane is a plaza, and a park with trees, and there was a Catholic church. And sometimes I was so deep down in the dumps that I just -- and the Catholic church are always open. Oh [indecipherable]. But anyway, I was there a long time, and --

Q: Were you also working as -- in the resistance, or were you just being a maid?

A: No, this was just -- I was there several months. No, I was just a maid.

Q: But here you -- you don't know anyone.

A: No, I was totally alone.

Q: Right. You can't communicate with your parents. Are you able to communicate with Hein or not?

A: Hein and I --

Q: Hein.



A: -- wrote each other on false names.

Q: You did?

A: Yeah. So I got mail from him. And I also send him mail that he gave to other guys from our group, and some of them were in The Hague, and not being looked for, so my parents got always, every 10 or 12 days, a note in my handwriting, that they knew I was alive, but I did not let them know where I was.

Q: Right.

A: It was much better. And I did also not write neither father and mother, of course you didn't.

Q: Yes, right.

A: Just -- but they saw in my -- and one of the guys always dropped that off [indecipherable]

Q: And none of this is done through the regular mail system --

A: No.

Q: -- you're doing this always through --

A: [indecipherable] handling, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: But the letters to Hein I sent to an address and mailed by --

Q: Regular post?

A: -- you know, my friends, where I knew that he was often in that area. And he send me at this address, because I was there, the maid under the name Dineke de Jong.

Q: But -- but he -- neither -- you're not sending anything through the regular post, either?

A: The dangerous stuff, never.

Q: But the normal letter you could send?

A: Well, we did at this time, you know.

Q: Uh-huh.

- A: But we did not do it at -- if I was at an address where there are Jews hidden, I wouldn't do it.
- Q: Right.
- A: But here there was no really danger, he was very high in the council, city council, he was right under the mayor. He was a very nice man. And I loved the Rudy, and --
- Q: Rudy?
- A: It was Eindhoven, yeah, and that was so often bombarded because that's where Phillips is, you know, and that was the war industry then --
- Q: Uh-huh, right.
- A: -- so and I had my order, I slept on the same floor as Rudy, so if Rudy -- if there was a bombardment, we all had to go down, then I took care of Rudy, and they had the two other kids. But then one time I got a letter from Hein, and it said, "Diet, we haven't seen each other in such a long time, let's go to Amsterdam, to friends of ours, and let's meet." And it was a city just outside Duga, so he would come from Friesland, I would -- and the train would be four or five minutes that we will change trains and go to Amsterdam. And it was a s -- it was -- I had to meet him on Saturday, and on Sunday we would be together. And that lady, I was really the maid to her, and she says, "You can't go, because Sunday after church I've invited this lady, and you have to serve coffee." So I couldn't go for serving coffee, that stupid hour that I couldn't see Hein. So I said, "He won't take that," because I know -- I knew him, I says, "He will be furious." "Oh, how childish." I said, "No, he counts on me, and there's no time to reach him." I couldn't reach him anyway, he's traveling. She said, "Well, then you can go to the city," it was called Sonnhoooven, "and you can tell him that you can't come in, you have to come back." [indecipherable]. And I was so grateful that those people were hiding me while I was being searched for, because my parents had all the time the Gestapo over the [indecipherable], so it was dangerous, but I was so grateful that I felt I had to do what she said. So I take the train -- I never forget it, I came in Sonnhoooven, and Hein came out of his train, and there was the train to Amsterdam, and he had three or four minutes, and he grabs my hand, he says dos -- I said, "No I can't go." He said, "Come on, you can tell me later." I said, "No, I can't go." And I pulled back, and oh, he was furious, furious. And he said, "For that stupid coffee," he said, "you're going away there," he said, "I'll find another address, you're going away." And I felt so bad because after all, they had taken me when I was in big trouble, and I had gotten to love Rudy, and then Hein says to me, "Diet, we need you really full time, it's getting more and more busy." So I went back to Eindhoven, and she said, "And what?" I said, "Well, like I told you, he was furious, and I have to leave here." "What?" And they couldn't believe it, and then they were trying to -- I said, "No, they say that they need me." And that was very hard, and I left, and I've never seen Rudy again, none of them. And that --

Q: What was their name, what was the family name?

A: Wait a moment, what was it again? [inaudible]

Q: Was it Bakker, Backer?

A: Baker, yeah, Baker.

Q: B-a-k-k-e-r?

A: Yeah, yeah, Bakker, Bakker.

Q: So you never saw any of them again?

A: No.

Q: And you were there for a few months, you think?

A: I was there I think a month, two or three months.

Q: So in the summertime?

A: I was in -- made attempt to find me, and then I was first of all [indecipherable] and I was at my sister. I think I went there in June or July, at that time. And I left in the beginning of December, so I was there several months. And it's almost nice because they -- it was in an outside area, and there were apple trees, and there was nothing any more, so sometimes I had a job that I had to on my bike go to an apple thing and buy apples. It was nice, and beautiful country, and outside on your bike and alone, that you could think, and -- but then I went for a time in the underground, and there was a family with five kids -- seven kids, and that guy was also deep in the underground.

Q: And this was Klooster?

A: That was Klooster.

Q: Dries?

A: Dries Klooster.

Q: It's Klooster?

A: Klooster.

Q: Klooster.

A: K-l-o-o-s-t-e-r, Dries.

Q: Right.

A: And he worked in the post office, and he was a great guy, but h -- the youngest was two, then they had one of five, seven, nine and then two kids from her first marriage that were my age, and a bit younger. So there were a lot of kids, and then I could, during the day do my underground work, but I slept there.

Q: And they knew that you were working for the underground --

A: They knew, because he was also --

Q: Yes, yes.

A: He was also -- and they took pilots in, and shot down allies. And that was the most dangerous because you know, for armed robbery you got still prison and a trial, but you were shot. But if they were found -- if they found you with allies, you --

Q: You were --

A: On the spot, you were killed

Q: On the spot, uh-huh.

A: I know from several cases that it happened. Sometimes they still arrested you, but they had a right to shoot you at the spot. But we had pilots, and it was a terrible danger, and there was your word, but now everybody knows that we had never heard it okay, okay. And those pilots, three or four from a shot down plane, they were talking to each other, and okay, and I knew English, so I could speak with them, but those kids went outside in the street at five, seven and nine, and they said okay, okay, okay. That was a give-away that there were allies, so I thought, I can't stay here, and I told them. And then Hein found another place on this farm, with co -- with Lozeman. And that was where the Jewish couple, the falsifier was hiding. So that became really my base, but wherever I was, I had friends by that time I could use everywhere, but that was -- became my base.

Q: Lozeman, which is L-o-z-e-m-a-n?

A: Lozeman, L-o-z-e-m-a-n.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And his name was Aalt, A-a-l-t.

Q: Right.

- A: And her name was Alie, A-l-i-e. And they became like a brother and sister to me. Oh, they were wonderful people. And that's where the Jewish couple was hiding, and they had always -- whoever passed by and was in the underground could sleep there.
- Q: And this was Uncle Ben and Tante Marie?
- A: And Tante Marie, yeah, they were there.
- Q: Uh-huh.
- A: And he was a dairy farmer, and they work hard. And it was, for a city girl, very interesting, too. And Alie said, "You are for the world my maid," because she was pregnant again, and she had two little kids. So I se -- but I could go for my work, but I said, "You tell me, I can arrange it myself, which date you really need me." And you got so little soap, so every three weeks you did a laundry, and at that time the people changed only once a week their underwear. Their socks were [indecipherable], you could put them on the floor, and they would stand. But there was -- you got -- and the soap was like putty, brown and stone hard, so you first had to grate it. And there was so little that it was better to do the [indecipherable] three weeks. So then I always was there on Monday. And then the farmer woke me up at quarter to five. And they had a well and a pump on that deel. The deel is the connection to the farm where in winter all the stables are and the cows are, and the horse has a stable. But it's connected to the farm, and that was also where the bathroom was, you know. What the cows dropped, that went in a pit, and what we dropped, it's [indecipherable]
- Q: Same thing.
- A: And -- and there was the water pump. So then I remember that I had to pump two pails, and then I had a yoke on, and I had to carry that outside, because that was ice cold. And then the farmer had gotten up a bit earlier, and there was a big cement thing with a deep hole, and then you had to put the water in it, underneath, they had [indecipherable] all the little twigs, and that was warm. So then we had to warm, and nearly boil that water, and then get it back, and then I had to carry it back to the deel, and fill it in big wooden tubs, and then stamp 200 times. And then it had to go in the rinse, and then in the Chlorox, later you do it [indecipherable]. And then in the [indecipherable] it's blue, that the white stuff was nice and -- and then rinse again. And afterward you did all the white stuff, then the colored stuff, and at last the dark stuff. And by that time it was mud. But I learned how to do a laundry there.
- Q: And I can see --
- A: And in Mar -- March and April, then I had to spread all the white stuff on the meadows, because then there was ozone in the sky, and it maked it even whiter. And you had to get -- keep it wet, so I started in those months, I started always quarter to five, and then when they had breakfast at 7:30, they called me for breakfast, and they called me at 10, or quarter after for a cup of coffee, and they called me for lunch. And then in the evening I

was maybe -- especially in the months that I had to keep that stuff white, maybe at 5:30. It was all by hand, you know.

Q: Wow

A: So I learned it, and that saved my life later in the camp, that I -- all my false paper was in there, and that they let me do the laundry.

Q: Right.

A: If that happened right after that they came [indecipherable]

Q: Right. We're gonna stop the tape now, and take a break.

A: Good. That i --

End of Tape #5

**Tape #6**

Q: Okay Diet, I wanted to stop the flow of the interview for a moment because you brought some artifacts. Can you hold this and explain what this is and show us what this is?

A: Now, there was curfew, and every city in the Netherlands was what they called verduisderd, everywhere curtains. And every street had a su -- supervisor who lived there, and by the Germans he was told, every night you have to walk around -- they were allowed even after curfew, to see if any light would shine out. So everybody had dark curtains. But if you had to go somewhere in winter, and on nights that was no moon or snow, you would bump in people, you didn't see them, you didn't hear them. So everybody had this, and it was a dynamo, and that they called it knijpkat. Your -- ca -- this is knijp, you press. And then you saw everywhere a little -- this was very little, so then you had light where you stepped, if you would step in a hole, you could break your ankle. But it was funny when you walked, or funny -- it was not so funny, but your -- you didn't see people, but you heard everywhere in the dark the -- this noise, and then you know it. So I always kept it, it was kind of funny.

Q: So almost everyone --

A: Everybody had --

Q: -- in the nether -- had one, because you couldn't go --

A: -- one, yeah, because if you went out -- in winter it was dark at five, so even at seven or eight if you went out. 11 o'clock -- 11 was curfew.

Q: Right, right.

A: But you had to have this, because that was the only way -- you know, and now the streets are so even, but then you could easily fall, and there were holes, and nothing was repaired, so you could easily break an ankle, or fall terribly. [indecipherable]

Q: How does that work?

A: What?

Q: How does that work? Is it --

A: Well, it is a dynamo, because the bikes had that, too. They had that on their front thing, and the line -- so you produce your own, it -- it's a dynamo, I don't know. Dynamo you say, I think.

Q: Dynamo. It's fabulous.

A: Yeah. But the bulb might be gone, or that there's still some --

Q: No, it comes out just a tiny bit.

A: Some light comes out?

Q: If you do it -- if you do it hard enough, you can see it.

A: Well, the bulb might be out.

Q: And then there's something else that you stole. Explain -- explain [indecipherable]

A: And I feel good about it.

Q: Yeah, absolutely.

A: They entered, in the beginning of the war, our houses. They just -- the doorbell ring, they pushed you to the side, marched in, took everything of copper, brass, metal, and they just melt it for their bullets. So in our house [indecipherable] we were warned, so we had everything -- we had beautiful brass stuff from Indonesia, engraved, so you put it -- there was no plastic yet, that you put it in now. Now, rubber sheeting, what the hospitals had to cover the bed, and that went all in the gardens under the ground. So there it was, so they didn't catch much. But I was in the train, and I was seeing this were the ashtrays that were welded in the trains, here you see that. So I figured that are about six bullets, and they'll probably one of these days take that off, so I thought I'll be ahead of you. I had to make a very long train trip, and they crammed us in a few wagons, and then they had loads of wagons where one German soldier was sitting and a big sign, forbidden for others, only for the German army. But when I was standing there so long, and I got more and more mad. So I was standing pushed against one of those, and I don't know how I did that, probably my fury, but in the end I pulled it off.

Q: So you pulled this off?

A: I pulled it off, I wrung it off, I don't -- so I saved six bullets.

Q: And where did you keep this, so that you could get it after the war? Do you rememb -- you -- do you --

A: No. I mean, this was -- they wouldn't search your house for this, even if they had come and they found [indecipherable]

Q: So do you think you brought it back to your parents house?

A: If it happened when I was still home, yes, and otherwise where I was hiding.

Q: Otherwise it was someplace else.



- A: But this was not dangerous stuff, if you had stolen documents or some, but this -- I think that they never have put two and two together, that somebody in their fury had bothered six bullets.
- Q: But you must have felt good just to do that, yeah?
- A: Oh, very good.
- Q: Very good. Do you know other people who were doing similar kinds of things? These little --
- A: No, I know that if a Gestapo guy, or a German soldier came, you watched in the s -- walked in the street, and he was coming that, then you crossed the street, like that they were poison or something. And I know people who spit on this -- on the thing. They --
- Q: Spit on the ground?
- A: When they saw a German soldier. And I know that one time a soldier came and asked me to go to Scheveningen, and there was a big battalion, and I knew it was there, but I didn't want to help them, so I said, oh yeah, there, and I sent him 90 to 180 degrees the other way. [indecipherable]. Anything that you could do against them, we did. Terrible, hey?
- Q: No, it's great. It's a great story. Now, things start to get very rough, personally, in 1944. You're in a bike trip with Hein with -- when you hear this voice, after you've had this premonition that's he's going to be arrested. And it's o-only a few days later, after the bike trip, that he does get --
- Q: It was April 23, '44. And they were a whole year looking for us. And Hein wrote me a letter, and he said, be Saturday night at that and that farm, and I then I think I told you this morning that went to church together, and then we had dinner at that leader -- the other leader, there were two, and he was a farmer, so they got up in the morning and they wanted to take a nap. And then Hein said, We -- we going on a bike ride, and it was beautiful spring weather, and all the fruit trees had their pink blossoms. And we were alone on that, and Hein pulled his Bible out, and he read from John 14, and that is in my Father's house, I have many mansions, and I don't know, I still remember that. And then he told me everything about the work, because I knew only my little part, and I didn't want to know more, because I thought, if you are arrested, and they start torturing you, you can't say I'll keep my mouth shut, you can't say that. And I -- but he said -- I said, "Hein, don't tell me, I don't want to know what the others do." He said, "Somebody has to know the whole thing," he said, "for in case that Ab or I," -- and I listened to him, and then he brought me that evening to the farm of Alie, and we were alone on that country road, and there was nothing, only those beautiful trees that are in the distance. And I heard clearly a voice, and I s -- can't explain it. And that voice said in Dutch to me, Kijk nog mar goed naar hem. That's in English, have a good look at him. And I thought this is ridiculous, that is a thought that comes in my head, but I heard it again, twice. And then I started looking at him, and he was far over six feet, so I

[indecipherable] and I looked up, and he started laughing. He said, "What are you staring at me?" And I didn't dare to tell him, and I said, "Nothing." And he brought me to the farm, and that was the last time I saw him. And three days later he was in Friesland, and he was inspected in the train like many people, but men especially. And they saw that he was a pastor, so he was safe. But then they searched him, and they found a lot of stuff what he had there. So he was put in a prison. But we felt -- and I -- you saw those coupons, and those I.D.s, those identification cards. And when we stole them, if that was found in a large quantity, you got shot. I mean, that was the end of your life. So we felt, all the farmers, and the people who gave us a bed, were already running a risk. It could be that three in the night there's the doorbell, and they look for us. So we always had to find a way out, in the back door or through a window, but you know where we would go. But we did not want to bring all this danger stuff in those homes, because it could be that I could get out, but that the papers stayed there, and that the people would be shot. So we had rented a P.O. box somewhere, and Hein smuggled a note out, because we wrote each other, and then we gave the letters to others, and keep them till after the war. But the last letter we always kept, it was kind of, you know, close to our heart.

Q: You mean, you -- you -- you kept the last one before you got the next one?

A: Yeah, before the next. And so he had my father's -- last letter, with my false name. And they found that, and they started looking for me.

Q: And which false name was that?

A: That was Dineke de Jong.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And they were looking for me, so he smuggled a note out, and it reached us, also by a miracle of God, because that was so much work, he couldn't send it straight, and he had to trust a guard, it was a Dutch guy. And the underground hated the Dutch people, especially the police who stayed and worked for the Germans. And sometimes by the -- by the Communists they were killed. Those adulterators, they helped the Germans. But this guy had stayed to help. And for some reason or another, that Hein smuggled that note out via this guy, and it -- it came via, via, via, through lots of searching, and underground did that -- man delivered it to the underground, and they found Ab, the other leader. And then it said, "Empty the P.O. box, and don't use it any more," because he had a key, and he would be afraid that he will be tortured, and if the other kept on sending, that would be heavy for him, with his hearing. And he said, "And let Diet take another name, they know now her false name." So then they were looking twice for me, my real name, and this name. So it was getting -- the net was getting closer. And then he said, And let her warn all the guys, and then bring the documents from the -- from the thing to The Hague, and he mentioned a nickname that we called this guy. And so I knew what he meant. So I got my other piece -- identification card again, and then the man asked me what name do you want to have now, because he had made so many. So I says, "Well, the name of our queen, Wilhemina," and then I just heard the name Laarman -- Laarman. And then he

said, "Where do you want to be born?" And there was no time to put one in that town hall anywhere, and then you had to smudge it. I says well, make it Surinam, Paramibo is the capital, and that's Dutch territory, and they can't check that, there was no mail there, they were free. So -- and then he said, "What job?" And that was a problem, because I couldn't say secretary, because if they said where do you work, there was no Willie Laarman, I couldn't say nurse, I couldn't say teacher. So I said maid. And there was an elderly couple in there, had said, "We would love to help, but we don't know how, we are so old." So I went to them, I said, "Now you can help. If I am arrested, you vouch that I am your maid." And they said okay. So I was the maid Willie Laarman. And then I had all that stuff from the -- from the thing on my -- in an envelope in my blouse, and I had warned all the guys, and I had lunch with one of them, in Zwijndrecht, and then I had to go to The Hague, and that was a short trip, only one stop in Rotterdam, and they -- this was in May '44, they had -- were a whole year looking for me already, and the Gestapo still coming to our house, so they had never given up. And then it turned out -- and that was so terrible, because normally if they thought you help Jews they came four or five times, and then they thought -- there were so many, then they gave up, but they never gave up. And we had a spy in the headquarters of the Gestapo that was -- and he worked for us, and he looked in our files, and he found out that Mies had kept a diary, and they had found that diary, and in it said Toos brought 27 ration cards. Toos brought 27 I.D.s. Toos -- and Hein had been there also, but not so often because he was in other parts. And he had given the name Dick. Dick did this, Dick -- so they were looking for Toos and Dick that they knew were doing the robberies, or part of the robberies. And that Jewish deal wasn't even important for them, they wanted that, that's why they never gave up for two years. So we knew that they knew everything about us. But they didn't know who Toos was. And then I found out that that Bram had been there, and Bram had been, not too long before that married, and his bride was crying his ide -- her eyes out. And later I heard that she paid the Gestapo 5000 guilders. And they told him, you go to Germany, and your bride is crying at home. And then, I have no proof, but he was the only one who knew who the phone number was, so he gave the phone number to the Gestapo, and he was freed soon after that. But I've never seen him, and I -- I don't know, the guy started out good, that he wanted to help Jews, so I didn't want to make a big fuss out of that. And I don't know if it's in the book, he's now -- I heard that he died. I checked later out, and I didn't want to go there, because I thought if he knows what that mentioning of that phone, for -- had for results, he would live this terrible remorse or something, so I've never made any. But he was the only one who knew my phone number.

Q: Diet, let me ask you a question. If the Gestapo went to your parent's house, did they say, give us pi -- a photograph?

A: No.

Q: They didn't. They never asked for it. So they had no idea what you actually looked like?

A: I don't think so, unless that there was anything in the town hall. But they had no idea, so that is a lucky. But I had changed my hairdo, and I did different color glasses, you know, frames, so when they were after me, I always, for the new I.D. --

Q: Looked different.

A: I looked a bit different.

Q: Cause that just struck me, that if they came to your house --

A: No, no, I was thinking, now, in this time, from DNA, and from every -- I wouldn't have a chance.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: I wouldn't have a chance, not a chance.

Q: Well, only if they found you, and could check.

A: No, but I think they would much easier find me.

Q: Find you. Maybe so.

A: And with the TV, and with all the -- you know, that they ask for in this guy, and the 10 most wanted, and whatever. No, I think it's -- it's a miracle.

Q: Right. So, you're under the name Willie.

A: Willie Laarman. And then I said in the train -- and there was so little fuel, before they went every how -- hour, and now they went a few times a day. And the train was nearly empty, so I knew I would have to wait a long time, so I had a book, and I had a window seat, and I start reading. And I still remember the title of the book, Toen De Hertten Riepen, "When the deer called out." And anyway --

Q: When the deer called?

A: When -- yeah, th-that -- in the woods, you know. Anyway, I was reading that, and then slowly the train filled, and after maybe an hour and a quarter, it start slowly going, and I look out of the window, and I felt my heart stop. Six gest -- the trains had those steps then, you know, and six guys stepped on that, opened the doors, Gestapo. Four in uniform, and two in civil, but they had the insignia that I knew that was German Nazi. And then -- several of my group had been arrested, and one got out by pretending he was a black marketeer. Then they gave you a sentence, but everybody wants to make a buck, and that was not so serious resistance, and he had gotten out. And he had told us, if you ever are arrested, don't show how scared you are, don't show it, they get their kicks out of the [indecipherable]. So how -- don't -- he gave us that advice. So I thought, I'll stay quiet, stay quiet, and then I thought the headquarters of the Gestapo is in The Hague, and this train is going there, maybe they just have to report, I don't get nervous. And then they split out, six wagons, six guys, and they started inspecting everybody's I.D. And I

had a real one from the last robbery, but still, you know, and all this stuff here, and they were a year long coming to my parent's house. I was scared stiff. Oh, I was so scared. And -- but I wasn't allowed to show it. So -- but the interesting thing was he started, and he takes an I.D., and he looks and gives it back. And it went so fast, and then he came to me. And my heart was pounding.

Q: Yeah, I was wondering, is that --

A: Oh, it was -- I thought he must hear it. It was pounding, and I didn't dare to look at him, because you know, I didn't know if I was blushing, or that I was very pale. I -- it was so terrible, so I looked like in my book that it was very interesting, but I couldn't see a word, everything was dancing. And I gave him my I.D., and everybody got it back right away, and I didn't get it back. And then he said in German to me, "Wann haben sie das bekommen?" When did you get it? And I wasn't going to speak German, but I knew what he said. I said -- and I said, "I don't know what you're saying," I said, "I don't speak der - - ger -- German, can you speak Dutch?" And he went on and on, and he was screaming, and I heard what he was saying, and he want to know when I had gotten this. And then an other traveler [indecipherable] speak, he says, "He wants to know the date you got it." I said, "Oh, that's on it." And -- but you know, and the other five hadn't found anything, and they all came in this compartment, and they gave one look at my I.D., and they burst out laughing. And after the war -- I never knew till after I got out what had gone. They had printed -- and you saw the copy, in deep purple, and it had all the data, and a background like money that you can't falsify, but one of the little things was nationality Dutch. And that was printed in deep purple. But everybody 14 and over had to go and get that I.D., so in the beginning we had I think about nine million inhabitants, and a lot -- millions over 14, so they had handed out millions. And after that -- that was in the end '40 -- beginning of '41, they handed out to everybody who turned 14, then you had to go. And in '43, they ran -- ran out, they had no more. And they printed exactly the same, everything, except those to -- two little words nationality Dutch, instead of deep purple, in black. And if you don't know it, you could barely see it. And I had one of the last robbery, and it was a black one, so that was printed in '43, but the guy who made the false papers, wrote automatically I think '42 or something. If he had done a duplicate that I'd lost it '43, I would have been okay. But on that I was arrested, and later that man from the government, he said, "Oh, you had a black -- you had a black nationality." He said so many were arrested. So then the underground started to check and found that. So after that they did those all duplicate, and later date, but I was one of the victims.

Q: Did -- did the underground figure it out, what happened?

A: Yeah, after --

Q: Yeah, they figured it out.

A: The -- there were so many arrested, relatively, you know. So they knew there was something, and then they went over that. It was really -- I always think it was nearly like

a chess game. You do this, we do that, you do this. And here they had a smart [indecipherable]. So --

Q: So they look at this, they're laughing, and now what do they do, do they search you?

A: And then the train stops in Rotterdam.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And it's a big station, one of the biggest in the Netherlands, and they said out, and they had a little office there, and they looked through my little [indecipherable] and I had some data, but I had made my own shorthand that nobody else could read, and this -- oh, this is spy material. I said no, and then they wanted to know -- they said, "Well, if you don't talk," and I said -- I said, "I don't know what you're saying, I don't understand German." They said, "Okay, you go to the headquarters." And that is where they did this stuff, so I was really scared. Back to the station, and it was a chilly day, it was May eighth, '44, and it was drizzle -- like now, drizzle and rain. And we have many benches on this -- on the station and everywhere, but nobody was sitting, because it was so chilly, so they were all walking. And it was crowded, because there were so many -- so few trains, and many people. And they said to me, "Sit here." And then the leader of the group, he had a higher rank, he was standing here, kind of facing the other five, and the other five were in a horseshoe, five facing me. And I thought this is the end of my life, because now I go to prison, and I knew you had to undress, and then when my blouse, I had buttons, you know, I thought, when they find that [indecipherable]

Q: You had all the papers --

A: I had all the papers from the robbery there.

Q: In your bra.

A: I had it in my bra, and it was stolen I.D.s, and there were two pilots who wanted to get to England, and they were in that age group, so we had to give them also the papers. And there was a way to get back to England via Belgium, France, over the Pyrenees to Portugal, and then a submarine would pick them up. And we have helped several, and when they were in England they gave secret code that we knew they were there. But -- and for those guys, if they were stopped, they couldn't speak Dutch. And so they had the Dutch papers, and if you had like the -- where the Jew was the J, if you had a big scar, or at that time you still had people with what they call that -- those red -- now they can with ice get that off when you're a new baby, but at that time it was called a veinflak. It's a big thing that -- a scar of thing, and everything special. So on that -- for those guys we always wrote deaf and dumb. And we said, "If you are arrested, don't say a word, and you don't hear."

Q: Right, right.

A: So -- but we got many back to England. And then -- but you know, I was brought in, I was sitting there, and I was praying there was [indecipherable] for those, and there were 500 guilders because by -- it was towards the end, and many Jewish people didn't have money any more. And in the cities we had to pay the people something that they could buy the food, you know, and the Jewish people were so eager also, collecting money from people who didn't dare to do dangerous things, but were willing to contribute, so it was a busy time. And then they -- I -- I was praying to God, I thought, oh, this is the end of my life, when I go to prison I have to undress, and they find that, and I'll be shot [indecipherable]. And I thought of my wedding dress hanging at home, and the -- all the expectations we had. And I was praying to God, and pleading. I said, "We are helping your people, and then," -- and I says, "You are Almighty," and I was really pleading with God, I said, "You are Almighty, can you give a moment that all people don't look at me, and that I can get rid of that envelope." Then I'm still in a bind, they are looking [indecipherable] then I had a chance, but here I have no chance. And then I always say, humanly speaking, when five people are watching you, what are your chance that all five don't look? You can say zero. If it was one he could be looking another way, if there are two, they could be looking. But five? And I always say it says in the Bible with God, and with God all things are possible. And the guy who was standing here, he had a raincoat of stuff we had never seen. And at that time the fashion was that all the raincoats were made of gabardine, and only pockets here in the side. Nobody ever had -- and inside pockets had never -- in no coat, you had not have it happen. And he had a shiny coat, it was a military coat, battleship gray. And one of the Germans, I heard him say, "Is that that new material? Is it really waterproof?" It was the first plastic, plastic had just been found out. And then another, I heard all what they said, said, oh, and how nice, it had two big stitched on pockets. Those pockets, that is handy, that had never -- and this tall guy said, he said, "You think that is handy?" He said, "This coat has pockets on the inside." Now, they had never -- and they all said, "On the inside?" He said yeah, and he opens his coat, right, and he was over six feet, and all the five heads went in the raincoat to admire.

Q: So how did you get out the --

A: I had opened my blouse --

Q: Already?

A: I -- I needed -- yeah, when I started praying, I'd opened the blouse.

Q: So you were ready.

A: And I had only to grab it and throw it.

Q: And where did you throw it?

A: Well, there were loads of people walking, hundreds were walking up and down, this could be anybody's. So then they would have had to arrest the whole station. And whoever found this was lucky, he had the ration cards, he had 500 guilders --

Q: Right.

A: -- and the rest he can have thrown away, but --

Q: But these guys didn't find this? They didn't --

A: No, because they didn't know I had it on me, of course, so they didn't even look. And then I wanted to get away from it, so I said -- and one guy could speak a bit Dutch, I said, "I am so chilly." And I was. I said, "Can we stand in that tunnel?" Because there were tunnels that go to the next platform, and I heard him say to the other, "Let me alone with her, I'll get it out." I thought, "Yeah, that's what you think." But I didn't know any of what he said. So we stand in the tunnel, and you -- when you are so long in that work, you get really a look at people, that you -- and I saw he was very vain, and so I started the conversation, and he could speak some Dutch. I said, "Now, when you go through those trains, what are you looking for?" Like I was [indecipherable]. He said, "Oh, for spies." I said, "For spies?" I said, "And -- and who -- how do you find them?" And he start -- he said, "Yeah, two days ago we had a guy, and he had all secret films, and," -- I said, "What did you do? Shoot him?" He said, "No." He said, "He tried to run away." I said, "And what did you [indecipherable] shoot him?" He said, "No." I said, "I can run hard. May I run away?" I said to him, "Do I get a head start?" So I was joking, like I wasn't nervous at all. And I talked the whole time, and then the train pulled up, and he had this big head, and he had [indecipherable] didn't have a word [indecipherable]. And then I heard him again say to the others, "Leave me alone with her in the apartment, I -- in the compartment, I get it out." And I went on in the train. But then -- oh, I ran from one fear and another, I -- later when I looked back, I thought, oh God, I should have cracked up. Because the train ended, and there -- then we had to take a tram to Scheveningen, and that was line eight, and it was around five o'clock, and that tram went exactly past the bank where I had worked, and the people left at five. And I thought, oh God, if any of them -- and it's raining, hops on, say hi Diet, I'm sunk.

Q: Right.

A: I -- from one fear and another. And I wanted also to know the people, and because they had -- the uniformed people left, and the two in civil, with the insignias on -- and I was such [indecipherable], and they left me. So we sit in the tram, and then you had a conduct -- conductor who collected the money. So he came to me, and I said, "I'm not paying." He said, "You have to." I said, "No." He said, "Then I throw you off the tram." I said, "Please," because I sit he -- I said, "I'm sitting here very much against my will." And he said, "What?" I said, "Yeah, those two guys," "they have put me here." And he said, "What?" I said, "Yeah, those two guys," and they had -- said, "they have put me here." He said, "Oh, la -- you're fur [indecipherable] you got -- you're arrested?" I said yes. So the whole tram knew that they were two Germans, and that they were arresting me, and I thought, if the tram gets in a jam, they probably help me that I can shoot out of it [indecipherable] to -- to the prison -- off to the headquarters of the Gestapo. And there I had to sit for hours, because you had those special cars that they arrest people, and they



have a special name, betsies, or something, I don't know what. But anyway, there was not one, they were out to collect Jews, and whatever, they had to sit there for hours.

Q: We're gonna -- we're gonna have to change the tape.

A: Okay.

Q: Okay.

End of Tape #6

Tape #7

Q: Okay. Diet, so you're waiting in the prison, and how come they're making you wait, do you think? Do you know?

A: In that -- they -- in that building of the Gestapo, the headquarters, I had to wait because they were -- they had big, black yars -- cars that they brought you to prison and arrested you apart from if they had the whole group, they did it on trucks with machine guns. But they were waiting for [indecipherable] because they were doing raids in The Hague, and arresting people, probably Jewish people. So I had to wait a couple of hours, and then they brought me to the prison. And it was the same arrogant guy who was in the train. And he could speak Dutch, and I remember that in that car he says to me, "Yeah, now I can't help you, you're a young girl, and I feel so sorry that you go to prison now, but you didn't tell any, now you have to go to prison," he said. "But if you still tell me how you got this paper," he says, "then you get very special pr -- treatment in -- in the prison. You get -- may choose every day what you want to eat, and you get every time with your meal a glass of wine." And I thought, how stupid does he think I am? I -- I knew definitely that wasn't true. I mean, how stupid? So I just played along, and I said, "Yeah, real -- really?" And you know, in Dutch? And he says yes. I said, "May I even choose applesauce?" Was applesauce, and that's -- it's such a stupid word, applesauce, and I thought that he would then realize. He said, "Oh yeah, you may choose applesauce." Well, I said, "I -- I can't -- I don't -- I have this paper, and I don't know." So anyway, then we came to the -- the prison, where Milosevic is now, that's a big prison for criminals. But it had a big, high wall, and it had a small side door, and it's round, and it's still there. And -- and there was a bell that you can press, and they stood there, and they had told me, don't show that you're scared, you know, and we were standing there, and he said, "You can still tell me, I haven't yet pressed, you can still tell me." And then I took his thumb, and I pressed it. And he gave me a whack. But then I was brought in, and he disappeared, and I had to stand for a long time in a corridor, and on one side are all cells. And I had to face the wall, and stood there for a long time, and out of the cells I heard all voices, and they said, "What is the news from the outside world, what is the news from the outside world?" But I didn't know if these were Gestapo guys who wanted to check, so I -- I feel always guilty, because if they were real prisoners, I thought I should have told, but I didn't want to take the chance. And then they brought me, it had many corridors, A, B, C, D, and I was in corridor A, in cell six, some that -- the handkerchief, I think it was six or eight. And they put me in, and it was three meter, now that's a little bit longer than three yards, and two meter, right? And it had -- I didn't know that -- a drum in the corner, and only one cot, and it was meant for one person, so small. And very high window with bars. And I was number five, there were four others. And there was an old Jewish lady, Mrs. Spire, and she had the cot, and we slept on stone, on the floor. It -- it was a prison for criminals, so I didn't know what are the other women, you know, they could be criminals, they could be [indecipherable] they could be anything, but the Jewish lady I knew was okay. And I had been the whole day in the train, telling all the guys, and I had been sitting at that station, and then in the headquarters of the Gestapo, and then I had to go to urgent bathroom, so I said to those ladies, how -- "What do you do? I have to go bathroom?" And I thought that they say,

well you have to go -- knock at the door and then they bring you to a toilet. And they turned around, and they pointed at this little drum. And I -- you know -- that this was the time now you go camping, and women shower together, and there is no -- but this was 1944, and everything was so proper. And I thought, I'm not going on a thing with those women that I've never seen. But you know, I couldn't hold it until after the war, so at one point my pride went out of the window, and I had to go on the tippultum, and that's what it was called. Oh goody.

Q: So, had they questioned you at the Gestapo headquarters or not?

A: They asked me all questions, but I couldn't speak German, so --

Q: Right.

A: They didn't ge --

Q: So are -- are you beginning to play someone very dumb?

A: I started then, because first you know, I was kind of that I didn't answer, I was -- and that I pushed, I thought it was kind of -- when you're going to -- but then I thought, hey, I have to do dumb. And then I never spoke German already, but then I really pretended, and when they ask me I shrug my shoulders. And I think later that saved me. I think that they let me out that they had -- they didn't have trains any more because the queen has spoken from England, and said that all the people who worked for the railroad had to go in hiding, too. So all the Jews were in hiding orway, all the men between 16 and 45, and now all the railroad, and the queen said, and their families have to go in hiding, too, because in '44, the end -- they were so mean, if they came to arrest a man and he wasn't home, they took his wife, the children, the baby. If you were pregnant they took you. And then the man came back and was shot, so it was a crazy world, and there were not enough trains any more. So -- but we were brought there.

Q: So you're in a cell with four other women?

A: I'm in a cell with those other four women. And then I was so lucky, because the Jewish lady was brought out, and every Tuesday, and every Thursday night my heart broke because then they had rounded up the Jews, put them in the prison, and then they separated the men and the women, and the children. Oh. And then you heard them, [indecipherable] mama -- mama. It was terrible, terrible. And then --

Q: What were they doing every Tuesday and Thursday, were -- they were sending the Jews out to Westerbork?

A: Then they -- all the people that they had arrested were brought to Westerbork.

Q: And then they were deported from Westerbork, right? So who were these other three women with you, do you know?

A: Now, the Jewish lady was taken out

Q: Right.

A: And then an other young woman came in. But see, this was in the dunes, in The Hague. That prison is right on the edge of the dunes, and in the dunes, that was sperrgebiet, it was forbidden territory. And they have made many bunkers [indecipherable] to England, and there was also the place of execution, and that was known Waalsdorp. And I'll spell that later with Elizabeth. But that was the place of execution, and they had already executed so many people, but you couldn't get there. And then --

Q: Did you hear it?

A: No, it was farther in the dunes, no --

Q: You couldn't hear it, so -- I see.

A: -- it was farther in the dunes, but we knew it, that was the place of execution. But it was right on the border of the koshda dunes, and then the osh -- the North Sea. And at the -- in the morning we got that rusty cup, we had to stick that out, and they poured in a -- in the door was a little thing that they could open, and then you had to come, and the -- often it was bohoi -- boiling hot brown water, it wasn't coffee, they poured over your hands, that you burned, but it was all you get, and at lunchtime -- anyway, there was nothing except that -- but that young girl came in, she was I think 22 or 23, about my age. And when the allies flew over, because they dropped bombs sometimes, if they knew that they were building something [indecipherable] and that has to be, I mean, but it is scary if you're sitting in the cell and you hear bombs falling close by. But we knew that we would never get in -- gotten free without sacrifices, and if it was us, so be it. But we always, when we heard our friends in the sky, that were our hope, you know, and then everybody went, because there was a cell left, and right, and in the back. And then you went to the hole, and you started knocking, and knocking, and knocking. And they did it, and with a whole bunch, but the whole prison was nearly trembling like it was our friends are in the sky, one day we will all be free. And this happened when she was there, but this girl comes in, I can't remember her name.

Q: Is it Sonia?

A: No, that was not Sonia, no that was another one. She wanted to, with her beauty to -- to [indecipherable] she was Jewish. [inaudible]. Anyway, this girl comes in, and --

Q: Barzilai is her last name?

A: Barzilai, yeah, Sonia Barzilai, I felt so sorry for her.

Q: Uh-huh. But -- so this is another woman?

A: Yeah, this was a young girl, and she comes in, and here we are -- she was the fifth one, and she comes up to me when we had introduced ourself, and she says to me, "You know, I know that I'll be out very soon. Do you have a message for the outside world?" And I thought, "That is crazy, why doesn't she ask the others also?"

Q: Right.

A: And so that was already fishy. And all the time she came to me, and I thought -- and I said, "Listen," I said, "you both -- you all know, when you are here, you never know that you're out in a few days, it's impossible. You don't know how long." And then in the end she said, "Well, I'm engaged to a German, but he is a good German." I thought that for me there are no good Germans at the moment. I thought -- and she said, "No, but he -- I know he gets me out." And I said, "No, I have no family here, and I'm just a maid and the people where I am, they don't really care for me, they only care now that the laundry isn't being done." I said, "And I -- now I have no -- nobody who is interested in me." So I didn't bite. But then the next night, the allies flew over and dropped a bomb real close by, so we run to our walls. And she ran to the front door where the guards were, and she [indecipherable], "let me out, let me out [indecipherable] allies, and let me out, you know I don't belong here." So she was planted. And I see everywhere God's hand, because this was at the very beginning of my -- of my prison time, so I knew don't trust anybody. It's the lesson I got.

Q: But you don't remember her name?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Don't remember her name. And then I -- she was there so short, just two or three days. And then we were brought -- the invasion came, and then they got very nervous, and we were all loaded in -- in trains, and in -- in -- really in trucks. And see, Corrie and Betsie ten Boom, you've heard that name, of course, too. But they came from another city, Haarlem, and I never heard of them, we didn't know what they were doing. But we were from The Hague, a lot of us --

Q: Right.

A: -- and we were driven in the dunes. And when you came out of the prison, you came on the long lane that was called the van Alke madelaan, and the city, and the railroad stations were to the right. And to the left was only the dunes and the place of execution. And they drove us to the left, so the Dutch -- the Hague people thought we are going to be executed, and I thought so, too. So you had to prepare yourself for being shot. And I know that several -- there were so many, there were 1800 I heard later. So we were in loads of trucks. And some of The Hague people were so scared they jumped out, and there were soldiers sitting with machine gun -- with mi -- mitarios machine guns, I think

you called it. There was no point, a-and I don't know, we have dunes in Michigan the Great Bear dunes, you can't run in dunes, it's sand, and it goes up, there was no way, it wasn't practical, so we went there. But then later my father told me -- he was born in 1883, that when there were no cars yet, and there were a couple of very expensive hotels, one was the Oranje Hotel, the Orange Hotel, and development people came to the big station, and for those people, there were no cars yet, and they -- they didn't have any suitcases, especially not this [indecipherable], they had big trunks for [indecipherable]. So they had made a side branch with a little train that came to flu -- near the hotels. But over the decades, that was totally covered with sand, and some of the Nazi Dutch people must have known that, so ha -- they had unearthed that station, and they were afraid to ship us from in The Hague itself, they thought -- and -- they did it in Amsterdam, and there was a big riot, and a fight, that the underground wanted to liberate the people from there. So they avoided that, and they brought us there in the dunes, so we were not shot, we were loaded in trains. Crammed in trains, and I was in the same compartment with Corrie and Betsie ten Boom, so that was the first time, and you know that story, of course, maybe you've read, "The Hiding Place," and some other --

Q: I did, but summarize it a little bit. They --

A: -- of the [indecipherable]. And they were in their 50's, so I thought at that time they were old ladies. And they were each in a cell because they thought that Corrie had tee -- tuberculosis. And their old father, he was a very wonderful Christian, and he was a very distinguished gentleman, very well known in Haarlem, they had an exclusive watch store -- s-s-store, and when all the Jews had to wear a star, he went too. He said, "They are my people, and I am a Christian," and he wore the star. But they were arrested [indecipherable]. So -- and their old father had just died in that prison, so they met each other, and Corrie and Betsie met each other then, on that trip. They were sitting hand in hand and crying, and then I heard their story from the other prisoners. And then the train was also black, when -- you know, curtains, that not a light shown, and we didn't know where we were going. But the noise changed, we went -- so I knew, I thought if we got in Germany, the chances for survival would pfft. And if we stay in the Netherlands, and in the south you had a -- a Vught, and in the middle you had Amersfoort, Camp Amersfoort. So we didn't know where we were going, it was dark and all the curtains were down, it was night. And then all of a sudden, the whole noise changed, and it was so -- and then I knew we were going south, that we were going -- because -- you saw on the map the cities of Zwijndrecht and Doordrecht, but there is a big, big river, and that's called at Hollands Diep, and that is so big, and there is a large bridge over it, and we were going over that bridge, and I had done that many times on my bike. And then I knew that we were going to Vught. And at one point there was a toilet, and everybody stood in line to go to the toilet. And when it was quiet, that there was nobody, I see a girl go in, and I see that she -- there was a window, and that was also -- but I saw that she took the black curtain up, and there was glass, and you could open that, and I thought that she had opened it, but there were soldiers with machine guns on the roof of the train, and I thought she knows this area, and I thought she's trying to escape. But if somebody goes in -- so I stood at the door like I would be the next one. I thought I'll give her a chance. And then at one point, we went through a wooded area, very curvy so the train had to go

slow. And I saw her jump. So then she jumped out of that window, and she rolled -- I don't know, we went further, but the train went slow, so I said a prayer that she would make it safe. And then I went to the bathroom, I didn't have to go, but I had given her the chance. So I went back, and we came in the camp, and then they counted, all -- eight prisoners had escaped on that trip, so --

Q: Eight?

A: Eight. So I knew one of them, I hope that she survived. But I felt really great. And then we were brought in that -- was in the night, I think we arrived at two o'clock in the woods. We had to get out. There were all soldiers with helmets, and bayonets and screaming --

Q: Did they do something because they knew that there were eight escapees? Were they --

A: Well, this was when we -- they count us inside, we weren't yet in the camp. But you know, the train with prisoners came, so then there are soldiers, and we were 80 [indecipherable] prisoners, so they were [indecipherable] warned that we would be punished. They didn't have [indecipherable] for us. What was unexpected was the day of the invasion.

Q: Right.

A: And then --

Q: Did they care that there were eight people who escaped? They didn't care?

A: I don't know, they were furious, they -- all the time we had role call, or something, and counting --

Q: Right.

A: And I don't know if they ever found out who, because it was a chaos with the invasion, you know, the -- and then we were -- and there were big Dobermans, and we were pushed into the camp, and then we were in di --

Q: There were Dobermans? Dogs?

A: Doberman dogs, and soldiers, so they -- I mean, you didn't get a chance to escape, they were [indecipherable]

Q: Right, right.

A: -- and guys had bayonets and guns, and whatever. And later we went in a barrack number four, and that was really a camp within a camp, because see now, if you had three or four of one case, they kept you in different cells that you couldn't agree you'll say this or that.

But now we were just mashed together, and they [indecipherable] guards, and we weren't allowed to say one word to each other. And then we were all brought to a separate barrack, the women number 75, and the men were brought somewhere else. And for days we couldn't speak to each other. Day and night that we were not allowed to say a word to each other, till they had quick interrogated the keepall -- the people from the same cases. And then after a couple of weeks, I think, then they stayed the whole day with us, the female guards, and on the four corners were four S.S.'s, and the S.S.'s were the volunteer Hitler elitengrup, and they -- they had their awesome -- you know, the swastika is from the Nazis, but the S.S. had the wolfs angel, they had that sign like that. And they -- on each corner were always S.S.'s in every barrack, four. And this was May, June, July, August. And I remember it was very hot, and we have nothing there. We got cots, and very thin mattresses, and three high in long rows, of course, like in all the barracks. And then the only thing we had -- there was a washroom -- washroom, and that had drofs and a pipe, and faucets. But that was all, we had no soap, no shampoo, no towels, no toilet paper, no nothing. And I was arrested in my clothes, so if I wanted to wash any of my underwear, then I must [indecipherable] it out till it had dried [indecipherable]

Q: So there was -- there was no uniform, you could just wear clothes?

A: Not yet, later --

Q: Later there was.

A: -- later I got a prison dress, but --

Q: I see.

A: -- I had no clean underwear, or anything, I was arrested with what I had worn. So that was very hard. And then, because they checked us, and the other girl had to make the twine, and I was picked out there, "Oh, you're a maid, you have to do the laundry," of those guards, and from a whole bunch of guards, and I got two other girls to help me, but I was the maid, so I have to be the leader. And on the -- on their shirts they had that wolfs angel embroidered, and I hated that more than the swastika. And this women -- the guards, they had to take turns, and there we stood, three, and it was all [indecipherable] stuff, because there were no laundry machines. So then -- sometimes they got so bored, you know, to sit there and see those three girls the whole day, and they locked us up and they went away for a beer, or a coffee, or whatever. And when they were gone -- and don't forget, I was in my early 20's then, and then we took that sh-shirt and undershirt, with that hated swastika on -- no, the -- the wolfs angel, and we got a nice big gob of saliva, bull's-eye. And this -- but every day when we were alone, and every day we went a little bit back, and we got so good in aiming. It was really -- and later, you know, Corrie ten Boom asked me later to be with her, and help her to arrange a home for the Jewish people who now had nobody, she had a home for. Cases that didn't go to sanitorium [indecipherable]. So she had that, and I helped her those six weeks. And she had a friend who was a psychiatrist, and he wanted to talk to her. At that time, if you went to a psychiatrist, they thought you were nuts, you know, that was -- so no, we didn't want it,



didn't need it. But he was so interested, so in the end we said okay, and then I asked him, I said, "You must think that we were crazy, that we got such a kick out of spitting on that -- on that horrible thing that we hated while our lives were at stake." And he said, "No," he said, "they tried to break your spirit, and they couldn't, so that was a good thing." Because if we had been naughty, we had to stand there, appel had -- now that is horrible - - it -- it doesn't sound horrible, but you had to stand, marble, you know, with your thing here at the side, and you weren't allowed to move. And you know, after seven minutes you start swaying, and they fainted left and the right, and then all those guards were sitting there and laughing. And we put a smile on our face when they made us do that. Like we got those delicious cookies, like they had given us something nice and we stood there, and we fainted left and right, and they got mad at us. And I remember that they said, "Die Hollandische weiber sind schlimmer wie die Polakken." The Dutch -- and then weiber is a degrading word, here weif is a normal word, but it's a degrading word, you ha -- the Dutch women were worse than the Polakken, than the Polish. That was [indecipherable] and then they yelled at [indecipherable] like they had given us a great compliment, you know, like [indecipherable] you are perfect, and we stood there, and they were furious, but that were all our little fun thing.

Q: Why -- why was that insignia of the S.S. wor --

A: The wolfs angel?

Q: The wolfs ang -- wolfs angel, why was that worse to you than the swastika, do you think?

A: Because the swastika was the general Nazi thing, but this was volunteers, and they were trained in cruelty. They could blindly obey, and they were trained -- I read that when they started -- they are volunteers, so they signed up for this, then they got an -- a new puppy, a -- a German Shepherd puppy, and I don't know if the training was two or three years, but at the final exam, now dog is your friend, and they had just [indecipherable] to kill their dog. That -- they could do anything. And I heard [indecipherable] from another friend of mine, who went through so many camps, and he was later the head editor of a very high standing Dutch magazine that came, The Alsafer, that's one of [indecipherable] and he went through so many camps, and if he saw a scrap of paper, he wrote something down, and he put it in cracks from in the wall, or whatever, and after the war, he picked it all up, and he wrote a book, "Nacht und Nebel," [indecipherable]. I don't know if you've heard about it. And they volunteered. I mean, what they did fi -- they said, kill this prisoner, and they were free to do it. They hung them, and then they were nearly dead, they got them down that they could breathe again, they did that sometimes three times with the same -- now is that cruelty? I mean -- no, I hated that sign more because that was volunteers who did that.

Q: Now, when you're in Vught, you can't tell any of these women who you really are, so you not only have to be hiding from the Germans who are going to question you, but you have no -- you're totally alone.

A: I was totally alone, and you know, I scraped in the wall of the prison, because they took everything away, but that was the time of the bobby pins, and they had not taken my bobby pin, and all the other women did -- to keep the date [indecipherable] so all the others did one, two, three, four, five, that -- from the days that they were -- so I didn't have to do that. But the very last word our Jesus said before he went back to heaven was, lo, I am with you always. And I scared that in the wall, and I thought I'm never alone. So -- and that's what I had to cling to. And I never felt alone, I knew He was always there. I trusted. Yeah, that was -- but it was a very rough time and in the end, I've got two people that I've trusted. And that was -- one was a Catholic girl, she was in about the same situation, I don't know how I got to trust her. And the other was a lady, and her name was Mrs. Verschoor. And she was in her 40's, and the suffering was engraved on her face. It's so intense sad, and it really struck me. And I asked others, "What is the matter? What is this hurt?" And they told me she had only one daughter, Yoka, and the girl was 18, studying at the university, and she had helped pilots all the time escape, and she was arrested, you heard her name [indecipherable] Yoka Verschoor. And she was arrested, and she was nacht und nebel and it was that you disappear, nobody knew any more. So Mrs. Verschoor did not. And then somebody said yeah, and they lived in Paramibo, and that struck a chord because on my false papers I was born in Paramibo. And one day -- we were 175 women in the camp, and there was a very famous film star. Like here, everybody knew Judy Garland, something similar, Ennie Meunier. And she was -- and Ennie was there, now, why the heck is Ennie Meunier in this camp? And I asked others, and they said she is engaged to a German. So right away [indecipherable] I don't know what's the matter. So one day Ennie Meunier hears that I was born in Paramibo, and I didn't know a thing about Paramibo. I knew much about Indonesia because so much of my family and my brother, so many had been there. But I didn't know a thing about Paramibo. And she come, "Hi Willie, I hear you were born in Paramibo." And I said yes. And she said, "Where did you live?" A street -- I had no idea about a street name, but we all had diarrhea, and then you could run away. I said, "Oh, I'll talk to you later." And I ran away to the bathroom, and then afterward I avoided her like the plague, because I knew -- oh no, she says to me, "We were on [indecipherable], I mean, we were there, did you see me," in a big play. I said, "No, my father was just on leave, he hated it so much to miss that." Because in a small Dutch community, that's a big thing. And she said, "Oh." And then she asked me where I lived, and I thought oh no, so I ran away and pretended I had diarrhea. And then oh, she comes back, and what do I say, and if she's engaged to a German -- who is engaged to a German during this time? So I was really scared. And then I had heard that Mrs. Verschoor had lived there, and we all had diarrhea bouts, and then you were allowed -- they were allowed to leave their paper stuff, and I had to go. So I saw that Mrs. Verschoor ran to the bathroom, and there were 10 on a row, and we had to go in groups, and were watched by a female guard. Anyway, Mrs. Verschoor runs, so I run, and I sat next to her, and --

Q: Hold that. We're going to stop the tape, and we'll start --

A: [indecipherable] back?

Q: Yes, we're going to stop, and start at the next tape.

End of Tape #7

**Tape #8**

Q: Diet, we left off when you went into the latrine to --

A: Oh yeah, and then I asked this lady, I said, "Don't ask me any questions, but tell me anything about Paramibo." And I said, "A street, where do people live, regular people." She says, "Heerenstraat," and she told me all about it. So that was -- and then after the war I went to her house. She got out and her daughter got out. And, well -- so I know that. But that helped me, and when Ennie Meunier then came, I knew something.

Q: So you weren't afraid when she came any more?

A: Well, I didn't like it, but at least I had answers, you know. But I -- anybody who had anything to do with Germans, I stayed really away, and the -- like you say, I was very lonely there, because I couldn't trust anybody I didn't know. But there was one girl, and she was go -- when we were called out for hearings, we were scared stiff because that was life or death again, you know. And it all depended on the mood of the guy who interrogated you. And we knew it was in a little building, and there was one girl, and she was called out twice a week at least, and mostly around two o'clock in the afternoon, and I told you -- this May, June, July, August, beautiful day, summer, and she was never nervous when she went. And she stayed awake for hours, she came mostly back around five. And she had a couple of tan shades darker. So I thought, you are not in that little building of the hearings. I thought, you are a spy, you are planted here. Because I knew they had done that in prison, but from her I knew it. So I was afraid for the spies, [indecipherable] but her, I had already pinned down. And another thing happened, and that was kind of funny. One time a big filling fell out of my tooth. And you stick all your tongue in that when there is a hole. And what do you do? So one night one of the girls wakes up screaming, screaming. And so we went to the guys at the corners, because we didn't know they had -- by that time we were there so long they locked us in, and there was four guys, and the windows were all open because we -- I think we stunk, because we had -- never had soap or shampoo. But anyway, those guys, we were warned, and then they [indecipherable] there came an ambulance, and they took her away. And I thought, "What happens now to her when she is," -- I thought [indecipherable] kill her, or what And they said, "No, there is a hospital here." And that's all prisoners, the doctors, the nurses, [indecipherable] everybody is a prisoner except the leaders are Germans. And I said, "Is there also a dentist?" They said, "Yeah, there's also a dentist." And by that time we had all had our prison dresses, and if you had had a hearing it was navy blue, gray, navy blue, gray, and it had pockets. And if you had had your hearing, then you were classified, and you got a triangle, and you probably know about that, but when you were a political prisoner you got a red triangle. If you were a murderer you had a green triangle, if you were gay you had a pink triangle, and I think the Jehovah Witnesses had silver, gray, or something. But that was after your hearing. And Corrie and Betsie had already been called out. And so I heard that there was a dentist, and I asked permission -- a boring life, you know, every day the same, and we were hardly ever marching, because we weren't allowed to go outside. And so then I said, "Could I go to the dentist?" And with eight other prisoners, we were brought by a soldier with a machine gun to the

dentist. So we walked through that camp, and it was in a little building that was -- I think next to the hospital, but I didn't know, we came through a door. And we had eight of us to sit on a bench, and I saw that the dentist had a green triangle, and he was a Greek, but he spoke fluent English. And he -- and he had a green triangle, so he was a murderer, but I thought, well, maybe he has killed a German, and then you know, for me he is a good mur-murderer, yeah. It's terrible that I say that, but you know, you didn't know what -- so anyway, it was my turn, and I -- but this city where this Camp Vught was so close to the Philips factories, and all the young men had been sent to Germany, and the top guys, who were necessary, they had been exemptioned to go to Germany. But they said to the Germans, we need Dutch people -- we need people to work here, we need laborers to do the work, why don't you send some busloads of those prisoners every day? And then they were fed terrific by those Dutch guys, and Philips makes radios, there was no TV yet, so the Germans couldn't constantly watch, so those prisoners who worked there, they loved it, they got food from the Dutch, and if any of the German was gone, they put the BBC on, so they heard all the latest news. And they told it in the camps, so that dentist knew all the latest news. So it was my turn, and he starts drilling, and he said, "Would you like to know the latest news?" I said, "Yes, please." So he told me they were marching up at Italy, and it was going so good for us, so there was hope, you know. And then when my turn was over -- he did the temporarily filling in it, so I had to sit back on that bench, and the next one -- but that German had to watch us, but also the dentist and the patient, so he was slowly walking up and down, and up and down. And I was sitting at the corner, and here was a door. And the door started slamming. And that's such an irritating noise, so I closed it [indecipherable] and a moment later it was slamming again, and I thought, that is not coincident, so I kept my eye on it, and when the German had gone this, and was with his back to door -- the door opens a little slight, and a hand came up, so high piled with bread, much nicer bread than we had outside. And was margarine on it. So I grabbed it, but the German could come back, so what do you do? I gave all the girls one, and was no time to eat, so it goes here, that's where you stuff everything. And then the German walked again, and the hand came again, and we went in [indecipherable] and we went back to the barrack [indecipherable] down, and it was really funny. And we knew the news. So the next time -- the temporary, he did that three or four times, and then he said, "Now I have to put a real one in." And I was so sorry, I thought no news, no bread, because we shared it with those eight girls, especially w-we thought were going to die.

Q: Right.

A: And I was so sad, and he says to me, "But I can drill a hole in a good one," and he said, "I won't touch a nerve." I said, "Yes, please." And he did several of my good ones, and I was there for weeks. And you won't believe this -- so then in the end, I think that he was -- and we heard heavy artillery in the distance, and that was your general -- we didn't know it was, but we knew they were our friends the liberators. And the Nazis got terrible nervous, and these were our friends, and they didn't want anybody of this camp ever to be liberated. And then they started, every sunset my barrack was right on the edge of the camp, and there was water, and they said there was electricity so you can't escape, and they said there is a mine field. And then you had that fence with the towers and machine guns, and then there were the woods. And the machine guns were every time at sunset,

and it was in the woods close by that we could hear it. And one day I'm doing the laundry, and there were two clothes -- and all clothes, and it was covered with blood. And one woman from the guards -- I remember it, you were never alone, and you longed to be alone for a moment, and think and pray. And I had to clean the little room where the guards were always sitting, and there was a [indecipherable] and I was very softly humming a -- a hymn that was really consoling to me, and this woman came in. And she could have yelled at me, because you weren't allowed to sing. And she said to me, and that's German again, I have to spell it, "Sie singen wie ein Heidelarche." You sing like a heather lark. And I was really sad, and I didn't have a beautiful voice, but I knew that she was not the cruelest, you know, she had some soft. And she was just on duty, so -- and she could speak a little bit Dutch, they all could. So I said to her, "What is this, all this blood?" And you know, I had to soak it, and blood has to go in cold water, in troughs where we had to wash ourself. And it was horrible. And she said, "[indecipherable] two guys who have been on a motorbike, they had an accident, in the hospital, and they come out and need their clothes," so I washed them. Two days later, I got 12 sets of bloody underwear and clothes. And that whole 12 was filled with blood, and all the 12, and I thought this is not just something. So I went to that spy, and they all did kind of pitiful to me, they thought you're a border case, you're not all [indecipherable], and they said -- Hanny Janssen was her name. I said, "Hanny, I have to wash all clothes, you know, that -- that's hard to do every day, but now it's all bloody. What would that be?" I did real stupid. She said, "Oh, that are guys who are, every sunset when you hear the machine guys, are executed. They are traitors." And it were our Dutch guys. And you know, they dragged you from one camp to another. And the next day I got 36 of those bloody clothes, and that trough was filled with Dutch blood. It was so horrible. And I didn't know if Hein had been brought [indecipherable] Ab and I started to look always when I had to wash those clothes, for names. And I was shattered, and I don't know, I -- I cracked up, because also we had buried weapons in my parents house, under the roses, under the bushes, and I didn't know anything. I thought, if they all the time come and search, and they dig up the yard, and they find the weapons, they've shot my parents. I really -- I thought my -- I thought I was absolutely going crazy, I didn't know any more. And if I didn't have my faith, I would have -- I was -- I cracked up. I was -- the next morning I couldn't get up, I was paralyzed for three days. And they sent the camp doctor, and he kicked the bed, he said, "There's nothing wrong with you." But I was so weak that then they don't me -- me -- they didn't make me do the laundry any more, they gave me a broomstick, and I had to sweep. And then I started hating them so much, you know. We say I hate this, or I thi -- old President Bush hated broccoli. And I think you don't know what hated is. With every molecule in my body, hated those Nazis for what they were doing. And I was so angry with God. I thought, you are there in heaven, these are your people that they're killing. They're killing my people, and you can stop this, and you don't do a thing. And I was praying God's damnation on the whole bunch. I was still praying, but I was praying horrible prayers, only God's damnation. God [indecipherable] this or that. And just then, there was one girl that I -- I said I trusted too, apart from Mrs. Verschoor, and her name was Freddy, and Freddy was a Catholic. And just in all this stuff that you heard, that was your General Patton, who was getting closer, and closer by -- and just in [indecipherable] of my hearing, and I had -- all those months I had trouble with you may not give false witness, it was one of the things what was in the Bible, a

story of a spy, Rayhab, and she lied, and she was not punished by God, but she was blessed [indecipherable] Jesus. So when I thought of that, because I knew the Bible from that -- I thought, oh that's God permission, so I said, oh let -- okay lord, I consider that I have your permission to lie, and now give me a good story. And for months I was praying if they had interrogated me then, I wouldn't know what to say. But every day I'd work on that story when I went to bed. And I was born -- I thought, as little ballast as you can have. So you have a father, no he has died. You have a mother? She has died. No brothers and sisters. Because if you -- three months later, I didn't know how long I would have to say it, you have to tell the story exactly the same, the same dates. So it was really a matter of life and death. And just when this all happened, I had my story ready, but I was repeating it every night, you know, because sometimes they shook you up at two in the night, and you had the hearing that -- in your sleep, or half asleep you may say the wrong thing. And Freddy saw that I was called out for my hearing, and she knew that was life or death for everybody, except for this Hanny Janssen, and the officer from the Gestapo came for the hearing, had to sign me out. And she pretended that she had diarrhea, and she stormed from her twine making, past me, and while he was signing me out she whispered in my ear. I'm going to storm the gates of heaven for you. And you know, me -- I say to friends, I'll pray for you, but this was so much stronger, I don't know if you know that story -- the gay guard at -- that comic, you know, you see him with a ram going. And you know something, another second miracle happened apart from the rain coat. I walked out with that man, and we had to walk maybe eight minutes, or 10 minutes to the main building of the hearings. And because I knew the Bible, and I was bombarded with God's promises. And one of them is, not a hair -- hair of your head will be harmed without the will of your heavenly father. So they couldn't even touch a hair of my head without Him. And the second one is something that you don't need every time, but it said also, do not fear be -- if you have to appear before authorities and kings, I will give you the words. God promised me. And I said, okay Lord -- like Tevye on this "Fiddler on the Roof," you know, he was always talking to God, I said, "I have broken many promises, but this is a promise, and I hold you to your word. But you just have to give me the words." And I walked in that building, and in that room, and there were a whole bunch of Nazi -- very high Nazis sitting behind the table, S.S.'s. I knew their ranks, and I saw their medals. I think about seven at a green table. And I told you about the bad food we had, one slice of bread in the morning, one in the evening, and that was [indecipherable], then the line leaves. But once a month we got a package from the Red Cross, and that has a sandwich, and that had a little bit of toilet paper, and it had a square inch of pure lard. And they had put some soy sauce in, so we scrape every day a bit of that. But because of that bad food, we had all gotten phlegmones, I don't know if you know what that -- people in the first World War in the ditches in Belgium and France had it. It started as an itch, and then you got hives, and then they became so big like strawberries, and you always had them in your face. And your whole face was out of shape, and in the end your skin couldn't hold it any more, and it burst open, and green pus was dripping down. And we all had that on our faces, most of us, and it was terrible. And then it was the fifth month, I've never had shampoo, so can you imagine your hair greasy, just cold water, no towels. And we looked a mess, and we have no mirrors, but you saw how the others -- so there I was sitting with those seven well fed guys across from me, and 15 minutes before, I'd wished them all death. And I looked at them, and I thought, there you sit, you seven,

and you think that you can decide about my life. You can't even touch a hair of my head if God doesn't let you. And I thought you totally on the wrong side, the -- and actually, the most strange thing, I could feel pity for them. They thought they had it all, and they had nothing. And then they ask -- started asking me questions, but stupid really had done so stupid in those months, and I'd never said one word of German, one word. So I said, "I don't know what you're saying." So they called the translator, and he had to sit there, then they asked him the questions, but I knew it already, and then me, so it gave me twice the time to think. And then in the end, the leader -- he had the highest rank, and he was in his 50's, and he said, "I have done nothing in my life but hearings, and I have developed a sixth sense," he says, "and I can't," -- and I was so afraid that I had slipped up somewhere, you know, because it was very important. But he said, "I can't put a pin in your story, [indecipherable]," -- he said, "but my sixth sense tells me it's all baloney." And I told him, because they said I was early 20, so my father must have been in his 40's. And they said, "What did your father there?" I thought everywhere before I thought a -- taxes. I said, "He worked for the taxes," because that's everywhere, in every country, you know. And then he said, "Where is he?" I said he died, but of course he must have been young. He said, "What did he die of?" I said he was bitten by a snake. [indecipherable]. And then they asked me the date, and they have the big Sinter Klass on December five, so my father had died on December five. And then, and your mother? She has died, too. I -- I felt like I was killing my own parents. And they said, "What did she die of?" I said, "She had a very weak heart, and when Father was brought home there, she died." "When?" "10 days later, 15<sup>th</sup>," so I thought I could remember that. So they asked all questions, but then in the end they started -- and I heard every word, they started discussing my case in front of them. And they said, "But she doesn't look like a maid, she looks more like a secretary, or a teacher." And then I heard another one say, "Well, we can check that." And I thought, how can you ever check -- I -- I had no idea what it was. And then they brought me -- see, that was the good thing, that I -- that they thought I didn't know German. And then they brought me a magazine and a pad, and a pencil, and said, "Copy that." And I thought -- I think your brains work 200 percent when you're -- it was life or death again. And I thought, why are they with this? And then it dawned on me, when you were a maid, by law you had to go through sixth grade, and then you could go, and mostly you were from poor families, and you were farmed out to a wealthy lady where -- or couple, that you had to have the etic -- but you don't write, you write -- and we had one hour, and some schools two hours of penmanship. And if you see those classrooms, the capital A, the small a, the ca -- so that is what your handwriting was when you leave. But if you're a secretary, and you take dictation, you start -- so I thought, that is the trap they put up for me. So I sat there, and I hold [indecipherable] with my tongue sticking out like it was really unusual work. And then they brought me back to the barrack. And then the noise of the a-allies came sh -- all the time closer, and they got more and more nervous. And then I remembered one of the women one time says to me -- I was called Willie. "Willie, if you can choose what day you go out of prison, what would you choose?" And I says, "If I would choose, I want to go in the radiant sunshine, when the world looks so happy." I said, "On a Saturday morning, and take a soak bath, and shampoo, and take care of all that stuff on my face, clean underwear, clean clothes, and Sunday go to church and thank God for freedom," I said, "with capital letters. We always take it for granted, but it's a gift." I said, "But if it pours,



and it's Monday morning, I'll go too." And you know, this is so miraculous, two weeks later, on a radiant Saturday morning, I was called out by the Hauptmachtmeisterin, she was the highest, and she was a real mean woman. And she's, "Willie, you'll go to Germany." And the little voice here said, "You're going home." And that's when I put the belt on, and I left sweaters I had with the eight girls, and I knew in my heart I was going out. And I was let out with another girl, Ansje. And Ansje didn't know it, but her husband had been executed. And Ansje, when we had to stand at attention, you know, had always fainted the first. And she was married for eight or nine years, and they wanted so much to have a baby, and in the camp she found out she was pregnant, so she fainted all the time. And her husband didn't know it, but he had been executed. But when she was let out she didn't know she was a widow. And they let us out at the total different gate than where they had brought us in. And there we stood. And they had been so cruel with many things. They once said to me that I could take a shower in Scheveningen, and then I was there, and I hadn't had any water -- I mean, that little pail with cold water, and when I stood there, and I'd undressed, and I wanted to [indecipherable] ready, I'd never [indecipherable]. So they did all cruel things to make you happy for something, and they'd -- so we were afraid that the gates would open again and say, "Okay, all a big mistake, back in." And we wanted to get away, but we were so [indecipherable] nervous. And there was nothing. It was a lot of sand, it was very arid, and in the distance were trees but you saw two wheels from a cart, and you saw some horse manure. And this was the end of '44, and [indecipherable] our whole country does nothing any more. If you saw a store, there wouldn't be a rubber band, there wouldn't be a paper clip, there wouldn't be anything. And the farmers didn't get fertilizer, and this is an arid part, so they collected all the manure from their pigs, their chickens, their cows, from everything, and it went in a pit, and then they pumped it up, and they put it in the moving cart, and spread it over the field, and they did that regularly. So they never scrubbed that cart -- for a few days later they filled it again. But this was the end of '44, so you can -- and we saw -- where we were standing there, and we said, shall we go left or right, we want to get away from here, but we didn't want to walk miles for nothing, you know, so we -- and then we saw a little dot. We said, "Let's see what that is." So we started walking, and it was a farmer who was going to spread all that manure, and that cart was filled to the brim with you know what, and stinking, and he was walking next to it because there was a shelf or something, that -- where you could sit on behind the horse, but it was caked on everywhere. And he was walking next to his horse. And he's, "Hi girls, you just came out of the camp?" And we said yes. And he didn't know if he should offer us a ride because then we had to sit on that dried stuff. And he said, would you -- would you -- but [indecipherable] it was a Cadillac, and we said, "Yes, please." He said, "Hop on." And I think that was such a glorious exit out of that prison, and the concentration camp, on the top of a manure cart. And I think like [indecipherable] God in heaven was having a little fun, that he had [indecipherable]

Q: Now, now, let me go back a little bit. What was it about this Catholic woman saying that she would storm the gates of heaven for you that brought you out of your anger against God? What do you think --

- A: I -- I really don't know it, but I think she made me think that she was praying for me, and that I then thought hatred is not really good. It -- you know, I -- to be honest, I hated now the German again, and I had the same problem, it took me months and months. But if you start hating somebody, it eats you. Then you have to, but you need very much strength and prayer to overcome that because you know, and I think that she really shocked me in that I thought she is praying for me, and that I then thought of all God's promises. I mean -- and He keeps His promises, I break them often, by not even th --
- Q: But you were sure, in spite of the fact that you were accusing God of not doing anything, because all these horrible things were happening, and that was true, and on the other hand you believed God would protect you. Did you -- do you think --
- A: Well, protect -- I -- I knew -- see, after the war, there were things that -- I had a long time a lot of trouble, because more than half of our friends were killed. And then I heard that there was a session of grief, you know?
- Q: Yes.
- A: And that were so many steps, and that man who led it, he was a psychologist or whatever, and he said, if you miss one of those steps, you cannot be whole. And as a matter of fact, then I he -- what he said, I missed the anger against God for -- for my life, because I thought, God didn't force us, we did it out of our own free will. So that part I can't be angry with God, because, you know, if we hadn't done it, this mightn't have happened.
- Q: Right.
- A: But I don't know. I mean, I think God works in your heart, and that he showed that to me, I don't know.
- Q: Were you ever beaten at Vught?
- A: Ever what?
- Q: Beaten.
- A: No, not beaten.
- Q: Uh-huh, you were not. Do any of the women that you were with --
- A: There were a couple of Jewish sisters, they were taken out and they were beaten, and one they told me was put in a very hot bath, and then a very cold bath, and the other one came back totally deaf, they had beaten her with the leg of a table, and her drums were broken, and so -- but then, the Jewish people went right away to Westerbork, and then no one saw -- but --
- Q: So these Jewish women were with you, or they were in another part of the --

A: No, they were in my barrack for a few days.

Q: In your barrack, I see. And was the majority of people in Vught Jewish, and then the rest of you were political prisoners?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: We were nearly all po -- political.

Q: I see.

A: The Jewish people were right away sent to -- the majority in our -- were resistance, really.

Q: So that -- you're talking about the majority who stayed there for longer periods of time. But the Jews who came in when they [indecipherable]

A: They were regularly --

Q: I see.

A: -- shipped --

Q: Right.

A: -- to Westerbork.

Q: I want --

A: They didn't stay there long.

Q: Oh, okay, we'll change the tape right now, because I have another question.

End of Tape #8

**Tape #9**

- Q: Diet, y-you and the -- some of the other women embroidered handkerchiefs. Could you show this and explain what it is?
- A: Now, when your -- when you left your house in the time, there were no tissues. The last thing your Mom always yelled when you were at the door, do you have your handkerchief, because it's terrible. And when I was arrested I had my handkerchief. And then when I was in Vught, somebody had the needle, and they got the idea, and I did it too then, and we could borrow and from each other clothes we took threads, so we -- you just pulled it out. And so here I embroidered -- and every night you could have the needle for about seven minutes, and then [indecipherable] your blanket, so that you did. And here I did the date that I was arrested, and then here it must have been from somebody stuck in Scheveningen, that was the prison. And then this was -- if you looked up -- high up, there was this window, and I was there in the A corridor, cell 306. And this was the cribbiltong, where you had to go in your bathroom. And this was quarter to six every morning. And then they wanted to call Dutch, but they said, allemaal upschaan, everybody gets up. And then I was brought -- the night of the invasion, June six, we were brought to that concentration camp fer.
- Q: Right.
- A: And there was -- I was in barrack four, and that was here, where you walked, you saw this big wall, and here the four. And there we were in rows of cots, metal cots, with, you - long rows, three high, and I was in ba -- cot thr -- 125 in the middle. And then here, we got once a month the package of the Red Cross, so I did long live the Red Cross. And here we made our own camp song, Wijlaten demoedniet zakken. And at this -- we don't let our courage go, we keep our heads up, even if they have us now, keep courage, Dutch women, keep courage, Dutch women. And we made our own melody, so we sang that all the time.
- Q: Can you sing that song?
- A: I have a terrible voice [indecipherable]
- Q: It doesn't matter [indecipherable]. Do you have any recol -- you have a rec -- you remember what it was?
- A: Yeah, I remember the melody, I still -- when I saw Corrie ten Boom, or if I see anybody who has been, we sometimes sing it. [Ms. Eman sings some lines in Dutch]. Keep courage, even if you feel [indecipherable] and here's [speaks Dutch] that's to God, and here I have a big question mark, will I get out, and if so when. And here I embroidered the two initials of my false name, Willie Laarman. And that's it.
- Q: Well, would you just hold it up for a moment like that? Yes. It's wonderful. And you took that with you when you left Vught?

A: Yeah, I mean, it was to blow your nose in --

Q: Right.

A: -- so they wouldn't have taken it, I might have [indecipherable] a big blow. No, they -- they didn't take that.

Q: Did you wash this after the war?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yes.

A: And then I didn't use it any more.

Q: Right.

A: But it's now -- see, here was the needle, and it was there for months, because it took every day a few letters, so -- and I think that rusted, it might have been a rusty needle. And here it's going a little bit [indecipherable]

Q: Interesting. And then I have something else that you should explain to everybody, because before you left -- explain what this is, please.

A: Now, I had to do the laundry, because that's in -- but all the other women had to do something, and like I say, there was nothing any more in the Netherlands, so all those other women had to sit on long tables, that was also the tables where we had to eat, and on benches, and they had a rusty cup for themselves, and it was water in it, and they got long strips of brown paper, and you know, when you go shopping, for food shopping, then you get those big brown bags, that type of paper. And they got long strips, and they have to dump that in the water in strips, and then wind it. And they had every day to do 60 meters [indecipherable] little bit, I think 70 yards or so. And that was then dried, and when it was dry it was rolled in rolls, and they sold it as twine. And then I was arrested in the train, and I had only the one panty on, I had no other clothes, so one time the elastic off my panty broke, and at that time it was -- the elastic was like through a loop, you know -- now they stitch it on, but that wasn't then. So there I was, and I had no panty. So I said to the girls who were making that twine, "Can you bring me some of that?" And I wind it, and that's stiff and hard and I can get it through and tie it. So they did, but they brought me so much. But -- and there was nothing, so that was very precious, and then I had done that with my panty, and I thought what can I do with the rest? And there were eight girls that I thought they won't get out, they won't survive. They were so sick, and TB, and everything. That were also the eight that we gave that bread to. And I thought, you know what, I'm going to their parents. I had deep down the feeling one day I will -- I have those crazy fore-feelings, you know? And I had the feeling, you will get out, you will get out. So I asked them where do you live? And I wrote all the eight addresses

down, and their names. And then I made it slightly wet, and I wound it, but I had so much, so I didn't want to have it just as one -- so then, I think without knowing it, I might have done the first macramé. And I made this belt, it was in August '44, I would say. But how do you close it? So then I did those loops, and one a bit smaller than the other one. And out of somebody's socks, we -- I pulled wool, and then -- so when I was let out, I had this around my waist, and I was planning to go to all those eight parents, they lived in different cities. But I had all the addresses in my head, so I never had to open it. So this is the real thing. But you know, it's paper, and now it's getting too dry. The other day I wet it just a little bit, but it's breaking here, and I feel so bad. But really, I think 60 years later, it must have bleached up, but the names should still be in here. But I still know several. Randy Polner was one of them.

Q: Did you --

A: Nora Domart, '32 Amsterdam, and I went there. And a few years ago, I went back to see if her family still lived there, but they didn't. But there was another guy who did TV like you do, and they were kind of interested.

Q: So did you go to all of these eight?

A: I went to all those parents, and I told where they were, and that we hoped that they make it out. But at least you know something then --

Q: Right.

A: -- because see, Corrie ten Boom, Corrie and Betsie were -- had the hearing, and then you went to the other camp, and that was much easier. We were not allowed anything. And there Corrie and Betsie [indecipherable] some months you were allowed to write, it was censored, and then some months you were allowed to receive mail. You could receive one package a month. And you had a working day, but when it was over, you were allowed outside in the camps, free to visit others, in other barracks. Now, we were never -- we were now and then marched through a little street, up down, up down, that was all -- and then back, because we were really the ones who hadn't had a hearing. And I did another terrible thing, that Hanny Janssen, the traitor, I heard from somebody -- yeah, I have to tell this too, because it's really hilarious. I heard that she was really a prostitute, and she had started an affair with one of those SS's on the corner, a young, handsome guy, Hans. And somebody told me, "Hanny climbs out of the barrack late, out of window, and then she's the whole night with this Hans, [indecipherable] and then towards the morning she climbs back." And then -- and she was a prisoner, and we had to stand appel. And then they came back, and the man in charge of the appel -- you had the week that you were the stubealteste, that's the outchder from the -- in time then. So one time it was my turn to be stubealteste, and [indecipherable] I have a real mean streak in me, and I'm not sorry for it. And anyway, when I heard that, I said to the girl who told me, I said, I know something. So then when it was my turn in the morning to tell the guards who locked us up and went away then by that time, they weren't day and night with us any more, but the guards were there. And I locked all the windows from the

barrack. And Hanny wanted to climb in in the morning, and she couldn't, there was no window open. And then she had to disappear in the woods, because, you know, she [indecipherable] missing, but she was a prisoner. So then -- and they all thought that I was so stupid, so then the guards came in and they had to say hundred sev -- 185 prisoners, eight in bed, and so many. And then you had to say who were sick or new sick ones. And I said -- and I did real stupid, I said, "I know there should be 175 women, but I can only count 174, but I'm probably wrong." But they started counting, and she was missing. And then it was daylight, so she couldn't come back. And then oh, there was -- and she was missing. And then later, the rumor went Hanny Janssen had tried to escape, but that wasn't true, and she had to go a month to the bunker, so we were a month without her, and she never knew who -- but then after the war, two guys from the -- from the ger -- from our police came when I was studying nursing, and they came to the hospital where I worked, and they were from the -- the political police, you know, who were checking on all traitors. And they said, "You were in Vught, did you know a girl by the name of Hanny Janssen?" I said yes. "What did you think of her?" I said, "I think she was a spy." "Why do you think that?" I said, "Because with -- she was called out all the time, she was never nervous, she had a tan when she came back. She was very talkative, so she had had wine or beer." And I said, "I had just drawn my own conclusion." And I told what I had done. And then they told me it was true. But they told me that she was in Rotterdam a prostitute for the very high Germans, and they had uniforms, and the top officers went to her. And England found that out, and then they asked -- and there were a lot of volunteers, and like a son of a consul, or an ambassador who grew up in Germany, was fluent in German, and went to school, they probably spoke the dialect. And they found one guy who was willing to take a very high imitated German uniform, and they dropped him off over the Netherlands in the night, out of the plane, he had to jump. And he had to worm his way into her circle of friends, and he did. And in the end he became engaged to her. But he was very broadminded, she could see her other friends, and in bed she got so many secrets from -- and he asked questions, general, you know. And she found it out, and that went all back to England, till one day -- it was such a secret that they had to narrow it down and it pointed to her. But England had more on this guy, so he disappeared, her fiancé disappeared. But then the Germans were with a terrible problem, was she really pro-German and a victim, what she was, or was she planted by England? So they didn't know what to do with her, so they put -- I don't know if they asked me to, so I think that she --

Q: They imprisoned her?

A: Pardon me?

Q: Did they put her in prison?

A: They arrested her --

Q: They did arrest her.

A: -- and I think that she had a long prison term.

Q: Where did you -- when you left --

A: The camp?

Q: Yes, in this manure truck, where did you go?

A: I went -- first of all to The Hague, and I went to close friends of my parents, we played bridge or something once a week. And I wanted to know if they were still alive. But they lived far away from where my parents, quite a distance. And I thought, you know, that my parents -- they were so wise, because so many people in the underground were arrested, that a friend saw them and said I've seen so and so, and that week -- and then the person was arrested. Because friends who thought it was interesting to say when they were looking for you, I've seen them. And I rang the bell there, and I thought they say, "Hi Diet, there you are, and your parents don't know." Because I had disappeared, they never got those notes any more. And they s -- "Hi, I am here." And nothing exciting. And I said, "How are father and mother?" They said fine. And then I said, "come out of Vught." My parents had given the story that I was -- I had my wedding license, and my -- and I didn't know how to boil a potato, and Hein had 10 kids there in that family. My parents had all the time said when there is -- where is Diet, where is Diet, she -- "Oh, she doesn't know anything about the household and she's learning it at Hein's parents that she knows the household. So they did not know it. And then I told them, and they went to my parent's house. And then I did the dangerous thing. We lived very close to a corner, but in our street were a few Nazis. And I said, "Oh, I want to see my parents." You know, I really thought they might have been shot, so I wanted to see them. [indecipherable], "Can you go to our parent's house, and tell them to leave the door open, and then I go on the corner, and I look. If nobody is there, and I shoot in the house." And that's what happened. And then Mom was so happy, because they had really thought I was dead, they hadn't heard. And when -- she was helping, I told you, the baker and the milkman came to the house always, and she was just helping the milkman, and then my father came home, but she didn't want to say Diet is home, you know, because that was dangerous. So my father walks in, and I had -- we had kind of a long house at that time, so I had -- when the doorbell rang, I had gone to the back, because then if there was danger, I would climb over the wall from the rosebushes, and in an alley disappear. So I was in the back. And then my father came to the back, and he sees me, and he turns around, and walks in a side room. And oh, he is furious at me that I caused him so much trouble. So I followed him, and that was the first time in my life I saw him crying. And he was so happy. So then I stayed only till it was dark, and then I left, and found the underground. And then I went to all the guys, to Aalt and Alie, and Ab had been arrested. No, Ab at that time hadn't yet been arrested, the other leader. And I went also to my sister and her husband. So I went to all, and then they said we need you, so many have been a -- arrested. And then a guy, this [indecipherable] troop was also helping, because so many were arrested. And that -- tho - - they were more in, really, you know, munition things and so. And one of them, a spy had to go all the time on dangerous missions. And it was -- we had -- he has false papers. But it was safer if he had a woman with him, so we had false papers that I was his wife, and then he prin -- it tell you that we were daily laborers, and helping with farms. So I



went many times with him over the rivers, and through territory where you really weren't allowed, but that we say we have to work for that farmer, and showed our false papers, and so -- and then he was really in spying, so he asked. "Can you work for us while you walk from The Hague to Amster-Amsterdam?" I saw troop movements and everything, and where they are building fort and quarters, and so then that's that stuff that they gave me for instructions, and I did that till the end of the war.

Q: And who was taking care of all the Jews who were still in hiding?

A: I did too, in between.

Q: You did that also?

A: Because he had often to go to other parts of the Netherlands, but if he needed somebody, I went with him, but I went full time, like [indecipherable]

Q: And it was December of '44 that Ab was arrested?

A: Ab was in December because --

Q: Yes.

A: -- that family where they had the pilots, that had leaked out, and he got a message from the good police -- there were -- there were bad police and good police, you -- your house will be raided, they suspect you. So he disappeared -- he disappeared and went in hiding. And Ab was arrested, that Ab also had heard the other leader that they were going to arrest him, because you've got mostly warned by the good police, and he went to warn him. But the guy, Dries Klooster had already disappeared and gone in hiding. And just when Ab was there to warn Dries, the police came, and he was arrested.

Q: He was arrested, so both of them were arrested.

A: And he never came back.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And the sad case was with Klooster, and that was another question mark to God. I mean, he was hiding at the farm, in the little village, it's really a -- a settlement, was called [indecipherable] one, two, three. And when the allies came, and that were in this case the Canadians, they came from the east, after the battle of Ironham, and the whole thing, and then they were marching up. And they wanted to cut off the Germans, and they marched up, and then they were really shelling. When they want to advance, they shell, so we said three days and was shell fire in the -- I was with Aalt and Alie at that farm, and Dries was not too far, maybe a few kilometers, but the shells were falling everywhere. And one shell hit that farm.

Q: Right.

A: And he was killed. And I was liberated on Hitler's birthday by the Canadians, so I got the biggest present.

Q: April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

A: April 20. And the rest of the country was later, but we were really by fighting. When I came out after three day, you -- you thought day and night you heard the shells fall, and that was so horrible, boom, boom, boom, and you didn't know if it would be on your roof, and that it would hit you. And we don't have big basements because we are such a water country, if you go a bit deeper, you're in the water. So we sat there, and then after three days and three nights it was quiet, and that was even spookier than when it got all absolute quiet. And you know, like Noah, that we let a dove out to see, and somebody had to go out, what happened. And the Jewish people couldn't go, and the farmer and his wife and two little babies, and she was pregnant, she couldn't go, and the -- so I felt I was the one who had to go, and I came out, and on the road in the distance, I saw all tanks, and that were the allies, the Canadians. Oh, and it -- and I ran towards them, but then I thought, no, that is selfish, I have to go back to the farm, the Jews had been all the time, years in that little room that they can -- and I turn around, and we have so much water, so there was kind of a small river, and it had all those weeping willows. And I had heard that in Italy more allies died by snipers than really in battle. And when I ran back to the farm, I see three Germans in camouflage in the water, and there's no -- their daggers between their teeth, and their guns up, and they were walking away from the allies, under the weeping willows. And they saw that I had seen them, and I thought, oh my goodness, they are not planning to surrender, otherwise they would have gone the other way. So I went -- I went back, I thought, now I have to go to the allies, but I was afraid that they would shoot me in my back. I zigzagged to tho -- to those Canadian tanks and I said, "There are snipers." And they turned around, and then they went there, three tanks, and each took one of the Germans like -- really like [indecipherable], and then I said there they are. And I said that's when I won the war, I was triumphant.

Q: Now tell me something, did any of the Jews that you -- your group was hiding, did any of them get caught? Nobody got caught?

A: From our original group, never. The group from Mies that we helped, yes.

Q: Yes.

A: The whole group. And --

Q: But not the original group of 60?

A: No, they all got through. Miracle.

Q: Really a miracle.

A: But if we knew that a thing was getting unsafe, we had -- you know, there was one -- you know, Esso, that is that very wealthy oil -- a son of them, Hans von Esso, and his sister Alie, and I was somewhere, and this Hans from Esso came to us for an address. And I never forget, I was at Yen, that was another one of our group in The Hague, and he saw me, and Yen said she brings all the Jewish people to the -- to [indecipherable] to that area. And he stuck his hands in his pockets, and he held it out, and it was full with diamond and emeralds, and he, "Please, find me a place." I said, "You can put that away, that doesn't do anything. I help -- the forest and whatever, if we find a place." And then -- but this was so far in the war, I think they had been somewhere else, where it wasn't safe, and he had real trouble finding a place. And then he found something, but he asked for his sister Alie, she was beautiful, and younger than he was. And we found a place at this very poor farm, so poor, it was really the married daughter of the farmer where we had Herman. And she was a sloppy household, where they had a bunch of babies. And you know she was -- so that was the only place, and it was so poor, and she had to sleep in the hay. And Rosa was at that time at an address [indecipherable] safe, so Rosa was there, too, and Rosa got scabies, you know, that's really from dirt. And Alie got it too. And Rosa went to -- back to Arlington when it was safe, and there she was, you know, bath and what -- boil the clothes, and so -- but Alie couldn't take it any more because Rosa told me later, she said, "That wife of that farmer was so filthy," they had on the table a piece of oilcloth or something, and then she said, "that's where we had to eat, they didn't have any tablecloth," or whatever. So -- but she changed the dirty diaper of the baby there too, on that table, and sometimes didn't clean, so it was a filthy house. And then Alie, who came from such a wealthy family, and probably had lots of servants, she couldn't hack it any more, and she went back into her other [indecipherable] and she was arrested, and she was killed. And I think oh, that poor Alie, if she had only had held out, you know.

Q: Right.

A: Because the camps might have been just as dirty. Hans came through [indecipherable]. No, we were very fortunate.

Q: But you're not so fortunate personally, because --

A: I have to look at it this way. We were four, really five years in this war, and if you think that more than two and a half year, every month we had to do those robberies. And they were only once [indecipherable] and you always prayed beforehand if God would protect everybody, also the enemy, where the Dutch people were [indecipherable] and I think God is almighty, and Hein was killed in the end of January '45, the war was over. I was free in April [indecipherable] I just know that God [indecipherable] have protect [indecipherable]. So I figured -- and so many didn't come back, and I was spared three times that I thought this is the end, when I were driven in the dunes, when I had my hearing, when I was arrested with all that stuff. So then, I think God still has something for me to do, and I have to find it. And now that I look back I see it, because it's telling the young people in the universities, and you don't know a thing here in America. I had

to speak for Yad-Vashem, I got [indecipherable] later from -- and I met that rabbi, what's his name? Mordechai Paldiel, have you heard his name?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I mean, he is -- really became a friend of mine. And then they asked me to speak for Yad-Vashem as a fundraiser, they want to build the school next to the museum, and they invited in, I'd learned, a very wealthy [indecipherable] a very wealthy Jewish people, and I had to speak, and then they all got a book, and need to write a fat check, and so on. But I mean, I met them, and I think well, I have a purpose, you know? And they say, go along with -- tell, tell, tell, and that's what I do. And they do that now with teachers, that they over the whole world make [indecipherable], and there was in Canton, in Ohio, there is Malone College, that's a liberal arts, Malone College, and there's a large Jewish group, and they ask me -- they started -- I think that's now about eight years ago, in the summer when the college is closed, they have a week long that it's a whole Holocaust week. And the rabbis, and the people [indecipherable] they had then one survivor of Auschwitz, an old man, and they had a Jewish lady who was hiding, a Polish Jewish lady. They had the Polish lady who had taken Jews in, and they wanted me then to come, and I [indecipherable] the whole week, and you know, I was really surprised. The first year they told me they had 12 people, and now there were 45, so this was the third year, and now I hope it grows. But those teachers, that is good, they go back to their schools and talk. Because I -- one lady there, they asked -- I mean, she says, "When I was in college, my prof told me the Holocaust never happened, and it's a sob story that the Jewish people do just to get pity." So can you imagine that you say that to a class of students? So I feel I have to go. I have to go and then like I was those 10 years in Venezuela, that was a healing time away from everything, no talking about it, nothing. Because when my friends from Venezuela, we only 18 Dutch families, and I knew them all because those women married mostly, they ha -- they were engaged, and then they got this great job after the war from Shell, so they quick got married and they had their first baby their, and the doctors only spoke Spanish, and they were scared stiff, because [indecipherable] they were expecting their first baby, so I was called out for every delivery, and they all became my friends, and they were like brothers and sisters. And I still have contact with them. But you know, that was such a healing time, and I never talked about the war. And then when the book came out later, they said, "We were 10 years with you, and you never said it." But I think that was the good thing that I was away from all memories there.

Q: We have to stop the tape.

End of Tape #9

**Tape #10**

Q: How did you find out about Hein? I mean --

A: Well, his father -- of course we weren't married, he got a notice from the Red Cross, and that notice said that he had died in Dachau on March nine. So he let me know, and I right away said, "If he has died, it was January 20." And the father really got angry with me, but that was the night I couldn't sleep, and that I was pacing that big room at that farm. And I had to sleep in a double bed with a girl in her -- a few years older than I was, if I slept there. And it was so cold, and there was no heating, and she said, "Willie, come in in bed, it's so cold." And I said to her, "There is something with Hein," it was that horrible feeling again that I got. I said, "What is today the date?" She said, "January 20." I said, "When he comes back, I'm sure he's very, very sick, and that I have to ask him if he was sick." And that was the night he died, and I heard that later. And the Red Cross say nine, but when other people were let out, some survivors and they -- I -- I me -- I met them, and they said Hein was taken out of the barrack on January 20 in the evening, and never came back. But he was very weak, and he had [indecipherable] where you couldn't work any more, so --

Q: This was your biggest tragedy. This was your biggest tragedy, yeah?

A: It was terrible, and I know that I made it so difficult for the guy who came to tell me. That was the father of one of those guys that Henk had mentioned to me [indecipherable] was arrested, Dekker was his last name, and he was in the town hall, or town city, or something in -- in Eindholf also, and he had to go to The Hague, and Hein's father wrote me the letter that Hein had died. And I was so happy that we were free, and this terrible -- and the Jewish people could come back, but there was also a fear, there were too many in Germany, who comes back, who co -- doesn't come back. So you were mixed, you didn't dare to be really happy because you didn't know anything. And then this man came back and rang the bell, and I opened the door, and I said, "Oh, Mr. Dekker," and his son had come back, and I said, "How nice to see you." I said, "Oh how wonderful that we are free and now waiting for our guys to come back." And I was so bubbly. And then he said to me, "Yeah, but some won't come back." And so he wanted to push me a bit down, you know, and I -- yeah but -- and I was just bubbling, and then I got that letter. It was terrible, I don't know if I --

Q: On the other --

A: But then -- very -- remember very little, I was in a daze.

Q: Yes. On the other hand, you thought that that might have happened.

A: I expected --

Q: A -- on bo -- you expected [indecipherable] some way.

A: [indecipherable] and I nearly -- I don't know how well you know the Torah and the Bible, but you know, Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac, and I thought maybe this is the sacrifice that God asks me, but I know I didn't want to live any more, because then, from our group of 15, eight were killed, so more than half I thought I didn't want to live any more. I said, "Lord, why didn't you take me too, I don't want to live any more." But then slowly but surely, you -- it -- that you have always a task for you. Oh, it was terrible. And then Ab was killed --

Q: Right.

A: And Hergen Feesler was killed, the man who took the picture when we are hugging, that he wanted to. But Herg was very brave, he -- now allies were coming, and the Germans had mined a bridge, and thought if they come over, we let it go in the air. And Herg knew that, and then the allies were real close, he ran through that bridge, and he cut all the wires on the explosion, and he was shot, and he also gave his life, he was brave.

Q: Why did you write in your book --

A: Write it?

Q: -- why did you write in your book that in some way you thought it w -- if one of you had to live that -- not that it was better that you were the one who lived, but --

A: I would --

Q: -- you could do it, that somehow you could do it?

A: I think it was harder to stay alive. I think it would be the easier to die.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I went through such terrible things, because when I was let out of the camp, I didn't want in any way that they knew I had been in prison. And I had smuggled a note out with this girl whose husband had been shot, tortured, and I had said don't ask me any questions, but I knew her husband had been executed, so she was okay, she was not [indecipherable] and she lived in a suburb of The Hague. So I said, please go to [indecipherable] this note, ask anything. If you see that there is Gestapo around, pretend that you are collecting for the winter help, that was from the Germans. I said, "But if you get to see, tell that Willie is in Vught, and that they may not do anything to try to get me out," because I was creating this image from the stupid girl --

Q: Right, right.

A: And I -- and too, the guys, the underground was trying like to [indecipherable] to bribe a big -- they were saving thousands of guilders to get me out, right? But that would have ruined my whole story, because --

Q: Right.

A: -- then I was important if they give so much money. So she did that. Then my parents knew where I was. But I -- I told also in that message, and let the guys never do -- and let Hein not know that I am also in prison, because it was such a torture when somebody you love dearly -- I think with children, too, if your children suffer, you want to suffer yourself, but not them. And that's how I felt with Hein, and I thought, oh, that was one of the cruel things that guy did, the -- the German. I had told him, I'll bring you everywhere, drive me, but there are two places in this world where I never want to go, and that is the concentration camp Amersfoort, because Hein was terrible tortured there. And it's right in the middle where we hid all -- I've thousand times passed it, but I don't want to go there, what for? To cry? Then to think of all the suffering, and the horror, he was killed. And I've three times passed the road that it says kil -- three kilometers [indecipherable] and I never go in, I don't want to. And this guy drove me the last day he went off th -- he went many times off the track, and I said you're going wrong, you're going wrong. [indecipherable] and the last day I couldn't -- I was so happy it was over, he was a miserable guy. And then he turns off the road, and he come in the woods, and I had no idea. I said Martin [indecipherable] straight ahead today. And he come in the woods, and he stops at the building, says here we are. I had no idea where we were, and the -- then is the sound guy and the camera man were there, and they [indecipherable] me up. And Martin starts on the new path, slightly up, and I follow, and I see the sign, the place of execution of that horrible camp. Now, is that cruelty?

Q: Sounds cruel.

A: Where I told him --

Q: Not to do it, right.

A: And I was so furious, I said, "What a creep you are." I said, "I told you this is the place," I said, "I'm 82, I can decide." And I did not -- I said, "I have no words for you." And I turned around and I walked away. And then the sound guy, who had always disconnected [indecipherable] an-and the camera man, they said that they have left this on, that the TV station knows what he did.

Q: Right. You -- you have Hein's diary. You have loads of letters, and there's one final letter that he threw out of the tra -- train, that he threw on the ground, and somehow it reached you. Can -- can you read that, part of it? Or do you want me to read the English?

A: No, I --

Q: You can't? Can you read that?

A: I can, yeah.” It is still very unexpected,” -- it’s so small -- “r-really, they didn’t count on this any more. I am happy that they have left the camp Amersfoort,” -- so he must have suffered there -- “and yesterday” -- you see, it’s so small and my eyes are --

Q: Here -- here’s -- here’s from your book, you can read this.

A: Oh that’s better, yeah.

Q: You can read it from the book.

A: “Yesterday, about nine in the evening we left, and now it’s seven in the morning. We just passed Rijssen,” and that is the last city in the Netherlands. “I think that trip will be quite long. Darling, don’t count on seeing each other again soon. I have the feeling that it will take at least a year. But we are with friends here altogether, and you will soon be in free country, so we have many reasons to be optimistic. And here we see again that we do not decide our lives. Dieneke,” -- that was his nickname for me -- “even if we won’t see each other on earth again, we will never be sorry for what we did, and that we took this stand. And know, Diet, that of every last human being in this world, I loved you the most. And it’s still my great desire that we be -- will become a happy family someday.” And then he ends with the words, “Omnia vincit amor.” That is Latin for love conquers all. And you know, when we got engaged, it was on the tram in Amsterdam. We had our rings, and -- because we had ordered our rings, and what we wanted engraved. And then he came home, there was a manila envelope and he was on list to go to England, and then he found that manila envelope, and he said, “Diet, these are my instructions to go to England,” he said, “and I have to leave right away,” and it was a Saturday afternoon, we had just ordered our rings and what we wanted inscribed, and he said, “And I may not tell you where I go and what I do, but I go tonight to England.” He said, “Do you remember,” -- I didn’t know Amsterdam [indecipherable] he said, “Do you remember where we ordered the rings?” I said [indecipherable]. He said, “Go there, pick them up,” -- he had paid for it and for the engraving, he says -- and there was a tramway that go to the main station, the central station, and it was line two. He says -- and the tram mostly had three or two or three carriages, and there was a balcony that was open where you step on, and then you went inside. And he said, “Hop on the last balcony of the last car, and then after two stops, I’ll hop on too. I have to ta -- get a few things.” So I ran to that store, and I got our rings and the guy said, “I haven’t engraved,” I said, “Doesn’t matter.” So I hopped on the tram, on the last cart, and two stops later he came, and he gave me his ring, and I gave him my ring, and that was our engagement, on the back balcony of the -- and then we had it engraved later, it -- he was in very big danger, it was a dangerous trip, and he never got to England. But at that time, in the beginning we thought that’s where you can be useful -

Q: Right.

A: -- but later those people were bored stiff, we could do much more. But then we have engaged on the [indecipherable] and his name and the morning, it was another premonition, the morning -- the day that I was arrested -- I had always that ring on, and I



took it off, and I said to Alie from the farm, I said, "Today I'm going to be arrested." She said, "Willie, you are nervous, and," -- Hein had just been arrested then, maybe. I said, "I know I'm nervous," I said, "but I have such a strong feeling that I'll be arrested today." And I said, "Will you take this ring till after I come back," because his name was in the ring, and so then they could say it was Hein. So I gave her the ring, and it was really funny, because I had all white underwear, but I had se -- one set black, and I thought when you are in prison, and you can't wash it, and it gets dirtier and dirtier, it -- I thought I'll put my black one on, it get also dirty, but you don't see it. I put my black underwear on, and I knitted [indecipherable] with the cable stitch, and I thought that is nice and solid, and that's how I went on that trip, and on that trip I was arrested. Strange, huh? I'm always scared when I get that feeling.

Q: Uh-huh. Do you ever regret having been in that group with you all --

A: Oh, no.

Q: -- being in resistance, even though you lost Hein? Never.

A: I tell you, I saw -- I never go to war movies, but I saw "Schindler's List" because I heard he changed later. But he started with wanting cheap labor. And I sat there, and I cried the whole film, and long times I closed my eye [indecipherable] hated Hitler, and the swastika, and that wolfs angel and those hated uniforms, and all. And I had a horrible time, but I wanted to see it, and in the end Schindler's changed because he -- later he's very sorry that he didn't save more. And when I walked out of that theater, the only thing I said, "Thank you God, I did something." Because I thought, if now I would have seen that movie, I thought you were there. You were young, but you were an adult, 20 year a -- an adult. And I thought, you were there, and this happened all around you, and you didn't do anything. I don't know if I -- and that's what I tell the young people, I said, "Make the right choices," I said, because -- and I tell them this, I said, "If I now -- you can't go back and do it over."

Q: Right.

A: "You have at that moment," and I said, and that ma -- may [indecipherable] during the [indecipherable] and I says, "Whatever your religion have -- you have, you have guidelines." I say, "And if you don't have a religion, you have a little voice in your heart, and you listen to that." It's the only way that you can in the morning when you brush your teeth look in the mirror and not despise yourself. No, I never [indecipherable]. And to be honest, spiritually it was the closest time to God, because He was all I had.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah. I think I've had a very wonderful, rich, life, and not always the things that you choose, but I asked for it, I really did. Not a dull life, so --

Q: Right. Well, I thank you more than you know for coming and talking with us.

A: It's good to be here, because you keep this for hundred and 200 years later --

Q: Yes.

A: -- so then people will know, and it's good that you have eyewitnesses, because hearsay is never the same.

Q: That's true. Thank you very much.

A: No, I am glad that I came. Thank you.

[Note: At the conclusion of the interview, several photos are shown while Ms. Eman describes each.]

End of Tape #10

Conclusion of Interview