

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Matilde Neuwirt**  
**December 11, 2011**  
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## PREFACE

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## MATILDE NEUWIRT

### December 11, 2011

Hannah Starman: This is the interview with Matilde Neuwirt **Mazliach** on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2011 in New York City. The interview is conducted by Hannah Starman. Thank you very much first of all for granting us this opportunity to hear your experience and I understood you wanted to make a statement.

Matilde Neuwirt: Yes and I want to thank you and tell you that you are very welcome to give me this opportunity. So I will, I want to say this. I want to express my sincere thanks to MrGiovanni Chiampesan for his efforts, considerable efforts in locating me. And reviving memories that are very precious and the beautiful part of my growing up years in Italy at the very incredibly tragic time for most Jews. Also many, many thanks to Ms. Hannah Starman who is making it possible for me to speak and retell the events belonging to my childhood, childhood years in Italy. 1940 through 1949. During and after the war, as well as starting a new life in the USA. Now that I know from Mr. Giovanni Chiampesan that it was his father Leno who made it possible for the Jews in **Sandrigo** to escape before the Nazis came in. By supplying us with documents stating that we were Christians born in Italy, my eternal gratitude goes to Mr. Lino Chiampesan for saving our lives at great peril to himself. In recalling the events in chronological order, I will mention other people who opened their homes and hearts and decided to help this relatively small group to escape the evil Nazi intentions. In particular the **Daria** family, two brothers and a sister and they all took part in this effort.

Hannah Starman: So this is the interview with Matilde Neuwirt, the second part. So tell us about your childhood and your parents.

Matilde Neuwirt: I was born in Belgrade, Serbia on December 26, 1930. My parents, **Solchi** mother and **Bugich** father were born in the same area on 1897 my father. In 1905 my mother. I had a brother born in Vienna. His name is **Yosef Bubi** and sister Dolly born 1924 and my brother

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was born 1924 and my sister 1928. We lived in a large comfortable apartment. I don't know if you need the details of the apartment.

Q: Yes, please tell us.

A: Three, we had three bedrooms, two dining areas, one smoking, sitting room for men, men friends where the piano was located. And the adults, men and women were offered drinks before and after dinner. My father had a small factory about 25 people, located about ten blocks from home. He was manufacturing hosiery for men and boys. He would leave early morning, come home for lunch and siesta and return to work around two and stay until six PM. We spoke Serbo-Croatian among ourselves. My parents also spoke Ladino to each other when they did not wanted us children to understand what they were saying to each other.

Q: Did you ever learn Ladino? Did you ever later learn to understand?

A: Well, I got to understand most of it because of the Italian language and because of the Spanish that a lot of people speak here. So –

Q: And your mother stayed at home?

A: My mother was at home, yes she stayed at home. She did not work outside the home.

Q: And were the children schooled at home or did you go to school?

A: We went to school, to public school and after public school we went to Jewish school.

Q: So for the religious –

A: For the religious yes.

Q: Instruction. And that was on Saturdays or Sundays?

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A: What, the religious?

Q: Yes.

A: It was every day after school.

Q: And that was it the Jewish community?

A: No, not really but there was a Jewish center like and that's where on the way back home from public school, we stopped there and we learned how to read and how to, about the holidays of which I don't know much today because this whole thing was lost with our immigration.

Q: So where did you grandparents live?

A: Our grandparents, they lived not far from us. And they were pretty religious, especially my grandfather. He was married for the second time. He lost his wife at an early age and my mother took over the family, the upbringing because she was the oldest of the daughters. They had four girls and one boy. So she was in charge of the family.

Q: And on the paternal side?

A: And on the paternal side I never met my grandparents. And I never heard and I never knew much about it.

Q: But they also lived in Belgrade.

A: Possibly. But I didn't even know that. I know that when we went to Belgrade, much, much later we visited my mother's mother grave, my grandmother's grave. And we asked the keeper there, the ground keeper and he took us to the other graves and the resemblance was such that we knew that they were both buried in the same cemetery.

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Q: What happened to your aunts and uncles on the maternal side?

A: They all survived the war. They were in the camps; they were in Italy. And eventually we got all together, much later, as most of them went to Argentina by way of other Montevideo, Uruguay right. And because it wasn't easy to get into Argentina so they were sort of like to making that like a passage. I don't know. There probably some, some money was exchanged or what. And that's where they made their lives. They continued with their lives.

Q: So you still have family in Argentina?

A: Yes I do. Have most of them died. I had my grandfather was there with his second wife. My uncle, the one son that they had. And my three aunts were there and of course their families and their children. Now today I have only one, two cousins there. One cousin was a pilot for the **Aerolineas Argentinas** and he's retired. Of course we're talking about many years now. And he has two children and he is a grandpa.

Q: So this side of the family would have spoken Ladino at home.

A: No. They were all speaking Serbo-Croatian and they learned Spanish. They, first they learned Italian while they were in Italy and then they learned Spanish and they speak fluently Spanish.

Q: Do you remember that you were very small if you were born in 1930, you would have been very small when the war broke out. But do you remember the time before the war. Do you remember, was there anxiety about the war. Was there an awareness of what was going to happen?

A: Not at all, not at all. Until the, there was like a big parade staged by the government. And they had, they had soldiers singing and you know about victory and what not and that they were marching with the cannons that were driven by horses and cows and all that. It was a very

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primitive. Today it would be laughable. But they felt very strong and mighty. They never suspected that they would be, that you know taken over by anybody.

Q: And that would have been when, in 41?

A: No this would have been already in 1940. And my mother got very panicky about this whole thing because some rumors. They must have gotten of people being taken out of their homes and to places unknown you know. And she had family. She had cousins all over Yugoslavia. They were not taken from Yugoslavia. The right then and there but she heard rumors and so she took it seriously and she said my children and I are going to my father. He says you settle your business and we are going to, and you will join us. And we started going towards the west, towards west.

Q: Towards the coast?

A: Towards the coast.

Q: But your parents must have been aware for example of what was happening in 1938 with the annexation of Austria by the German Reich. Was that –

A: It's possible, yes it's possible that they knew. Maybe they saw it in the newspaper. Maybe they said oh well it's not us so it's whatever you know. And life just went on.

Q: So when did your mother decide that it was time to leave?

A: In 1940. She picked herself up. We packed up whatever we had and off we went.

Q: Where were you when the war broke out in Yugoslavia?

A: We were away from Belgrade. We were never there when they came to bomb the city. The Germans came unannounced, obviously. That was their way. They never declared war on the

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country. They just came with the airplanes and they bombed them and then we just had to pick up the pieces. I mean news. Find out who was hit and who wasn't hit, but we were away.

Q: Do you remember the putsch? Do you remember cause Yugoslavia was first part of the Axis and then there was a putsch and Yugoslavia withdrew its –

A: Was, so you see I still don't know that, that Yugoslavia was part of the putsch, because Tito was in charge. Oh no, not yet, not yet. That must be 40, it's all right. They were, I did not know as a child that there was a, not my sister or my brother you know. Neither one of us seemed to be aware of that. We were just following. My mother wanted to go away and so we went with her.

Q: Was the notion that there was a threat to you because you were Jewish or that there was a general threat to people in Yugoslavia?

A: It was mostly a general threat.

Q: Do you know if any other families that also fled at the same time? Was that a communal effort or did you go separately on your own?

A: Nobody. They looked at my mother as though she was crazy to leave. And all the way she had family. She had family in Sarajevo and in some other cities, not such a close family. She would stop there and she would tell them that they should leave. They should go. And they said you are crazy. There is no, no need to worry to get panicky about it. And so we went and they did not survive.

Q: So your mother was primarily afraid of the German invasion from what I understand.

A: She was afraid of that, of the bombing and after we heard that they bombed so, so much. Without any declaration of war, war declaration or anything. They just came and they did their job.



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Q: So what did your father do? How did your father react to your mother's concern?

A: He went along with it. He went along with it. He let go of his factory. His brother was still there.

Q: What did he do to protect his factory while he would be away?

A: I don't know. I really don't know. I know that he tried to get some money so that we would have, we would have some money with us.

Q: So he tried to sell it?

A: Possibly. Or he told his brother to sell it because his brother was not going anyplace and he was married to a Gentile woman and they had a baby. They were afraid. They said how can we go, you know. We had, wouldn't have milk, wouldn't have you know a lot of things that today people wouldn't worry about, they were concerned.

Q: What happened to them?

A: He was killed not her, not the girl.

Q: And the baby survived too?

A: The baby survived til she killed herself years later. Yeah, it was a tragic thing. She didn't know where she belonged. She didn't know. Her mother tried to be married and it wasn't good. She married a drunken guy you know. And my parents stayed in touch with them and told them to sell whatever they found that was – we had nice things at home. We were not that poor, poor you know, we had nice, nice paintings. Nice and they told her she should sell and use the money for her needs. And **Melita**, that's the girl's name. she grew up in that kind of an atmosphere.

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Her, after her mother remarried, didn't work out and the stepfather was probably not so nice to her and that, that thing broke off. And they survived. They lived til she killed herself.

Q: Which was when?

A: That was when she was already in her 20s.

Q: So after the war?

A: After the war, yes. In fact she was already married and she had a daughter. Yes, she was married to a Gentile man and eventually that marriage didn't work out and I think that everybody was messed up by the circumstances. She missed her father terribly and she didn't know where she belonged, whether she was Jewish or what, you know. And her daughter was very smart and all that. She was in touch with us for quite a while and then she was so self-conscious of her English that she stopped writing us and she could write. She could write and keep in touch. That was **Ragena**.

Q: Let's return to your flight from Belgrade. You left when in 1940. In the summer, in the autumn?

A: In the autumn.

Q: And you were headed west towards any specific place?

A: We were heading towards Dubrovnik.

Q: What was the plan?

A: We didn't have a plan. We were just going you know. Wherever the train would take us, they would, we stop, wherever we would be closest to the ships going to Italy. And at the time there was one town there that I don't even recall the name and from there we encountered the

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**Ustashes**, who searched us thoroughly but not that they didn't search the children. And my mother had made because you know the bank notes, the Yugoslav bank notes were huge. In order to have anything there you had to really hide them somehow. And we had those things on us and so did my brother, my sister. They only searched the grownups and they had nothing on them so they had nothing to take. And they eventually let us go.

Q: But they were not looking for Jews in –

A: They were. And there they were.

Q: And your parents had fake papers or –

A: No, no we didn't have fake papers. I don't know how did that, maybe they paid off somebody. You know it's possible but I don't know. I really don't know. They kept us from all that kind of -- well I was ten and a half. You know today we tell our kids much more than they used to.

Q: So where did you stop on the way to Dubrovnik? You stopped in Sarajevo with your family.

A: Just passing through, passing through and I don't know how that was done because we didn't have a car. We just had to go by train.

Q: So you traveled all the way from Belgrade to Dubrovnik by train.

A: By train.

Q: More or less directly.

A: And then going back to, through **Abatasa**. There was a town, Abatasa that comes to mind. And then we went to Italy.

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Q: So Italy was considered safe at the time?

A: Italy was our, you know our next stop. That's what we felt, we felt that it was safer going in that direction than in the opposite direction so –

Q: Do you have any ideas why?

A: No that's a good question. That's a good question.

Q: Was there may be a plan to go to Palestine at all or to go to America?

A: No, no, no, no absolutely not no. Italy was the final destination.

Q: So how did you get to Italy?

A: Well the ship. There was a ship going from the coast, the Dalmatia coast to the, you know the Adriatic. We crossed the Adriatic and we were there and they said what do you expect to, we should do with you. We don't, we can't let you in. you're not –

Q: So that was on the Italian side.

A: On the Italian side.

Q: Did you have a visa for Italy?

A: Nothing. We, as far as I know we didn't have anything. What my mother had I don't know. Well—and she never, we never spoke about it. We never asked questions unfortunately. And that's how it was.

Q: Do you remember the name of the town in Italy where you –

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A: Yes we stayed in, they eventually brought us to Vicenza. In Vicenza in the Veneto region. We were able to rent an apartment.

Q: But tell us before how you got into Italy because that's –

A: That, I don't even know.

Q: You said you didn't have any visas or possibly not.

A: They let us go. They took, they had my parents sign all kinds of things. They had my parents give up all the money that they had for their safe keeping.

Q: So that was the Italian authorities when you arrived?

A: The Italian authorities. They were holding, though that money was not stolen from us. It was taken with the idea that we could not be on the government expense but we were just, they would give us what we needed for every day you know. That. And –

Q: That was in Vicenza or?

A: That was prior to Vicenza. It was still prior to Vicenza, still on the border line with **Fiume** [ph] . It was I think few, near **Rijeka**. That's what it was.

Q: So that's where you went. From Dubrovnik you went to **Rijeka**.

A: Right.

Q: And that's where you crossed?

A: That was the crossing. Yes, that was the crossing. That was the crossing.

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Q: And how did you persuade the Italian authorities to let you in?

A: I don't know. I don't know whether money did it. Whether, whatever. We were not alone. You know we were a group of maybe 50, 75 people.

Q: So who were the other people?

A: The other people. Some that we knew, that my parents knew and we didn't but apparently they were all leaving.

Q: But were those other people from Belgrade as well?

A: No. No, no. We found them on the way and they were Jewish. They were all Jews.

Q: So they came from different parts of Yugoslavia to Dubrovnik.

A: To do the same thing.

Q: And took the same boat to Rijeka.

A: To Rijeka. Yeah.

Q: So how did you travel then from Rijeka to Vicenza.

A: By train.

Q: And you were not under escort. You were –

A: Not as far as I know. But –

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Q: You were not confined or –

A: No, not confined. Not you know not, not treated as prisoners. Absolutely not.

Q: Did you have to report in Vicenza regularly to the police authorities?

A: No. I think I suspect that maybe my father had to sign something or where we had to report was in **Sandrigio**. We stayed in Vicenza for maybe less than a year because I know they had a terrible winter that we didn't experience in Belgrade. We came out with all those things, **geloni**, what they called geloni. I remember so it had to be winter time. They gave us some, what do you call it cards to buy food.

Q: Ration cards.

A: Like ration cards. Right.

Q: So you said you rented your own apartment?

A: Yes.

Q: And where did you stay? Did you rent from a landlord?

A: Right. She was, that was the landlady was there. Her husband was in the war you know. He was a soldier and she was a nice lady. It was a walk up apartment. And we had fun. I tell you the truth. We had fun. I used to go to the marketing such as it was. And my mother on the fourth or fifth floor threw us always a basket down which we filled. She pulled it up and then you know it was a kind of leisurely, leisurely life. The place was enclosed by a big gate. This is what, in Italy they have a lot of, had a lot of such places. In that when you walked in there was a fountain. You know that's where the people used to get their water. And then it was this long stairway going up. And we brought our water and we did all these things. And she was good to us. And of course she was alone and I guess money was, helped her. This was Senora **Marchetti**.

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Q: And were there other Jewish families that you knew that stayed in the same area?

A: No.

Q: You were the only one who went to Vicenza?

A: We were the only one as far as I know. I don't remember anybody else. Eventually when we go back to Sandrigo we were able to find out what happened to some of our others. They were in **Ferramonte**, which was down south in a camp. But not, it wasn't a concentration camp. It was just a camp where people were living in little homes like. You know but nothing, nothing horrible. They were just there, detained you know.

Q: What did you do in Vicenza for almost a year. What did you parents do? What did you do and your siblings? Did you go to school?

A: No, not allowed to go to school. We were not allowed to go to a movie. All that what it was, but it wasn't a big hardship. I mean we welcomed the freedom, the kids were, we couldn't go traveling around but you know we made, we met the people and we made some acquaintances. Not friendships, you couldn't really.

Q: Did your parents make an effort to learn Italian?

A: Yes, yes and we did too. And I remember that I used to, my favorite word was **Capisco**, Capisco. I always said Capisco. I could tell them that I did understand what they were saying. You know. I was very proud of learning the new language.

Q: Were you afraid at all during that time?

A: No. No.



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Q: Were your parents concerned?

A: They were not settled there. They would always tell us you know don't go there because this is just a temporary thing. Don't think that this is where we're staying. This is a temporary thing. Someday we're going to go home. That's what they felt, that we, so they tried to keep us, keep a low profile you know until things got resolved. But no big fear of being Jewish. What we did find over there which was very interesting for us was the **Ballilla [Fascist Youth]**.

Q: What's that?

A: Those are the little children are brain washed in uniform, marching for Duce and for you know and they were the fascists. They were taught to become fascists.

Q: So where would you see them, in the streets or –

A: In the street, marching and we looked at them and we realized, we asked questions you know. From the – and that's who they were. And they were different groups. You know. The little ones and they had, you could distinguish them by the color of their uniform or whatever. And that was kind of at the time I didn't know. You know I mean I took it for what it was. We didn't have it in Belgrade, obviously. So later on of course you could tell that this is what it was. Just a brain washing situation. This is what you get the children. You get –

Q: Was there, were there any controls in the street? Were you ever asked to identify yourselves or –

A: No, no, no, that's why there was –

Q: So being Jewish was not a problem?

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A: Not at all, not at all. The only time when being Jewish was possibly something there in Sandrigo because there were only Jews being detained there. You know. We were all Jews. The group was all Jewish.

Q: How did you decide to go to Sandrigo? How did that happen?

A: They told us to, that this is where we are going.

Q: So the Italian authorities sent you there?

A: Yes, we had not idea. We didn't know about Vicenza either. They brought us there. They told us you know and all that. But it wasn't a threatening thing. it wasn't the police. It wasn't was nothing, nothing like that.

Q: How did your parents accept the news of being moved again to another place?

A: Fine. We learned to pack fast you know. Packing, unpacking. We used to make a joke about it because it was forever packing and unpacking. We didn't know what was going on. No it wasn't.

Q: When did you arrive to Sandrigo?

A: I arrived in Sandrigo and I'll tell you why I have, I found the, I'll tell you right away. I arrived Sandrigo, March 1942.

Q: So you were in Vicenza from autumn 1940 until March 1942.

A: Well on the west coast of Yugoslavia waiting for this boat that, it took a while. Because I remember by the trees. Because we rented an apartment there and the lady had orange trees, the wild oranges in her yard from that year and they were already out you know so I guess it was past spring and all that. The time was going. We were playing and we were waiting.

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Q: So you left Belgrade a little bit earlier than we thought. You left Belgrade then in early summer and then you spend the summer in Dubrovnik?

A: Not in Dubrovnik. First further, further west, further west.

Q: Further west, and then you boarded the ship probably sometime in the autumn?

A: Sometimes in autumn because in Vicenza we were in winter.

Q: And then you stayed in Vicenza from –

A: A year.

Q: Winter, yeah more than a year.

A: More than a year. Because we –

Q: Because in March 2000, March –

A: 42. 42. And then left, we left Sandrigo, I mean we are not there to leave Sandrigo, yet. But we left Sandrigo in 43. And I am surprised myself that it was only a year and a half, March being third and the September being nine so that's six months there. Plus a year. So we were there only a year and a half. And it seemed like such a, because we practically befriended people of the population. I don't remember anybody else. I don't remember Lino Chiampesan unfortunately because only my father had to go there and sign in. Daily.

Q: So when you arrived to Sandrigo, you rented an apartment again?

A: It was a home. It was a beautiful, beautiful house. This lady had nobody but her son there. Her husband was in the army. See all the men were gone and it was on two flights. There were

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bedrooms. We shared the bedroom with, as children, we were three in the bedroom. And my parents had another bedroom. And there was a bath. And then downstairs. That was upstairs. And downstairs they had the **salotti**, you know the, and it was nice. And my mother did all the cooking and all the everything. Eventually she get other woman to help her do the wash. You know they were cooking the water. They were boiling it and what not. Outside there was a lot of, a lot of vegetables were growing outside. But they wasn't ours. I mean it wasn't for us. So if she, if the landlady brought us some that was welcome you know but it was there. And we befriended the, a family. Mr. Giovanni mentions **Antonietta Bozzetto**. Well she was older than we were. She was about four or five years older. And she took charge of us because we had to learn everything. How to ride a bicycle, how to smoke a cigarette and we do it. That was my, my sister not but I was the one that went into all of that.

Q: You were what, 12?

A: In the evening, I smoked a cigarette. She offered me a second one and I got so sick and I was afraid to go home. I said oh my god my mother is going to kill me. And you know it was a cure because I never touched a cigarette.

Q: You said that you met other Jewish families there in Sandrigo.

A: Yes, that was my aunt came with her two children. My aunt and my uncle. Then my other aunt came and one was already, one had already lost her husband. He was a naval officer. And they blew up the ship and they never told her. So she was waiting for him. My aunt Ella's husband was taken prisoner and sent to Switzerland and he spent a long time in Switzerland. So she, you know she was pretty much alone with her little boy, who by the way is in Argentina. He is my cousin in Argentina. So these were mostly the people. The rest of the people that I don't know the people that he mentions except for the **Deleon**. The Deleon people, they were two young men who took charge of us and they made a school for us. And for their younger brother. So we were in fact when he wrote to me from Australia, he said you remember that we were a school of four. He mentioned the names and I don't remember him. I remember the, his older brothers you know. It was Elly and what was the other guy's name, Deleon. Anyway they were

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all there. They were more even older than my brother you know. And my brother didn't take any lessons because he considered himself already grown up you know. So it was just for my sister, me, my cousin Anita and their brother. So we were just four kids in that class and we were learning you know the basic things. And they would guide us to books that we should read which was very nice, because we did a lot. I don't know how we got the books because we were not allowed to go into a library or anything. You know it wasn't the aim wasn't to educate us. It was just to keep us there you know until things were resolved.

Q: So this class was privately organized by Deleon and his brothers.

A: Absolutely. It had nothing to do with the authorities. Nothing.

Q: Where did you meet?

A: In the Deleon's house. We used to go there.

Q: And who was teaching you?

A: The Deleon, the guys.

Q: The elder brother or the two.

A: Yeah, the two, they were teaching us.

Q: And you would go every day.

A: Every day we went there for a couple of hours. You know and --

Q: What kind of subjects would you learn?

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A: I don't remember. Math probably. Well we were different ages you know. (clock chimes in background) Different ages.

Q: So math, Italian.

A: Italian sure. Well they didn't know, they didn't know the Italian language that well. I mean we all had to pick it up. But maybe some history, some geography, stuff like that. And they, and primarily they would tell us what books to read. You know which was very, very good.

Q: Do you remember any books you read at the time?

A: There were a lot of books that were translated in Italian, like what is it.

Q: Like the classics or –

A: Like the classics, yes. Like the classics.

Q: Did you discuss politics at all? Did you discuss what was going on?

A: No. No, not that I remember.

Q: Were you following what was going on? Were your parents listening to the radio or –

A: They were listening. I believe that they must have had the short waves and that they did listen because I know that my brother was glued to the radio. He was six years older than I, so when I, he was 16, 17 you know when I was there. And little by little he got enthused about going to help the partisans over there. And that's how we lost him.

Q: So --

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A: He was going to do his share. For the, for the cause.

Q: You did some years of schooling in Belgrade before –

A: Just to fourth grade. After the fourth grade.

Q: Four grades.

A: Yeah.

Q: And then you had this one and a half years of privately organized education.

A: Right and nothing else. And when Rome was liberated, oh in Rome, while we were in Rome, our parents were wise enough to get us a tutor.

Q: How did you get to Rome? Cause we're still in Sandrigo.

A: Right. To Rome we Leno apparently and I, at the time I didn't even know that he was the one. I thought that my parents bought the false documents when we got to Rome. But it wasn't that. We, they were, they were smart to send us with that false documents because at that time the Germans were coming already down so they could easily have asked us to see our documents and we could produce first of all the, the names that I don't even remember the new names that they gave us. But anyway.

Q: So that as after the capitulation of Italy that you left Sandrigo.

A: Right, right.

Q: Were you sent somewhere, were you told to leave or did you decide to leave because of what happened?

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A: We were advised, we were advised by the authorities that it would be very, very what do you call it dangerous for us to stay because they knew, the Germans knew that there was a group of Jews there. And so the, this man Leno.

Q: What was his position?

A: I believe that he had a high position in the city hall there. I, in fact I thought that even that he was the mayor, but I don't know that that he was the mayor.

Q: But he was in a position to issue false –

A: To issue false papers, yes. And to let the others just keep a closed eye. You know they let us go.

Q: So how many of you were issued false papers. It was probably not just your family.

A: About 30 or 40 people, a lot of us.

Q: All Jews?

A: All Jews. And we all headed down to Rome.

Q: Did you travel together?

A: No, we traveled separately and we were all going in the same direction to Rome. The reason we wanted Rome was because there was a, oh my god. There was this woman in Sandrigo who had two brothers in Rome. They had sent their families, they were sending their families up north because they were afraid that Rome would be bombed.

Q: They were Italians.



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A: Italians. They had a young family. In fact one of them is, of course he's married. He lives in Milano with his --- I should probably have gotten in touch with him or something. He was the son of our landlord. See there were two brothers. They each took several peoples in their three, four room apartment. And no big, big apartments, but they were willing to do something and they did something for us.

Q: And their mother was in Sandrigo?

A: The mother was on the way up there.

Q: Do you remember her name?

A: I haven't met her, I haven't seen her or nothing, no.

Q: So she basically sent you, directed you and other Jewish families towards Rome to stay with her son.

A: This woman that sent us down, it was the sister of these two brothers. She was a sister. She wasn't married or anything. She was a, something in school. And she was the one, she wasn't married. She was lame. She was you know. She told us. She gave us their address and she told us that they're going to be at the railroad waiting for us. So we arrived in Rome, after you know, oh the trains were packed with soldiers. They were running away. They were deserting the army because they were no longer allies of the Germans. They were traitors, they'd say you know.

Q: Were there a lot of refugees as well going southwards.

A: I don't know, this I don't know but they were mostly in uniform. And when they would see our group, you know they would get up you know to let us sit down because it was a long trip you know. It wasn't going very fast. They didn't have the trains that were going at high speeds.

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Q: When you say your group, aside from your family was that your extended family your aunts and uncles?

A: Our extended family. I would say.

Q: And the Deleons as well?

A: The Deleons were there also but I don't know. We lost track of them. In fact we understand that eventually they were taken in by the producer of films. **De Sica**. The De Sica family. In Rome. At that time they were not famous yet.

Q: So the group that you are traveling with was just your family?

A: Mostly my mother, my father and my brother and sister and my, my grandpa you know that. And if the others were you know, because you, there was a surge for the railroad. Everybody was in a different place. You didn't know you hoped that everybody made it and they all made it. We got to Rome and we couldn't get out of the station because there was the curfew. So everybody's sitting there on the floor. The kids go to sleep or what, and the Germans are coming in.

Q: But were those people waiting for you at the station? The two brothers?

A: They were outside the station with a car and they couldn't come in and we couldn't go out. You know. So it was a, at that point we were a little bit afraid. We didn't know what was going to happen. You know. But mostly because we knew that somebody was waiting for us. We said oh my god you know everything. But not because of what was going on. You see we were not, we did not get this feeling that, that people were getting killed. That's what's so amazing and, and there were concentration camps all around us and we didn't know.

Q: And the Germans then checked your papers at the station?

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A: Not that I know. They just, they just, they did whatever business they had. They did, they ignored us. I guess we didn't look important enough or something. You know.

Q: What did the Italian soldiers do? Were they also waiting at the station? Or did they leave?

A: No, no. they tried, I don't know but I mean they were on the way down. Not everybody came to Rome, you know. A lot of them got off before you know. They were all running home and I don't know what they did and how they you know what the, what they had to say to each other, the Germans and the Italians. I'm sure it wasn't easy, nice. I don't know.

Q: So what happened then, how did you find the people you were supposed to stay with?

A: They found us. They, they saw us. They found us. I guess they decided on some kind of a distinguishing mark or something and they took this one, **Doria** men, took us to the **Flaminia** section of Rome and the other his brother, took them. They happened to live. One lived at the entrance of Rome and one at the exit of Rome. So that was just the way it was. And –

Q: So was the family separated or –

A: Not our family. The we are, excuse me the cousins and all that yes.

Q: Which part of Rome did you stay in?

A: We stayed in the Flaminia part, opposite the Forum Romano where Duce built himself this lavish palace. And we were right there. It was an old building you know with an apartment that was, it was ok. You know I mean it was much better than a lot of people had it, much better I'm sure. And he took the five of us and my grandfather and the second, second wife. Seven and I think that's all he was able to take. Seven. The other guy took as many. And then the De Sicas took some which I only found out from Giovanni. I didn't know, I didn't know.

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Q: How was life in Rome? How long did you stay there?

A: Life in Rome was beautiful. You know I, we couldn't go into any, we couldn't go into the, we wanted to go see the you know what do you call it where the pope is and then I saw that everything was, well everything was, it wasn't, it wasn't for us.

Q: Were you not able to see any monuments? Was it –

A: We saw the monuments but you know my parents tried to keep us, most of our day was just gathering the food and gathering the water. There was no water. There was no, no fuel. You know it had to be lines for everything and that's and we didn't go to school until the end of the war there.

Q: So your parents and the three of you were concerned about getting the food and the water and did you stay mostly inside or did you walk around cause it was spring and summer when you –

A: We had to be outside simply to, to get the, the what we needed you know.

Q: Was it dangerous to be outside?

A: Maybe. We didn't realize. Maybe it was. Because we had our documents whatever you know they told us that this is well you respond to this name. And that was it. And you know by then we already learned language. We were speaking the language and all but did the Germans know whether the Italian was correct or not. They didn't. They didn't care about that. My brother was very, because he was rebellious. He wanted out you know. He wanted, so and he was glued to the radio and listening to that and, and eventually, eventually when all this was, we saw the Germans leave.

Q: But when you were in Rome, were the Germans present? Do you remember seeing them?

A: They were present.

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Q: But you were not afraid of them?

A: We were not afraid of them because they weren't, they weren't doing anything. What they did eventually they, there was an accident in one of the, in the center of the, and our landlord was going home from his job. He was a journalist for the Corriere della Sera [an important newspaper in Italy]. He was coming home and suddenly they threw grenade from the window on a truck with Germans and they did a lot of damage. They killed a lot of people. So the Germans closed the street on both ends. And everybody that was walking there, took them into basement. They beat them up. They interrogated them. And first they pushed them down the stairs. Not letting them even walk properly. And they did a lot of damage to our Doria guy. Yeah the good ones get it you know.

Q: Did you know of any Jews being, suffering a horrible fate in Rome at that time, being rounded up or being deported?

A: I didn't know but I know that from the ghetto. Rome had a ghetto that they took them all and they took them to, north, where there was a concentration camp. And from there they put them on trains and they took them to Auschwitz.

Q: Do you remember this happening while you were there?

A: No, no I just, I read that recently. I didn't even know about it.

Q: So tell me about what your brother did.

A: My brother eventually when, when the city was free, when the war was over. The, president Roosevelt made an offer that 1000 displaced people are welcome to come to the United States, provided they sign papers that at the end of the war they're going to go back to their countries. So we figured what the world can we lose. We are just going to do it. We'll go and my brother was not going to go. Because he had to go back to Yugoslavia. He was not going to face his

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friends telling them that he was being, you know sheltered by his parents like a baby. You know he had all these fancy ideas. You know he was young and idealistic and what have you. He was not going to go and we were not going to go without him. So we waited for him to finally he, they spent many, many nights talking and arguing with him and what not and he was decided that he was going to go. In fact he wanted my sister to go because she was, she had learned how to sew. In the meantime in Sandrigo she had learned. And he feel that they will probably be needing that and my mother was absolutely not going to let anybody else go you know. So he went down, he went down to Bari which is all the way down south.

Q: And was his plan to go back to Yugoslavia to fight?

A: Yeah he was joining the group that was recruiting the young men to go and be in the hills there. You there you know with the partisans. And to fight the Germans because Tito was not in charge yet.

Q: But you said that was already after the war ended.

A: The war was ended. Italy but the Germans were still in our country.

Q: So we're talking the last few months of the war.

A: Possibly that's right. That's right. They were still doing damage to the Germans. They were still doing you know the partisans were always doing something and getting the cars, getting the trains, the bridges, the whatever they were doing and they were, we inquired about him because for a while he was corresponding with us and he would tell us after a while he told us to get in touch with uncle, uncle **Bata**. Uncle Bata was our uncle in the United States. He made us understand that we should not come back, that we should go because the partisans, while they did a lot of good, they had a Jewish group and they had a non-Jewish group. And they were not really looking very kindly at the Jews. I think that there were books written about that. You probably – so he must have felt some of that, he maybe even tried to make his way back.

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Q: And that was when he was in Bari and you were still in Rome.

A: We were in Rome. From Bari they took a whole group to Yugoslavia.

Q: But he was corresponding from Bari? Was he still corresponding from Yugoslavia?

A: From Yugoslavia he was corresponding.

Q: Where was he in Yugoslavia?

A: I don't even know. I think it wasn't even named. It was all like a secret. I think it was all the way down, yeah that was in Bari and then he was sent to someplace to the mountains and over there when he got there he got the reality of things. And he started telling us to get in touch with uncle such and such without mentioning you know. And then we tried to find, we didn't hear from him. And we tried to find out where he is. And somebody answers from the authorities in the partisans that he went to, back to his family, to his parents.

Q: Which was not the case.

A: Which was not the case.

Q: So all this time you were waiting for him?

A: We were waiting for him and we lost this same opportunity to come to the United States.

Q: How long was the wait? Was it weeks, months.

A: It was good months, yes. It was even more than that because then eventually the war ended. The Germans you know

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Q: So the war ended in Yugoslavia in May 45.

A: Right but we had nothing to do with Yugoslavia at that point, except that my brother was there.

Q: And you were waiting for him so --

A: We were waiting in Rome.

Q: So when the war ended in Yugoslavia logically he should have come back.

A: Right well we couldn't, couldn't find him. We couldn't, so what happened was that eventually we left Rome. We couldn't any more avail ourselves of the offer and we had to, we started making papers to come here, different way you know with get a permit, get the what do you call it --

Q: The visa.

A: The visa, something like.

Q: And you never heard from your brother again?

A: Never.

Q: Did you ever get any official certificate of his death?

A: Nothing, nothing, nothing. Whenever we inquired we got the same reply that he went to join his parents.

Q: And you've never --



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A: And we –

Q: You've never seen his death certificate.

A: Never seen his death certificate, don't know where he died. They probably put him in prison, maybe they killed him you know. They probably killed him.

Q: How long were you looking for him?

A: Oh my mother was going crazy for years. For years. That ruined her life. Yep.

Q: So then you made arrangements to come to the United States?

A: We made arrangements to come to the United States and there was a waiting period. We came back to Sandrigo on one of these **camionetta**. I don't know if you're familiar. They were like pick-up truck that had seats for around, the seats were made of the cans of gasoline because you couldn't stop and get gasoline so those were your seats you know, probably ready you know so that you didn't have to look for a place to gas up. It was there. And they brought us back to Sandrigo. We wanted to get our stuff. We had some stuff left because going like this, the way we went you know we hardly had any of our, some clothing and that's about it. But we had books. We had stuff that the – and everything was eaten by rats. You know because they kept them someplace so that was nothing. Eventually and I don't even remember whether we saw Antoinetta at that time. Probably did, I don't know.

Q: Did you ever consider going back to Yugoslavia?

A: No. no.

Q: Did you ever inquire about what happened to your property there, your apartment?

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A: Well we didn't have our apartment. We had a factory. We had a factory and my father was given a choice of giving up on it or accepting a settlement, a puny settlement of I don't know what, which he eventually accepted you know but it was apparently this whole thing was reopened later on and he could have done much better probably but figured let me take what they give now and be done with it.

Q: So you never tried afterwards to annul these decisions and –

A: No, no, no.

Q: Ask for a revision.

A: No.

Q: When was he offered this settlement? When did he get this money?

A: This I don't even know because he was working with a lawyer.

Q: While he was still in Italy or later?

A: No, no it was here already after a few years. Yes, already in the states.

Q: So you traveled to Sandrigo. You didn't find much of --

A: We traveled to Sandrigo.

Q: Much of your property.

A: Nothing much.

Q: How did you travel to the States?

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A: We traveled to Milano, from Sandrigo, sitting outside, my husband. Sitting on crates that were full of chicken, live chickens that were going from Sandrigo to Milano you know. They used to bring the chickens over. There was a camion, but this was a bigger camion. And we were sitting. And they put the blanket there and we were sitting there and I don't know how it was but we made it there. And there we had no direction at all. We just went. We asked there, they told us when we passed we could find an apartment. And then they found an apartment and that's where we went. It was nice, nice house in the **Allee** of Margaritas, something or another. I forgot even the address. And we stayed there.

Q: For how long?

A: Til 49 and it was probably from 46.

Q: So did you go to school at that point?.

A: Yes.

Q: Was that the first time you went to school again?

A: No, actually in Rome I tried to go back to school. It was like a technical, not technical but business school, something to learn. And then in Milano I went to, in Milano I went to school. And also to learn to type and to take shorthand. And stuff like that.

Q: And your sister?

A: My sister was able to sew. You know she was, she learned to sew in Sandrigo and she became very proficient in that. But she didn't like it particularly. She didn't care for that, so eventually she met somebody and in Milano we used to meet people in the coffee shop, in a coffee place. Where they used to have meals there like (unintelligible). And we went with our mother and somebody. There was a group of guys and they saw her. She was always very nice

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looking. I don't know if you saw the picture. My sister. I think that she, she sent us a picture of us. This is my sister and this is me. And this is my sister again and I wasn't in this picture. And this, I believe it was in the **Anthonia eta Botseta** [ph] and she was there and she was the only one that we no, this is not the same one. No this is not the same one. Couldn't have been, no.

Q: When did you first learn about what happened to the Jews?

A: When?

Q: When you were in Milano did you hear anything about what had happened?

A: No, no. No, can you believe that? Did it happen to some other people that you know? I don't know why, I don't know why they kept this all this stuff from us. There wasn't happy news you know, but why would they keep it from us so, so we, we lived without any fear. We didn't expect anything.

Q: But that was after the war we're talking about?

A: Ok. After the war we were coming to Milano and all that. We didn't know. Yes my mother would talk to her friends and all that. Oh, oh, oh you know. We didn't know who they were talking. They figured, we figured that ok they were you know they, that didn't know, didn't care you know. We didn't know these people but we didn't pay much attention to it. It wasn't our, our people were all, our family was in already by then in Argentina.

Q: How did your parents interpret what happened to your brother? What did they think happened?

A: They thought that he was disillusioned, that he probably didn't want to follow orders you know and that he maybe tried to escape and they got him.

Q: So your parents would have probably had a very low opinion of the communist regime.

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A: Oh my god, yes. Yes. Yes, oh definitely.

Q: So they held the partisans responsible for his disappearance.

A: Oh definitely, not because he was Jewish, but that probably didn't help because there was an antagonism between the you know, but not we did not feel that in Belgrade, during, before the war. We didn't feel that.

Q: Was that the reason why your parents didn't want to go back to Yugoslavia?

A: No, but we had nothing, nothing to go back to any more you know. And my father's brother was in the, he had accepted the offer from Roosevelt and he went to the United States. And they put him in Oswego. You heard about that. They were all there in Oswego. It was a concentration camp but not like, nothing like what the Germans had. It was just a place a waiting time til things were settled in Europe and when that time came, nobody wanted to go back. Because these were mostly Jews who had lost families, had lost so who, who were they going to go back to you know?

Q: When did you leave Milan to go to the United States?

A: In 49.

Q: And how did you travel?

A: By ship.

Q: From where?

A: From Genoa.

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Q: Do you remember the itinerary?

A: Genoa yes and then we went to Barcelona. There was a lay over there for a couple of hours so we get out, I wanted to see the city you know. For me it was a whole big adventure you know. And it was beautiful you know. It was nice. We enjoyed that. And from there we go, and everybody was really sick on the ship you know. He wasn't. He came the lesser boat and he wasn't sick. He says he didn't miss one meal. He still has the card that they had to punch. He says he didn't miss one meal.

Q: So then from Barcelona you went straight across the Atlantic?

A: Straight across to New York.

Q: Do you remember the first sight of New York?

A: Well it was very, very, very interesting you know. It was great big buildings but you know I don't come from a little town with the -- we had nice buildings. Not the skyscrapers but it was built up you know. So it was, but it was very interesting. And our uncle was waiting for us.

Q: What did you expect? How did you imagine America before you came?

A: Well to tell you the truth, I didn't like to coming here.

Q: Why not?

A: Because I had a boyfriend in Italy and I hated to leave him.

Q: In Milano?

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A: In Milano. So I hated, he was Jewish it so happened you know. That was, I wasn't looking for anybody one way or the other but this is what happened. And so I was anxious to write to him and to get letters and then stuff like that and that's as far as it went.

Q: And his family did not come to the United States?

A: No. He didn't have, he had his father. His mother was somehow killed. I don't know how. He never told me how. And I just remember that he said that he swore that if she doesn't come back he would never dance again. You know that he would take like an oath never dancing again. I don't know what happened to him. I understand that several letters came from him and my mother intercepted them. She wanted to put an end to this. And she did. You know. Mothers today wouldn't have done it but in those days they did a lot of things to interfere. And she was pretty dominating that way and she was strong. She was strong because that's what we basically saved our lives because she was going.

Q: And your sister didn't have any such –

A: She had met somebody in Milano who was going to come also.

Q: Did he?

A: Did he? He did. And they lived 50 years together and then they couldn't stand each other anymore and they separated and he just died recently.

Q: When did you come to New York?

A: 49, it was September 49.

Q: And your uncle was waiting for you at the pier?

A: He was waiting for us and he took us to his apartment.

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Q: Which was where? Do you remember?

A: Yes, it was in Bensonhurst in Brooklyn. He passed the medical examination and he became a doctor here. His apartment was, consisted of living rooms only. There were no bedrooms. All these chairs were opening up into beds, you know. So in the morning everybody had to scurry out and close it because the patients were coming. The patients were coming into the other part of the house. And everything has to -- all the cleaning fluids were out, all the dusting things were out. We were all busy cleaning his place and all that. And he had a daughter. He has a daughter.

Q: Did you speak any English before you came to the states?

A: Very little. Very little because they sent us to take English lessons. And so we had a teacher in Milano who spoke, who was educated in England so to get, you know never figured that when we come here we would never understand a word because of the different -- but we knew we had, we knew some English.

Q: How long did it take you to learn, to feel comfortable in the language?

A: Oh, two, three years I think it took, yes. But I found a job as a secretary in an Italian place. I always looked for jobs like that because I didn't want to leave, to forget Italian. And I had, I was able to take shorthand in Italian and in English because the first thing I did here was to join the Y. They had lessons, they were giving lessons in Gregg shorthand. I didn't know the language but I was taking the sound and working it that way. It worked out somehow, you know. And I was able to get, well at first I was in a factory. I don't know there were, something is flying here, right did you see it. They were making buttons or something. I don't know any more. And there, the women, the people were very what, very primitive you know. And certain words I knew because I had already customs and stuff like that you know. I knew about the things like this. So I would try to tell them that it was misspelled if they were writing a letter or something and they looked at me like you know better. You know. Anyway.



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Q: And did you still live with your uncle at that time?

A: No, no, no, no. With our uncle, we didn't stay long after that. We took an apartment that was furnished, also in Brooklyn and from there we got into Manhattan and there we had an apartment in Manhattan that was unfurnished.

Q: And that was still the whole family together?

A: Not my brother, without my brother. Just the four of us. And then I met my husband. He was the nephew of someone that my mother knew from Belgrade yet. She knew the family and she was married to his uncle, you know. They had met also through a thing like that you know with the going through prisons, going to you know it was a crazy, crazy period you know where everybody was in, either in prison or going to prison or coming out of prison. For no reason.

Q: Who did you associate with in New York? Did you have friends or did you meet other Jews, refugees or –

A: I had met a girl, a woman on the ship that was very sweet and all that but then, when I learned the language better and all that I realized that I had nothing in common. We had nothing to talk about. We saw each other a couple of times and that was it. For the rest I didn't have just trying to think. Not, not, you know you couldn't make friends just like that.

Q: And you weren't for example looking for contacts with other Yugoslav associations or Yugoslav refugees. Or –

A: There were salons. There were places like that. And my parents had joined them and all that, but we didn't want anything like that. We wanted to learn the American way you know. To meet American people you know. We wanted to, to fit in. You know. You didn't want to carry the old baggage anymore. You know you wanted to sort of fit in. That was our, our aim was to become comfortable in this new society.

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Q: Did you still speak Serbo-Croatian with your parents?

A: Yes. Always. Always, yes.

Q: And with your sister?

A: I still do sometimes. Yes. Yes, I still do, but mostly English we speak now because we are more comfortable with English. Italian I am losing already because for many years I worked for Italian companies. And I liked it.

Q: When did you find out about what happened during the war? Do you remember the Eichmann trial for example.

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah. So I mean oh yeah, this we did, I remember, yes.

Q: Was this the first time that you heard about –

A: Well the atrocities, the atrocities really hit me hard and but then I had my husband. He will tell me about it now. He didn't speak about it for many years. You know but details I got from him.

Q: How old were you when you met?

A: When we met. I was 21.

Q: And so 21, that would have been in 51.

A: 51.

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Q: Between 51 and 60 did you inquire, were you interested in what happened or did you focus on the present?

A: We were focusing on our settling here and I was a little bit still attached. I had a lot of records from Italy. I was holding on to Italy, you know. It's not to Yugoslavia, because I was very young and I didn't have that kind of an attachment to Yugoslavia, but Italy yes.

Q: Tell me about the Eichmann trial, what you remember.

A: Well it, we were listening to this thing and they were emphasizing the fact that they were following orders, right. And that was their defense, That they were just following orders. Right. That was, was there anything else that I probably missed half of it.

Q: But there were a lot of survivor testimonies. There were 120 survivors.

A: They were a lot but --

Q: How did you feel when you were listening to, were you listening regularly or occasionally?

A: I was listening but I wonder if I connected it with reality or with the movie. you know because it wasn't, to me it was all something that, that didn't happen or it happened but -- some, it bypassed us.

Q: It was something that happened to others.

A: To others. To others. And we had always met nice people in Italy you know. Nobody ever made us feel like --

Q: When did you first go back to Italy? After the war?

A: After the war we went back and everything was on strike.

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Q: Do you remember when that was?

A: My husband will remember when. I didn't remember.

Q: In the 50s or 60s.

A: Oh no much, even later. I think it was in the 80s. yes, no, we couldn't afford it. We couldn't take time out and you know it wasn't –

Q: Did you visit Sandrigo?

A: No, no because we always took tours. So we were there in Milano which I wanted to see a little more. In Rome we were there, we landed in Rome and then we made our way to the, to the hotel. And everything was on strike. We had to make our room. I mean the place was really, and then we went to Florence for the first time which was lovely. And Florence they bombed our bus. You know the civil, they were against the people that were, the tourists and that was a big income for the, for Italy.

Q: Did you ever go back to Yugoslavia?

A: Yes. Back to Yugoslavia once.

Q: Also in the 80s.

A: I don't know now, right, before Tito died.

Q: So the 70s. He died in 81.

A: 81. We went there. We had a very, also a tour. You know we took, we had a guy who was from Ireland and he knew everything about Yugoslavia, he was so, explaining everything so well

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you know. He was really a good guide and all that. And he said you know should Tito die, should anything happen to Tito while we are on this, I'll put you on the, I'll take you to the nearest airport and put you on the plane. Because he says, after that it's going to be bedlam and do you know, he was right. Because nobody likes anybody in Yugoslavia. And they didn't just hate the Jews. They hated each other.

Q: Did you go and visit your, the house of your parents and the factory?

A: Yes, we lived And the factory we couldn't visit. But we went over there where we, where we that I describe in yes, so it was, it was sectioned, it was sectioned. The communist, it was too big for one family. You know this only rich people lived like this. We had a servant for the speak you know off the kitchen there was a little room and they had their bathroom and that was only to be considered luxury so that was already an apartment for the communists, for their family. And they made the whole thing into three or four apartments. We went to the door, we rang the doorbell and the woman finally opened up. And I said you know I'm very really sorry to bother you but you know I used to, we used to live here. We were there with my sister and my brother in law. And -- So just come in, must come in you know and I started crying you know. It was a little bit over --

Q: How did they receive you?

A: Nothing, they didn't make a fuss on us. They couldn't receive us. She only had this one room. you know they have given up the room. They looked at us. They didn't know what was going on and I say I used to live here and --

Q: Which part of Belgrade was that?

A: You would know. Strachen Nichobana. How can I describe?

Q: Was it in the center or was it in the suburbs?

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A: No, no, no we were not too far from the Kalimantan. In fact we used to, my school was right, not far from the Kalimantan also, but we went to see my school and it seemed so small by comparison. Well I was little at the time. We went to the Kalimantan. My cousin was there. The one who killed herself, Melita. She was there. She took us around. She wanted to bring us to the Kalimantan because of the restaurant there. They **semachichin** what not you know. And they had run out of semachichin. But I remember that with the school we went to, the Kalimantan and there was, there were rooms there with all the equipment that the Turks had left. During the Turkish occupation.

Q: That's a long way off.

A: That's going way back right. But this is what they wanted to show the kids. This was part of history. I guess so that's --

Q: Were there any people that you had known before the war that still lived in Belgrade that you were able to meet.

A: No.

Q: Did you go to the Jewish community?

A: No. I don't know that there was a Jewish community in the end. We went with my, she took us to the synagogue. To the Ashkenazi synagogue. Because I understand that our synagogue was completely ruined. They used it as a stable or something.

Q: Did you stay in touch with any of the people who helped your family in Italy?

A: No. And I don't know why. You know I tried to stay in touch with that boyfriend of mine and then there was a girl upstairs from us. **Titsiana**, forgot her last name. Titsiana. She was very fond of me and I was very fond of her. She was older than I was. But who else did I --?

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Q: Tell me the story of how Giovanni found you.

A: Well that is, that is a big accomplishment because Mazliach, you know he had traced me back to Mazliach.

Q: Actually I now remember I found you.

A: Oh you found.

Q: But Giovanni compiled a list of people who his father helped. Yes that's correct, so he contacted you and how did –

A: He contacted my son. And it was funny because he says yes, she's my mother. Says is she your grandmother or, and I have it all here because it was really something. And that's why. Oh I wrote you this letter.

Q: That's a real accomplishment yes. Are you now interested in getting in touch with other people who were there with you? Like Deleons. And –

A: I had a letter from Deleon and that all came back but he has a family and he is in Australia.

Q: But you don't remember the Kudish family from Slovenia.

A: No, no and what's more my sister doesn't remember. She's three years older than I am. I don't know how we just cut off completely. I don't know why but why did that happen. Maybe we weren't that close over there but we didn't have that many people to associate with.

Q: Ok well thank you very much. Now --.

A: This is it. That completes it.

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Q: I just wanted to ask you in the end if you have anything that you would like to add, any thoughts on your story, on your experience.

A: I think that ours was a happy, happy story and happy ending, considering what other people went through. I think we were awfully lucky. And you know the older I get and the more stories I hear from all around of Jews that were in France, or in wherever they went you know it's just a horror story of more and more you know. And here we, it was just like being on vacation, like a long vacation. Sure we lost, we lost all this time from going to school and so we had to sort of pick up things as we went along. Some things I suppose we picked up and some we never will but school is not only going to the building right. You learn as you meet people and it's a continuous learning process. I learned a lot from my husband because he really went through the nitty gritty, he went through the whole thing. How he survived that's a miracle. Because he was in camp from the beginning of the war to the end of the war. He lost his brother. He lost his family, he lost all of them. With the exception of those who, cousins you know he lost everybody. Well Poland was really, he comes from Poland.

Q: Ok, thank you very much.

(end)