United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Norman Salsitz
July 5, 1999
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Norman Salsitz, conducted by Regina Baier on July 5, 1999 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jeff and Toby Herr collection, this is an interview with Norman Salsitz, conducted by Regina Baier, on July fifth, 1999, in Mr. Salsitz's home. This is a follow up interview to a USHMM videotaped interview conducted by -- with Norman Salsitz on May 12th, 1990. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum gratefully acknowledges Jeff and Toby Herr for making this interview possible. This is tape number one, side A. So -- any my first question would be when were you born, and where?

Answer: I was born May the sixth, 1920, in a small town in Poland, southern Poland, named Kolbushova. And this -- people think that this -- well, this was known as Galeetsia, because before 1918, this belonged to Austria, and now as a section of Poland was called Galeetsia, so there where I was born. Then it became Poland, and it -- the section was called minor Poland. So, it was a very small town. It -- the town had 4,000 people, and from the 4,000 people, 2,000 were Jews, and 2,000 were Poles -- Catholics. We only had Catholics in our section. Protestants, we didn't have any Protestants there, so all Jews, or Catholics.

Q: And Norman, you have different names. One name you were born with, a name -- certain -- several names that you used during the war, and a name now. Could you give us first, all of these names?

A: Yes. I can give you the names, because sometimes when I -- on the street, or when I am in New York, and there are people who call me when they see me, and they call me different names, and I know from th -- where they know me. Well now -- will tell you the -- the names. So for -- I was born as Naftali Salishitz. Salishitz was like -- is pronounced as a ger -- German name, because we were in Austria, with a u -- umlaut, and this how I was born. In the war, I became the first one that it was changed. It was Tadosh Yadduch. Tadosh Yadduch is when I joined the Polish underground, the AK, which is the home army, and in Polish it's armia kryova. They didn't accept Jews, so I had to get some papers, and I masqueraded as a Polish Catholic, and with my papers, my birth certificate, which we will talk about it later, was Tadosh Yadduch, so my name was -- this was the name, and also, my friends called me Taddek. This is from Tadosh, is Taddek. So for this, if I hear somebody calls me Taddek, so I know they know me from this town. Then my name was, when I was there, so my name was -- became, in one part, it became Lazerosh Spillman. I had to do a certain job, and I had to be a German, so I had a friend, his name was Lazerosh Spillman, I took his name, and -- and this was for a short time, because Spillman is German, Lazerosh [indecipherable]. Then I wer -- I -- my name became Anatoli Sherberkof. Anatoli Sherberkof is when I joined the r -- Russian group, and there were Russians, and again I had to masquerade as a -- as a -- as a Russian, so my name was Anatoli Sherberkof. Then when I -- after the war, after I was liberated, I joined the Polish army. I volunteered for the Polish army, and my name became Tadosh Szaleski, because Tadosh, I liked the name, and Szaleski is because it's a very -- it's a

nice, Polish name, with the s-k-i in the end. And this -- I used this name during my time in the Polish army, which I had a very, very important position, until I escaped. Also -- so now, when I see a person calls me Taddek, and so I know from where. And calls me Naftali, so I know he knows me from home. And then, my name was -- I was called Lotchik. Lotchik in Russian means a pilot, because when I joined the army, I was accepted to the air force, and everybody envied me, because very few people were accepted to the air force. So in po -- Russian is called Lotchik, so people called me Lotchik. Now even today, when I see some friends from this time, they say, "Oh, Lotchik is calling." Yeah. And then when I came to America -- so I changed my name from Naftali, because I came to America on my real name Naftali Salishitz. So I changed my name to Norman Salsitz, because my family thought that this is a -- all my family changed their names, and I picked out Salsitz, and nor -- and there is a whole story about -- about how I would change, but this is not for now. I have the story in my ne -- coming book how my name was changed. So I remained with na -- with Norman Salsitz, and this how I am today.

Q: We'll talk about that story a little bit later actually, on the tape, too, but let me ask you this, who was Naftali?

A: Now --

Q: Who wa -- who was the man that the -- that they would remember, and who was the boy, or the young man that you remember?

A: Well, you want to know why I'm named Naftali?

Q: No, I wanted -- I wanted to know what your dr -- what you're dreams were, that wa --

A: Oh.

Q: -- who were you at that time, as a young person?

A: Well, Naftali -- I was the youngest in my family, which means all my sis -- I had five sisters. My fif -- sisters were older, and I was very, very spoiled, because all of them, as a matter of fact, til I was three, four years, one sister, which I liked very much -- I liked all of them -- I called her mama til I was four years old. They actually raised me, because my mother had nine children, so it was very hard for her. We lived in one room in this time, and there was -- I was born after the war. So I was very spoiled. And then later, nothing was impossible for me, because the family allowed me for a lot of things. And later, when I was older, I was not an angel. I did certain things that my father didn't like. Naturally, I didn't do bad things, but I was -- I was a re -- always I was a rebel. And I always, if I -- I always reached higher, that my -- my kind of people, or my family expected, especial later, when I started to go out with the girl of my dreams, [indecipherable]. I always wanted something higher, and I -- in school, I was a very -- I was, in my class in the public school, I was always the best student. And I have all my report cards. I have the report cards from the first grade to the last grade, I saved them, together with my photos. And I ver -- it was very unusual for a Jewish boy, who had sidelocks, and was reli -- and was dressed as a -- as a Hassidic boy, to have good report cards, because the teachers all were Poles -- Catholics, there was not a Jewish teacher, and they all hated Jews. Because I would say -- oh, maybe it's not the right expression,

but I would say 95 percent they hated Jews, and especial they hated a Jew who was a religious Jew. We were different. So -- to -- for a Jew like this, to get a report card with -- from top to bottom excellent, it was very unusual, but I have the report cards. Now, I went also to a Jewish school, we called it Yeshiva -- Chadda -- or Yeshiva, where we learn Jewish subjects. Now, I was not so good there, and my father always -- always ask questions. “How comes in the Polish school you are the best, and here you are not such a good student?” Well, I didn’t have so much interest in it. I had interest in geography, in history. Even today, so many years later, if you will ask me -- there was the river Vistula in Poland, which was the main river. And the main river had so many small rivers running into the main river, to make it a bigger river. And it started in the Carpathian mountains, and it ended in the Baltic Sea, in Danzig. So I can today mention all the rivers who fell in from the Carpathian mountains to the Vistula, the left and the right side. I remember it, because I was very interested in it. Poland had 40 kings, and if you will ask me, I will mention all the 40 kings, when they became kings, when they died. I remember those things, because I had an interest in this. And --

Q: Tell me two.

A: Two?

Q: Just as a test.

A: Well, I would -- I would tell you, just as a test, I will tell you the first and the last one. Maybe this will be the [indecipherable]. The first one was Meershko Peervsha. It means me -- his name was Meershko, and he was the originator of the Polish kingdom, before

Poland didn't have a kingdom, didn't have a country, there were tribes. And Meershko Peervsha was the first king, and he was also important, because in 966, he accepted Christianity for the Polish people. So 966 was very important. And the last one was Zigmund August Porniatofsky. He was the last king, the 40th king. So, h-he -- the -- Zigmund August Porniatofsky, there are rumors about him, that he was a lover of the Russian, and -- the czarina, and then -- and Poland didn't like it so much. Well, so those things were very important for me. Like, for instance, the mountains in Poland, the rivers in Poland, I remember it, because I loved it. So for this reason, I was a very good student.

Q: Wh-Why did you love it so much? What was so important to you?

A: I loved it for -- for a few reasons. The first thing it was to me -- when I lived in Poland, I considered myself a Pole, a patriot. I say, we live in this country -- Jews lived in Poland for a thousand years. My town existed since 1773. So it means oma -- over two hun -- 200 years. So I always said, if I live in a country, I -- this is my country. Naturally, in this time -- and so I loved it, and I loved everything, and also literature. If you will ask me about Polish writers, and Polish literature -- literature, I remember important poems. And -- and I -- I liked it. Where the Jewish learning, I did it because my father wanted me to do it. I was proud to be a Jew, but I wanted to show, because I lived in Poland, and because the peep -- Polish people didn't like us, so I wanted to show that I am a good Pole. And so was my father. My father was, I would say, the biggest Polish patriot in our town. He was a Jew with the long beard, and -- and very religious, very learned, but he was one of the few who spoke Polish beautiful. He spoke Polish without a Jewish accent,

correct grammar, ever -- he spoke -- now, as a matter of fact, if sometimes they had to send a delegation to the Polish peep -- to the government or something, my father went as a spokesman, because on account of his language. And when there were some national holidays or something, my sp -- father spoke about -- spoke, because it was unusual to see a Jew with a long, gray beard speak Polish. Now, there was a reason why he spoke good Polish, and if later -- if you will have time, I will tell you the reasons. So I li -- now, for instance, there was a peasant movement in Poland, which 90 -- I would say 75 percent of the population were peasants. And they were not very well off before the war. They -- the government didn't treat them very right, because where -- because the government was run by the nobility, and by people who were educated, and the peasants didn't have a chance. Now, my father was the only Jew in our town that he belonged to this movement. And when the peasants used to make gatherings in our town, which the government was against it, and the thousands of thousands of peasants came to the marketplace to speak about the unjustice, what the government is doing against the Poles, against the peasants, all the meetings, everything was done in our house. Now, he did it because he believed in it, and also he did business with the peasants. Our business -- he had the wholesale grocery store, and the wholesale -- the grocery store was not a grocery, it was like in America you have a general store; we sold everything. We sold in a -- grease for wagons, and we sold kerosene, and we sold flour -- wi -- everything was in our store. So the small stores in the villages came to buy by us, because we were the wholesaler. And so this way he had the contact with the people. Also, he had the contact because he was born in

that village. He was born in that village in 1882, in a village called Dubass, which is about five kilometer from Kolbushova. His father was the manager of the village. Now, I want you should know that a village isna -- wasn't like it's now, which is everybody land -- owned land. A village belonged to one person. In old -- it was a serfdom, it was a -- so then the -- all the people worked for this person, and my grandfather was the manager. When to cut, when to gather, when to sell, he was the manager. And in Poland he had -- in Polish he had a special name, they called him Veeairnick. Veeairnick in Poland means a man -- a trust -- a trustee. It means that you believed him. So the man who owned the village trusted him, and he was managing, and naturally the profit went to the owner. So maybe this is the reason my father had a little connection to the land, to the people, and naturally, they didn't reciprocate, they didn't pay him back that they loved him, because -- maybe they liked him, but they didn't love him because he was a Jew.

Q: So you gave us a little bit of an understanding of where you came from, and who you were when you were called Naftali. Who were you as a person when you were Taddek, and -- was it Lotchik?

A: No, no. Taddek Yadduch.

Q: Not [indecipherable]

A: Taddek Yadduch.

Q: Yeah.

A: Taddek. This was --

Q: Or Tadosh when you had the other --

A: -- Tadosh, right.

Q: -- the other identity.

A: Tadosh I became, is after I went through -- the Germans came in -- after I went through the ghetto. I went through three camps, from which I escaped, and I went in to the underground, to the woods. We had a Jewish group. In our Jewish group, we had 120 -- this is a long story -- we -- I describe it in my books. We had 125 members in our group, Jews. We started to get arms, guns, and then later, I was shot by my -- one of my best friends, he shot me four times, three bullets entered my neck. And this was a man who was the head of this Polish underground, AK, armia kryova, the home army. And he was a friend, we went to school together. But nevertheless, I was a Jew, and the armia kryova, the home army didn't accept Jews, and when I came to him that he should incorporate my group -- because later I became the commandant of my Jewish group. Now, we had -- the highest number of our group was 125, but in this time we had about 69, because we started to be killed, killed, killed. Not by Germans, we were mostly killed by Poles. So when I saw that we are being killed, and I find out that he is the leader, so I, through messengers I sent him, I want to have a meeting with him, and when I had the meeting, I offered that we have al-almost 70 people, young people, and we want to join his group, and I even told him that he can use us to the most dangerous -- [clock chiming]

Q: That's the clock here in the room, but --

A: So -- so he can use us to the most dangerous actions, because we didn't have for to lose. But we would be pro-protected from this Polish underground. So I figured because

he was my schoolmate, and he's the leader, so I will have a chance that he will accept us. And we -- this is also a long story, I have it in the book, and we had the first meeting. When we had the meeting, he shot me from behind, he shot me fo -- his brother, actually, with him together. They shot me four times. Three bullet entered my neck, one in my hand, I fell down, that I'm -- and I was sure that I would be dead, that I am dead, I felt dizzy. And -- and -- so then, when I came -- when I -- the --

Q: Bird is singing [indecipherable]

A: So -- so, okay?

Q: Yeah.

A: So -- so when I came -- and so when I came to him, I had already a false document which I got from a monsignor, and my name became -- a-a-again -- after -- now, people ask, "You were shot, so what happened?" I said, "Well, I was not dead, otherwise I wouldn't be here." So, but I killed him. Laying on the floor, I shot him, and his brother, and then later I knew I cannot be any more with my group, because they started to look for my group, and they -- and I thought my group would suffer on account of me, because they knew I did it. So I went to a different section, and I became a member of this organization with my name as Tadosh Yadduch.

Q: You were a changed man at that time?

A: Changed in what? In what -- in what way?

Q: In the way you felt about things. Revenge seems to have become an important theme at this point.

A: Yes, yes. Revenge was very important for me, and the revenge was important for a few reasons, but the main reason was, when my father was shot in the ghetto, the 28th of April, 1942, I witnessed it. And when he was shot by the Gestapo, before he died, he said what a Jew usually says before he dies, God is [indecipherable], we call it the shema Israel. And then he said -- the last words were, “Nakuma, nakuma, nem nakuma.” It means, revenge, revenge, take revenge. Now, he said it in such a voice, that it was not a natural voice, it was something that it came from heaven, an unnatural voice, which I -- til today, it is already almost 70 years, I can still hear his voice yelling to take revenge. And this gave me strength to survive. I said, “I must survive to take revenge.” For this reason, revenge was so important for me. Some people say so what is revenge? Revenge is nothing. Not for me, ben when you started to think, everyone who has a family, and if he would started to think that all his family were killed by certain people, and they were not only killed, before they were killed, they were tortured. Hunger, beating, starvation, and then finally killed, and you will say, “Well, if I can get these men, I am going to kill them.” Sure now, in 1999, you don’t think about it, because we are normal people, la -- we live in America. But in this time, the only dream I had is to take revenge. And for this reason, revenge was so important. Only -- also, this was my father’s -- the legacy what I got from my father. Also, revenge was important, I had five sisters. My five sisters were married. They had little children. I was very close to the children, we lived together. And when I started to think, there’s a little girl, her name was Blimcha, she was three and a half years. She was like an angel, with gold curled hairs. And if I start to think that this

girl had to be killed, and the others, I had 21 people. Why were they killed? For no -- not because they were bad, they were killed just because they were Jews. And if I survived, and if I wouldn't take -- I was the only survivor, and maybe if they are in heaven, I don't know, they would s -- or -- or before they were killed, they knew, because I always was the one who went down from the ghetto, brought food, and brought them candy. And if they would be killed, they would say, "Well, Naftali will take care on it." And they probably thought about it, that I would take care on it. If they are in heaven, which I don't know if they are, this is a different story, if they are, and if they look down, and they said -- and they looked at me and said, I was the survivor, the survivor to take revenge, and if wouldn't take revenge, I will be a traitor, I would be a disappointment for them, because I was the only one. So I had to take revenge. Now, after the war, after I came to America, I still take revenge. But I cannot go out, take bodily revenge, physical revenge. So my revenge is that I survived the war to tell the story, to tell the cruelties, to tell the murdering things. This is my revenge, and maybe this is the reason I survived. Otherwise, why did I survive, why not the other people? But this is the reason that I survived. In the war it was a physical revenge. Now the revenge is, like I'm speaking to you, I give other testimonies, I go to schools. I go -- people ask me -- if somebody asked me to speak about the Holocaust, I am always ready. I never took a penny, people want to pay me, I said, "No, this is not a thing that I want to get paid." Y -- I have to do it, so long as I am alive, because in a few years there will not be survivors. And who knows? If now

we have deniers, where we are still alive, what will be a few years later? So my duty is to tell and retell the cruelties. To tell the stories, because I was a witness. I was there.

Q: We will talk about that more, about your work, your legacy, a little later. Let me just ask you this, in your videotaped interview, you also gave another reason that might have helped you to -- to get through this.

A: Yes.

Q: A letter from your -- from your mother.

A: See, well people ask me -- everybody had a reason why he survived, had a legacy. I had two legacies, and I said I must survive. The first legacy was that my father said revenge, revenge, reven -- this I said, I must live to take revenge, because if -- if my father is in heaven, as we believe, how would I be able to face him, he ask me, “Did you do something, did you take revenge because they shot me?” I did. Maybe I didn’t take enough revenge, looking back, I didn’t take enough, but I did. The second legacy was when my mother was taken from the town of Jheshuf, from the ghetto, cause we were taken from Kolbushova, from a small town to a larger town, to Jheshuf, where they gathered more Jews, to be able to send them to a death camp. And when she was taken to Belzyce, to the death camp, with all her five sis -- daughters, with the son-in-laws, with her grandchildren, somehow she gave somebody a letter. She could give a letter, and I was on this time in a camp, and they brought the letter to me. And I remember -- I don’t have the letter, I would give everything to have the letter, but I don’t have it. But I remember the words. And she wrote to me, “You are the youngest of my nine children,

and you know always the youngest is the smartest," in their eyes. "You are young, you are strong, you are smart. You go and survive the war, because after the war, you go to America, and tell to El," I had a brother already in America. "Tell to El," his name was El, "what the murderers did to us. Go to Palestine." I had a brother in Palestine, David. "Go to David, and tell him what the murderers did to us. Go to the world, and tell the world what the murderers did to us." She se -- she also wrote, "Let your being an orphan not break you. Go out, fight, be strong, and survive." This gave me a o-other s -- reason to survive, and for this reason, from the first minute when I was liberated, when people didn't want to tell stories about the Holocaust, from the first minute, I spoke. People, in the beginning, didn't like it. They looked at me and they saw this is an obsession, that I speak about the Holocaust, but I spoke. People who survived, they didn't want to speak. It took a long time til they started to speak in the 60's and the 70's. I spoke about the Holocaust in '45, and '46, but people didn't want to listen. When I came to America, when I told the people, they thought I'm crazy. They didn't want to listen. This was the legacy from my mother. So those two legacies were the most important thing. It wasn't important that if I am alive, and not alive. So other men will s -- survive. I never -- I never thought that being alive was such an important thing as a personal thing, that I am alive. But a pers -- the important thing were those two legacies that I could fulfill.

Q: Maybe we should flip the tape over at this point. So this is the end of the first tape of an interview with Norman Salsitz, and the end of side A.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Norman Salsitz. This is tape number one, side B. I would like you to -- to go back to the time just before liberation. When -- when was that, where were you, and what kinds of state of mind, and physical health were you in at that time? J-Just before liberation, wherever you want to go.

A: Well, before liberation -- this was in July, 1944. Now, we were left from 125 Jews -- I'm not talking about the town, the town was gone. The town was liquidated July the seventh, 1942, they were taken to Jheshuf, and Jheshuf to Belzyce, they were killed. But then later on we get some people together, and finally we were 125, and from the 125 they started to kill us, and mostly Polish people killed us. And in the book I describe there some raids they made on us. And in -- in July '44, we were left only six people from the whole group.

Q: Who were they?

A: The six people -- this was -- I was there with my brother, my older brother Lyebish. He was 16 years older. Then were two brothers, Lybovitch. One was Lyba, and one was Herschel. And the Lyba actually, if not Lyba, we wouldn't survive, because he was a village Jew, and his profession was he was a trapper before the war, and he knew the woods. And I described what things -- he lived l-like a woodsman, and to me he -- his -- his -- he was like a -- a deer. He was -- he was like -- like a animal. Not an animal in a

bad sense, but he knew all those things, h-he could [indecipherable]. So, on account of him, we could survive. And his older brother was with him, so there were Lyba and his brother, I and my bro -- and there were two from my town. One was Lyebish Nestel, one was Connor. And the -- and the two were cousins, and they survived with us all the war. So happens that they were -- the -- the other one was Naftali Connor. And they were religious Jews. During all the time when we were -- they were with me in the ghetto, they were with me in the camp, they were with me in the woods. And during all the time, they didn't eat anything that it was not kosher -- it means it was not for Jews. So they only ate a piece of bread, some fruit, vegetables if they had. If we had meat, they wouldn't eat it. If we killed a deer, or we killed a rabbit, they wouldn't eat it. But anyway, they survived. And after, when they -- the -- when -- when we were liberated in -- in the end of July, so they said, "We -- we are liberated. No more Germans. We are going home." And they thought they would come home, they will be looked on like on heroes. They survived from the whole war -- Jewish community. And they came home to my town three days after they were liberated, this Polish AK, the Polish underground, took them, they wer -- they saw them. And they took them, and they shot them. After going through hell, losing their family, starving, everything, they were killed. And they were killed by very prominent people, not peasants. By two people -- and I know the people who killed them. One, his name was Vladiswav Kishel. He was before the war, dir -- director of the internal revenue in -- in Kolbushova, for te -- the text director. Intelligent person. The second one was Jellinsky. Jellinsky had a bus company in our town. He lived all his life

with Jews, because the Jews were traveling in the bus. They belonged to this organization. This organization took over the leadership for the first few days, before the Russians organized their own leadership. And they saw the two Jews, and they killed them. From the whole group, so we were left only six. Now, I -- I ga --

Q: How -- how did you hear about that?

A: Well, I heard it right away, because when they went -- came to our town, they -- I told them not to go, because I knew that nothing good -- because they killed so many during the war, and when they went there -- then later, the Polish people between themselves, everybody knew about it, because this was not done in secret. They took them openly, and they took them to the river by the cemetery, and they shot them. And -- and the people who were in my -- in our town, they told me this [indecipherable] not only one, a few of them. There were some people who were very sympathetic, and they told me. Now, the reason, later -- and I wrote this in my book, and naturally the people are very angry in -- in my town why I wrote it about it, and they said to me, “You shouldn’t have write it, because in case this book will be -- will be translated into Polish, this Kishel has,” -- he’s now 85 years, he lives in the town, he had grandchildren. So the grandchildren will find out that their grandfather was a murderer. So I shouldn’t -- I should retract it, I should write a article that is not true. They said he killed doesn’t mean anything, but the children shouldn’t know that he was a murderer. This what they wrote to me when the book came out. Now, I found out -- the reason why, which I understand, the reason why -- why in this Kishel, who was the director of the internal revenue, he

volunteered he should kill them, because there were the group of the ar -- of the AK members, and when they caught the two Jews, he volunteered to kill them. Now, why should he volunteer to kill them? The -- the -- the -- the reason was that this one of them, Lyebish Nestel, he was such a nice person, a scholar. You see, both of them were rabbinical students, they were very intelligent people. So before the war, when the war blew out, he was in the active Polish army, and his unit, his regiment was sent over to the German border, because they had to protect Poland. And he was, and he was a very good soldier. Now, also Kishel, the director of the internal revenue was in the reserve, he was an officer. And he was also in the same unit. And when the Germans attacked Poland, naturally the units started to pull back. And they came to a small town in -- near the German border, near Katovitz. And this was -- mostly there were Jews, so the Kishel knew this Lyebish Nestel, so he said to him, “Well, why don’t you go to the Jews, where you are a Jew, and get two Hassidic coats [indecipherable], and we will change our uniform, and we will go home.” To change as being Jews. This what he told to Lyebish Nestel. So Lyebish Nestel said to him -- and this was his officer -- and a Polish guy, a patriot. So Lyebish Nestel told him, “I will not do it. I am in the army. I came here to protect my country, to fight for my country. I wouldn’t do it.” Kishel looked at him, and that’s -- this was it. Two days later, Kishel disappeared. He didn’t know what a -- probably he did it on his own, he run away. Lyebish Nestel was fighting, fighting, til they came near Lublin. This was deep into the Polish countryside, and he was taken as a prisoner by the Germans, as a soldier. Somehow, usually if Jews were taken as prisoners,

they didn't survive, because the Germans killed them. Somehow he run away. He run away, he came to our town, and he told everybody the story. He told the story how is it possible that Kishel -- and Kishel disappeared, nobody knew where he is -- where he was. Naturally, Lyebish was with me in the ghetto, he was with me in the camp, he was with me two years in the woods, and he got killed. Kishel disappeared. After the war, Kishel became very important because he was a leader in the AK, in the underground, and he was not any more inter -- internal revenue, he was older, he had got married. He -- he had children. He lives now in a town in Poland. And I wrote his stories. They are now angry why I told his story. I told his story because this is the truth. So those two were killed. So from the six, only four survived. Now, from the four, from the four, six months later, Lyba, who was our savior, who was the trapper, was poisoned in our -- in the village, there he was -- there he was poisoned, he died. His brother Herschel was older, he went to Palestine before it -- Israel, and he died in Israel. Lyebish, my brother, came to America, and he died in 1965, as a -- got the heart attack, he died. So I am the only one alive from our group, and there were very, very seldom places that Jews organized. So happens we organized in the woods, nobody survives that. I have to tell those stories. Now, I know every one who got killed. I even wanted to write a book that everybody's dead. How it was, how he was killed, how he was betrayed -- mostly they were betrayed by Poles. Maybe I will do it yet. Why? Because I'm the only one who wa -- I'm alive. And if I would not be alive, nobody would know the stories. I tell to the families. If they

have somebody [indecipherable] how they were with me in the woods, and how they died. So from the 125, I am only one alive.

Q: Let's go back then, and talk a little bit about your personal liberation. How did it happen, and what -- what did you do afterwards?

A: Well, when my bi -- liberation is, that when it was -- this was after -- after I had to escape from the AK, because like I said to you, I was a member in the AK, and there were a few things, I don't know if you want me to tell you why I left the AK and came back to my brother. So the -- this -- this was -- okay, so -- so I came back, an -- I was about a week or two weeks, but we already saw that it is the end. Why? Because we saw Ericthsook. We saw that the Germans soldiers are coming, and they -- the army, and th- they occupied the villages with their equipment. Every day more and more and more German soldiers. And we were in this time in hiding, because we didn't have a group any more. So we knew -- and then we started to hear cannons. In every -- the night, the cannons were louder and louder, so we knew that this is the end, but how can we survive til the end, because in the last minute -- we suffered for six years, in the last minute we will be killed. So my brother, with one of those Lybovitch went to a friendly Pole, that we used to go once in awhile to hide there, and they were with them, and I went with Lyba to look, to see, to different peasants. Because we didn't know exactly, we knew it's coming, but we didn't know exactly. So I went with Lyba to a peasant, his name was Yanhodor. I had described him, he was very good, he was very friendly, he and his children. So we went to his house, and then we went -- we s -- we heard a unit of

Calvary, German Calvary is going t -- he was -- the road was right next to his house, near the woods. And the Calvary is going, you could hear the chains, and the horses. So we run in -- in the -- in the barn, or where they was -- the hay, and we buried ourselves under the hay, and then we -- so we heard that the soldiers coming in, opened the door, and they taking out hay for their -- for the horses. So we were afraid that they would take away everything, we will be discovered. But we were not discovered, and after the -- the calva -- the units went, so we came out. We s -- we di -- we wanted to ask how the war is going on, but he wasn't home, because when he saw that it is already so bad. So he, with his family, he took the few cows, and they were run into the forests to hide. So they were not home. So, when we went out -- so we said, "Well, we have to go to see what our brothers are doing," because my brother was with his brother, but the woman, her name was Mary pren -- Prenetta. So we went -- we went to go out to see. As we came out from the woods where we were, and there was a big clearing, and we had to go over to the other side, where my brother, with his brother were. As we came out on the clearing, people started to shoot at us from both sides. Here in this side for where we lived, were the Germans, and the other side of the clearings were already the Russians. And when they saw two people, they didn't know who we are. And both started to shoot millions of bullets. And this was at night, and I just see bullets like -- like slow bugs, red, light [indecipherable]. And so, we were afraid, so st -- luckily there was a small -- not a river, it was some water, we jumped in in the water. And the -- the -- the -- the shooting stopped, and there were haystacks, because this was in the time when they cut the hay, this was -- so we went in

in the haystacks to cover ourselves. The shooting stopped, and then we didn't know where, what, when. We knew that there is a shooting between us. So when -- suddenly there were two horses -- two riders on one horse, from a distance, and it was at night. So Lyba, my friend, says, "Oh, I know those peasants." And he even said to me their name is -- one name is Poslooshnid. And he remembers even the horse, because he sold them the horse before the war. Now, "Go," he said, "ask them. Because if I'm going to ask them, they know I am a Jew, they could kill me. But you go, they don't know who you are." And I was dressed like a peasant, no shoes, with a jacket, and -- and I run up to them, and they were on a -- two on a horse, and I -- I couldn't see who they are. And I started to y -- to yell, Parnyi Poslooshnid, Poslooshnid. They heard me, they stopped. And when I run to them, and I come to them, and I saw on the horse, there are two SS men on the horse. And they -- and naturally they were dr-dressed, with the helmet, but in the distance I saw a silhouette. So when they saw me, I s -- I didn't know what to do. To run away it was too late, ba -- so they jumped down from the horse, right away took out their guns, and they start asking who I am. Now, I didn't want to say that I speak German, because usually Jews spoke German, not peasants. And I started to tell them with a crying voice, you know, what will I do, my wife is in the woods, my children in the woods. They say the Russians are raping the women, and I start -- so I could see that one of them understands Polish. Probably he was from Salazzi or something, and I could hear that he's translating to the other soldier what I am saying. And when I saw that he's translating, so I started to cry more, and I said, "Help me, help me. We were with the

Germans, nothing happened to us, an -- and now the Russians will come in a," -- well, so he said -- the [indecipherable] he listened to me. So then he said to his -- so the other man said to him in German, which I understood, he said, "Now, we don't have to go." Because they were a patrol to see wa -- from where the Russian. We don't have to go -- because they were afraid for themselves, too. Let's take him to our headquarters, and he will tell us everything what we have to know. And they said to me, the guy, in Polish, to go in front of them into -- they will take me. So -- and they went back on the horse, put back their revolvers in their holster, they had rifles, they were back in the [indecipherable] and I had to go in front. Now, I knew that if I would go there, I would be killed. Why? Because I had a jacket, and underneath the jacket I had a belt, and on the belt I had the revol -- I had the revolver, I had hand grenades, I had a hatchet, I had a bayonet, I have a flashlight. I have everything I had on me. Now when -- they didn't see it, because it was the -- the jacket covered it. But I always had a revolver, and the revolver with the long barrel, remember, parabellum, I had. No, it wasn't a parabellum, it was a -- a revolver. [indecipherable], and I always had it not in my holster, but I have it -- had it in front of me in my belt, stuck in my belt. And as they went back on the horse, I figure -- I said, "This is my chance." I turned around, pulled out the revolver, and I emptied right away, all seven bullets to them, they fell down dead. And as I started to shoot, then you could see millions of bullets came from both sides. They didn't know who is shooting, they saw shooting. So, you could see it. But luckily, they didn't hit me. I w -- I bend down, I had an even -- I [indecipherable] took away their revolvers, and --

and -- and I took the horse, and I kept the horse from the side where the bullets are coming in case a bullet will hit, it will kill the horse, and I moved over to the side, not from where I came, but I moved over to the opposite side. And I went over because I figured why should I go here, here are the Germans, and there who know, maybe the Russians. I went over there, and as I came closer to the woods, and I saw a few came out, is a -- Russians, said to me to lift -- to raise my hand, and they looked at me, and they ask me who I am, so I said, "I am a Polish partisan." I spoke Russian. And they took away the revolvers, and they said, "We have to take you to our comman -- commander." And we went to the commander, and I told him the whole story, and he was very -- see, I didn't know if they would believe me, so I said, "I have a friend here, I have to go, and we have more people. I have to tell them what's going on, that the Russians are here." And I still didn't know if they believed me. I remember even I asked them -- I ask them to give me a star, what they have on their hearts a star, to give me a star to show it to my friends that I met the Russians, because they [indecipherable]. They gave me back my revolver, and they -- and I said I will go back with them. And when I went away from this [indecipherable], I was sure that they would shoot me. I was sure they don't believe me. And in ma -- I remember when I walked, it's like I would walk on air, so that I knew that I -- any second a bullet will come in. But they didn't shoot me, and I went back to my friend, he was laying there in the haystack. When he saw me, he started to kiss me, because he heard the shots, and he thought that I was shot. He didn't know that I shot them. And -- so we already knew that on this side are the Russians, on this side are

Germans, so he took me -- he had the old friend, a woman -- a old woman, and he said, "Let's go to her." And we went over to her, and we went up on the attic, nobody saw us. And in -- before -- before, in the morning, he -- we hear the door opens, and a Russian soldier comes in with a -- with a pat. And he comes in, and -- and -- when we saw -- I saw a Russian soldier, I jumped down. He said, "I came here, there's a cow I want to milk for some -- I want to milk the cow." And I grabbed him, and I dance with him. I said [indecipherable]. He said, "Yes, during the night, my unit came into this village, and we occupy this village, my unit is here." And he -- -- an-and we have the -- so this was the moment that I knew that I am liberated, the Russians are there. Now, I went right away with him. I said, "And you take me to your commander." And I told him I'm from a Jewish group. Him, I was not afraid any more to say [indecipherable] I didn't say I was a Jew. But Lyba, he didn't go with me. He still was afraid, he was very, very careful. He said, "I will not go with you," and he was still on the attic hiding. He was hiding I don't know how long, and I went out, then later I called him, and then we went to see -- this was already the territory liberated, and I went to see my brother. And I came, and I saw my brother sitting with his brother, but they were not any more on the attic hiding. They were sitting in the kitchen with their [indecipherable], and there in the kitchen were also about four or five girls, uniforms, Russian officers, because they had a field hospital there, and with the fee -- and they were doctors in the field hospital, and we started to talk in between the -- the four or five girls, two of them were Jewish. And we told them that we were li -- we were in this, and we -- we were and this was how we were liberated.

But, I didn't go back to my town, because I knew that if I will go back to my town, I would be killed, because they knew that I killed those two Augustin brothers. That I killed them in my self defense, this didn't mean anything. So, I didn't go back to my town. The other two went, and they were killed, and we went on, my brother and I, we went to Jheshuf, to a larger town, where Jews who were liberated, came from different villages, from different towns, and they came with a guard up there. Now, Lyba and Herschel, the two, they didn't go with us, because they were village Jews. So they still remained in the village to be there living with the peasants. This was the day, the night I was liberated.

Q: Before we go on to talk a little bit more what -- what happened then, what did liberation feel like to you? There was the moment of joy when you saw --

A: Right.

Q: -- the Russian soldier, but it was not that simple, was it?

A: Well, when it was -- when I saw the Russian soldiers, it was a moment of joy that I was liberated. But a moment later, it was a very sad moment. And the sad moment was -- I actually started to cry, the sad moment was, I am liberated, but what happened to my people? Where are my sisters? Where are my whole family? So I am liberated, so I will be fr -- see, my personal life was not so important. Important was that they were not alive, and specially the children. So my brother was with me. Now, I couldn't -- I -- I -- I thought about the people who were killed, but I also thought how my brother feels, because he lost the same family, but he also lost a wife and three children. So he was

much more in pain, because his wife and three children, which he loved very much. And there were a child from 12 years, child from 10 years, and a girl from seven years. So he -- but he didn't talk too much about it. The pain he kept inside. And this was a very bad -- to me, I had to go through it more. Th-the pain was when I was libera -- it was not a glorious time, because I couldn't believe that I am alive, this is the first thing. I -- it -- it was like -- like my mind was someplace else. I was glad when I came to Jheshuf, if I -- some people survived. It was not a happy time, because everybody started to speak what we lost. Now we are here, what now? What do we do now? We are single people, without the family, and naturally we moved in. One of our friends was from this town, we took over his apartment, and we all moved in with him. We lived together because nobody had a family. And there were two Polish women who helped them survive. So they became the -- the -- the persons who cooked for us, and we lived together for a short time.

Q: What -- what kind of -- were you in halfway decent physical shape, what -- how --

A: In physical shape, I was in physical shape. The reason why I was in physical shape was -- the others were not in physical shape. I was in physical shape for two reasons. The first thing is that I just came back from the AK. In the AK we had everything. When I was in the woods with my gun, as a Jew, I had to -- I only could go out when it was a heavy rain, and blizzard, snow. I never walked out when the moon was shining. The moon was our biggest enemy. So -- but then later, when I came to the AK, I was a hero. When we came to the villages, the girls kissed us, the girls brought us the most best food, and the people. We were heroes, we were the -- we were the same people. We wanted to

fight the Germans the same way. So there I had a lot of food, and not -- and -- and -- and I was not in bad physical -- I had to dress -- I had in this time, a -- a jacket, pants. I -- I -- I -- it was not so bad. Well, before I left for the AK, we were infested with lice [indecipherable]. But then I could go out, and I could wash. My brother was by this [indecipherable], but he was a very strong man. He was exceptional. By us, in our town, before the war, if somebody wanted to give an example of strength, they always mentioned him. He was very strong boy. Not that he was a fighter, but he was known [indecipherable]. So his physical was not bad. What others who survived, they came out, they're like skeletons. They were laying underground for -- for a year, two years, like in a -- like in a -- in a grave. And th-they had a little food what somebody gave them, if they didn't kill them. So mostly people came, and some couldn't even walk. They walked -- when they walked, they walked like -- like on all four. They were -- because they were not used to work, because they were laying in a grave for two years. And when they suddenly had to go up, and to stand up on their feet, they couldn't.

Q: When you say in the grave, do you mean from concentration camps?

A: No, no, no, no, no, no. I'm not talking now concentration camps, I'm talking now by people who survived in hiding. I'm not talking concentration camps. So where they were in hiding, la -- the people came out, from the first few days, where -- who were the people? They were the people who were -- had some friendly -- or for money, who were hidden. So they came out. So we gathered in this town. Then, we didn't have yet people from concentration, because the concentrations were not liberated yet. We didn't have the

people who were -- survived in -- in Siberia. They didn't come yet. We had some people who survived like my wife, on illegal papers, and now the Russians came out, so they came, they saw Jews that they came. They still were on illegal papers. They didn't want to come out, because they didn't know what will go on. But they came to i-indentify themselves, but most the people the first few days, most the people were people who came out from hiding.

Q: This is a good place to stop. Tape number one, side B, the end.

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is a conintua -- this is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Norman Salsitz. This is tape number two, side A. So, how -- how long, approximately, did you remain in that town or village, and what happened -- what happened then?

A: Well, this was not a village, it was a town. As a matter of fact, now it's a very big town, and it's the head of -- the capital of a state, Jheshuf. Now, I was there --

Q: Just one second, I have to rearrange the microphone just a little bit, so -- just one second. Okay, yes, that's good.

A: We lived there a few weeks. We didn't have money after we came out, so my brother started to do business, he started to make some money. And -- but ma -- with me, I always wanted to fight, to be involved in the war, so I -- I went, and I volunteered. I volunteered t -- it was very unusual for a Jewish survivor to volunteer, because Poland in this time, nem -- organized -- the army was organized Russia, but Poland [indecipherable]. They took in my years -- where they -- they were born in 1920, to the army, but they didn't take Jews. Not because they didn't want to take Jews, but they didn't have no evidence about the Jews, they didn't know who survived, and very few survived. So actually, they didn't mobilize, they didn't draft the Jewish boys. But I wanted, definitely to be part of it. So -- and also, it happened once, it a -- it was a -- a -- a episode that I went in to a barber. I have this story in the book. I went into a barber, and I -- I suspected everybody was a killer. Like naturally, if I would be the ge -- in Germany,

when I was in Germany, I looked on everybody, and everybody I thought, “Was he the killer of my mother, of my sisters?” But in Poland, even, they were so against our groups, that they -- I suspected that the majority, they didn’t like Jews. So when I went over once, to a barber, and there were -- there were people -- there were people sitting there and waiting in line for the barber, and I looked at them, and I looked at the faces, I didn’t know them. So I looked at the faces, and I thought they all looked at me that they recognize I am a Jew. Maybe they recognize, maybe I was not dressed the same way as they. And -- and this was after I came out from -- from the woods. And -- and I -- I s -- I start to think maybe I made a bad mistakes, that I came over here to this barber, and who knows what they will do to me? And little by little, the fear built up, in -- in -- in me, and when I t -- came my m-mind that I should go to the chair to be shaved and cut the hair. So -- but I went over there, and then later -- he cut my hair, and then later we star -- he wanted to shave, and he put in some cream, or some soap on my face, and when -- when he took the -- the -- to -- to cut -- to shave me, the blade -- the razor blade -- I thought that I see that all the people who are sitting around the chairs, that all are winking to him, and they said, “Now, now.” It was so the fear, this was when I came out, and -- and I was sure that this what they are doing, which later I find out they didn’t. But I thought so. An as -- as he -- he was finish with the -- with the cream on my face, and he took the razor blade, and he wanted to shave me, he started to shave my neck, I grabbed his hand, and -- and I stood up, and I run out. Even my face was -- was filled with -- was -- now I run out, and -- and -- and -- and when I -- when I came out, and I ran a -- where we lived, and I said to

my brother, who was -- like I said, I am going to the army, I want to be one more day, because this gave me so much fear. Now later, I was -- when I was in this town, later I was ashamed to go to pass his store, because I was ashamed what I did, because I knew that this was not -- but they were sitting there, they couldn't understand why I had run away in the middle. But to da -- we will -- I lived with so much fear, because everybody was killed.

Q: Did your brother want to join you with the army, too?

A: No, no, my brother never thought -- and don't forget, he was 16 years older, and he was not a man like to join, he was not like a -- a -- advent -- to like adventuristic, what I am -- he -- he had a wife, with three children, they were killed. He was not -- so he was -- he started to do business. And then I went -- I went and I volunteered, and because I volunteered, I had a choice to pick out the -- the part, which unit I want to be, and I wanted to be a pilot, because I thought being a pilot, I would be able to bomb German towns, and to take more revenge. So because I was a volunteer, they gave me some certain test, in front the whole group, a few of them were accepted to them -- to -- to the air force school, which was in this time in Quibishevo, in Siberia, they didn't have in Poland, they had this air force military school. So when -- when they picked me out, I m -- asked the doctor -- there was a young, Russian doctor, and I asked him how come that I was -- I pass all the tests, when they were such strong Polish boys who never had hunger, and this and that, and they were not accepted, and I was accepted. He said, "Well, this is the reason, because you went through so much, and nothing bothers you." And I was

accepted, and I was sent over a few days later, where I got orders to go -- to go to q -- Quibishevo, which first we had to go to Lublin, where in this time was the temporary -- the temporary capital of Poland, and there we gathered together the whole group, I think it was about 400 from the whole to -- country. And then we waited for a transport to go to Quibishevo, to go to join this officer's school, which, there is a -- [clock chiming]. But that is a other story why I didn't go, and I'm writing this story that I didn't go, but I was in the army, and I was transferred to a different, special unit, and -- because they wanted that -- I told them from where I am, so they wanted I should be in the -- in the intelligence, in this section, because I knew the territory, I knew the people. And I was sent back to Jheshuf, he ripped up the paper, this man who was in -- who was a colonel. He said, "Don't worry, don't go," I was afraid that I will go to jail, that I don't go where I was sent. So he said to me not to be afraid, and [clock chiming].

Q: The clock is really getting us here.

A: It's alright. So -- so -- and then I was sent back to this town, and this is how I became a member of this intelligent group.

Q: T-T-Two questions. You were there with a Polish identity?

A: Well, when I -- no, when I joined the army -- when I went, and I volunteered, I alre -- I took back my own identity, and I took my own identity as Naftali Salishitz, where I figured the war is ended, that's it. But, when -- when I changed -- I waited for this transport to this air force group, and there is -- it's a long story, if you inter -- I'm j -- I just wrote an article about it. And a girl saw me there, she recognized I'm -- I'm a Jew,

whate -- and she took me to her boss, who was a colonel, and he was the head personnel officer, from -- from the army. And she introduced me to him, and he said, “Well, don’t go there.” And he said, “Why you going to the air force school?” So I said, “Well, I want to learn to be a pilot, to be able to -- to bomb Germany.” He said, “Look, this is already August in -- in ’44, how long do you think we’re -- the war will last? Maybe it’ll last a other two or three months, maybe a half a year. As -- the school, i-it would take two years. After two years, there wouldn’t no -- be no war. So who would you bomb? So you will -- you will waste two years.” He said, “I will give you a better job. You want to take revenge? I will put you in a unit is -- that it is that Polish inf,” -- it was called information unit, it was like then the military CIC, and intelligence, and he said, “If you want to take revenge on the Germans, then you will be -- you will have a possibility.” So I said to him, “But I already have a order to go to -- to Quibishevo.” He said, “Where is the order?” I showed it him, and he took and ripped it up. I said, “What are you doing, I will go to jail.” He said, “Don’t worry, don’t worry, I know what I am doing.” He was then chief personnel. So he called the sixth secretary, and she said, “Make him out a new document.” And he said -- what -- “But he cannot be on his name in this unit. So what name should it,” -- so I told him my name was Tadosh Yadduch in the Polish underground. He said, “No, if you were in the Polish underground, which they are enemies of our government, [indecipherable], you cannot have the same name. Tadosh is okay, it’s a first name, but let’s see about the second name.” So we started to think about the second name, my name is Salishitz, so I wanted to have Salishitz spelled like in

Polish, so then I said, “What’s about Szaleski [indecipherable]?” She said, “This is a fine name. You will be Tadosh Szaleski right away on the spot.” They made me out a new military book, a new document, and he called the secretary, he said to the -- to her to write a letter to the head of the Polish [indecipherable] of the Polish army in Jheshuf, and he wrote a letter which it was not true, he wrote, “I know this man for a long time, he’s a very reliable man, and I want you should give him the best opportunity. Put him in a na -- in -- in a leader’s -- in a leadership position, in a [indecipherable].” And -- and this is how -- I took this paper, and I went back, and this how I remained in Jheshuf, being in this -- in this unit. And --

Q: Do you remember his name, by any chance?

A: Whose name?

Q: The -- th-the commander?

A: Sure. His name was Gorosh. Gorosh. I know the first name also, but his name was a -- he was -- he was the head of personnel from the [indecipherable].

Q: And what did you do?

A: Then --

Q: In your position?

A: In my pos -- in my position, I was -- when I came back to Jheshuf, I -- I was s -- they prepared -- they prepared a unit -- see, this was -- this was already about, I would say in end of October, beginning of November. So they prepared because -- for the last offensive, if you know -- the last offensive, because the front was stopped about 20

kilometer past Jheshuf, and there was the front staying there for six months. They prepared the new offensive, which started January the 12th, 1945, and this was the last putsch so -- for Berlin. And we -- I was included in the -- in the group -- in the group, to take over towns when we -- when the offensive will go, we will liberate towns from our group, they -- our people will take over the towns, because it was not a civil administration. So the army would take it over, an then later the civil administration will bega -- and I was assigned to take over -- one to take -- to go to Kraków, was -- Kraków was the second largest town, and the most historical town in Poland, and also the -- that doctor -- th-the head of the government in -- in Poland was -- was in Kraków, so I was assigned to remain the Kraków, and -- and to be part of the Polish intelligence in Kraków. And then the w -- in the book I describe how I met my wife, and so th --

Q: Let's -- let's do that -- let's do that over -- did you have a special mission when you went to Kraków?

A: Yes, well, the special mission is we should take over th-the -- the running, because there was not administration -- civil administration. So the army would take it over. So I -- my -- the special mission was, when we came closer th -- because we went with the Russian front, and we were attached, hundred of us were attached to the first lines of the Russian front, because the front started offensive like I said, January the 12th, and we were attached, and we were like -- like -- not like zion officers, but we were part of the -- the -- the front f-fighters, but we didn't do the fighting, but we went with them, they had to be straightened out with the local people, with the administration, yeah. So we went

with them, and I am describing this in details in the book, and then when we came before Kraków, and Kraków was a very, very important town, because the first thing it was the most historical Polish town, because the capital, it was the capital, and it was the -- the place of the kings. They lived in Kraków, and also it was the barbel. Barbel is the castle where all the kings lived, and they're buried. So we find out about three days before -- we were before Kraków, s -- and this was the front was going, we went with the front, and they -- did the Russian army went forwards, and the German went back. So, about three days before we came before Kraków, and also Kraków was not ok -- was not taken -- like usually in a war, you go from the -- and this time we went from the east to the west, like the army didn't go from east to the west. What they did, they wanted to surround, and to destroy the rush -- the German garmi zone in Kraków. So what the Russian, was a very smart thing what they did, they went -- before Kraków they went to the north, and then they surrounded, and they came into Kraków from the west. Because, actually, they had to enter Kraków from the east, but they came in thr -- from the west, and we went with them, and we went part of it, and in about three days before we were before Kraków, we find out that Kraków is mined, that they put in mines in Kraków, with columns, with explosives, and the -- and in any minute, the mi -- and -- and -- and their aim is to explode the town, and to destroy the whole town. We knew about it, because we had the fifth c-columns that they are doing it. Now -- so they wanted to -- yes, and as we came to the -- closer to Kraków from the west, so the Russian engineers, if -- f-find out that they already found some installations with [indecipherable], where there were important

buildings, but they couldn't destroy the whole thing, because it's like -- like this was the end. So they could dismantle all -- detach the electricity from the end of houses, but this was like -- like a snake. If you cut off a piece of tail of a snake, the whole snake is still alive. We had to know that central installation from where the whole town, the electricity is connected. So they picked out -- they picked out three officers to go to Kraków and to find out. And this was before Kraków was even liberated, and th-the Russians picked out. Now I -- th -- I had very good recommendations, because like I told you that this man wrote to the leaders that he knows me, said I am special in this, I did so much during the underground, you know. And then we picked out one -- a native Krakówian, who survived the war in -- in th -- in the Russia, and later he joined the Polish army, and he came back with the Polish army, and so he -- wi -- and because he was a native Krakówian, and so he was very important, and then we -- they invi -- they picked out the other men with us, so three of us, we got the order to go in to see how we can find out where the people who -- who built those things are, maybe we can prevent from the destruction. And we came into Kraków, this was winter, it was very cold. Remember, we came into Kraków January the 17th. The Russians took over part, but the ar -- a big part was still in the German hands, because officially, the town was liberated January the 19th, and we were there already the 17th, through channels, and je -- and also we had people in Kraków who were a fifth column for us. So we contacted some, and we find out that it's true, that the Germans want to destroy, and they built, in Kraków, they built columns on the main thoroughfares -- the main streets, they built columns s -- f -- a story high, with

four feet in diameter, filled with dynamite. Everything was connected, and everything had to be blown up with one push of a button. And -- and they had also mines, the main post office, and the railroad station, the [indecipherable] was -- was the king's castle. All the most important building, everything was mined. Were 287 mines all together in Kraków, and this had to be destroyed with one push of a button, and we knew that the -- if we will come closer th -- the -- this will happen. So, we were wor -- we worried very much. And we started to have leads where finally we find out -- and again, in the book I write a little more about it, you cannot have the whole book here. We find out that the -- that the company who made those columns, and those mines was done by an Austrian company, Meyerader and Krauss. And the Meyerader and Krauss isn't -- the headquarters was on the street Yuloushalaya, and we find out, and this was a winter night, a blizzard, cold, and we went -- we sent over the three to find out if -- if they -- they -- we can find out something. They came back they couldn't -- they didn't let in nobody, because every place where there was a German company, they -- and this was in the most exclusive place in Kraków, where the German took over, and then the next [indecipherable] was the Gestapo, and -- and so he ba -- by -- those places there was a iron gate, and around the iron gate there was a concrete bunker, with openings, with machine guns, they always did it there, and we sent over those, and th-they couldn't go in, the three guys, so we three went, said, well we will go ourselves. And before we went there, as I cross the street I find out that there is a -- a-apartments, that there was the Zunderdienst. Zunderdienst was auxiliary to the SS, which was from ethnic Germans. And we came in, the Zunderdienst

left, and there were about eight girls, and the girls were cooks, and not cooks, and partners to sleep and all those things, well -- so we came in, and we -- we had vodka, we cigarettes, and a -- w -- and we became very friendly with them, and they told us about this building across the street from the Meyerade and Krauss. And they told us that the Germans left already, about two days ago, but they left over the secretary, and she's still there. So a -- I couldn't understand how comes they left and they left the secretary, a German girl. She said, "Yeah, she's there, because they saw her after the Germans left." And I asked them how do you know that she was German? Oh she, they know because she used to come after the curfew, and she used to be -- they brought her with the cars. So we did -- the two -- the three who we sent didn't -- couldn't go in, so we went there, and we knocked on the door, and nobody let us in, and so we were ready -- this was already start to be dark, so we -- I wanted to -- to open th -- the door, to shut the door, then I saw that somebody's looking through the window, a young girl. So I said, "Let's wait." And the janitor came, he said, "Nobody's here, they all left." So I told him, "Well, I saw there a young girl in the window." So he saw that we know, so he said, "Wait, I'll bring the keys." He went up, he got the keys, and we came in. So in the apartment we came, it was the most beautiful apartment with oil paintings, carpets, beautiful. And there were -- and there were four women, one was the daughter-in-law of the owner of the house, then were two peasant girls, they were the maids, and then I s -- I saw a beautiful girl, dressed very nice, she wa -- she was standing there. So I start to ask who they are, then they told us [indecipherable] and when I came to her, she said, "Well, my name is Felicia

Muirashefska." And I ask her whose apartment it is, she said, "Well, this is the apartment that we live, but it belong to Meyerader and Krauss," and I start to ask her more questions, she got annoyed, I got annoyed, and -- and she -- I said, "How could you have a job l -- wh-what -- do you work here?" She said, "I work, but thank God I don't work any more, because the Germans left already." I said, "Well, what do you mean the Germans left already? You are German, aren't you?" She said, "No, I am Polish," and she showed me a kanekarta. So I said, "Yeah, we find out different, we find out that you were German." But we questioned and questions, and -- and I got very nasty, she got -- she didn't cooperate. She looked at this guy, the guy who was a Krakówian, he had a very Semitic face, he looked like he was a Polish officer, but he looked like -- he didn't have a Slavic face. So she asks if -- if she can speak to him. So I said, "Okay." And then -- and then -- and she went with him to the other room, and she said to him, "What are you bothering me, I am the same as you." He said, "What do you mean, I am the same as you? I am a Polish officer, and you are a German." She said, "No, I'm not a German, I'm Polish, and -- and besides, I'm the same as you. You are a Jew, and I am a Jew." He said, "How do you know that I am a Jew?" "Well, look on your face, it's -- you can -- I can see you are Jewish." And then he ask from where are you, from where are you, so he said, "I am from Kraków." She says, "From Kraków where are you?" My wife said, and -- and she's from Shtanuslabu. She said, "You know, I was in the Jewish -- in the Hebrew gymnasium, and there was a Jewish boy from Kraków, whose name was Oscar Margoulis, he went with me to the Hebrew gymnasium." And when he heard Oscar

Margoulis, he -- he almost fainted. So i -- Oscar Margoulis is my first cousin. So he -- and he asked her what happened to him, so he had the best proof that she's telling the truth, and he came in, and he said to me -- he calls me in the corner, and he said, "You know, this -- this pretty girl," and she was very pretty, "this pretty girl, she is not a German. She's not even Polish, she's Jewish." I said, "You are crazy. How can she be Jewish here?" So he -- and he was a womanizer, every girl he wanted to have. So I said, "You know," -- and Januk was his name, "you know, Januk, you are so -- if you had found Eva Braun," -- you know who Eva Braun was, yeah? "You would make from her a Jews just to have to go to sleep with her." So she said no -- he said, "No, you go and f -- prove yourself -- you cannot -- she proved it to me, she wen," -- so I said, "Yeah, she proved it, you are even -- told them that she showed you that she's circumcised." So -- so then later I started to interrogate her. And in the beginning she didn't want to cooperate, then later -- I didn't want to ask her if she is Jewish, because the people -- there was the janitor, were there three other, and this was very dangerous, because Kraków was not completely liberated. The Germans sometimes made a [indecipherable] and they found the Jews came out, and they killed them. So -- so I ask her, "Do you speak other languages?" She said, "Yes, I speak German, I speak," -- of course she spoke in Polish -- "I speak Russian, and I speak Hebrew, and I speak English." So I said, "English?" And I spoke a little English. See I -- I learned English. The only time I find out I don't speak English is when I came to the United States. So -- so I -- I remember I ask her from which nation are you, and she said, "Jewish." I said, "How can you prove it?" She said, "I

can speak Hebrew." So I said, "Speak to me Hebrew." She said, "Wa -- how can I speak -- I speak to you Hebrew? You don't understand what I am saying, because look in your face, y-you -- you -- you don't -- you look like a Polish anti-Semite." And she started to tell me that I shouldn't bother her. Well, [indecipherable] when she spoke Hebrew, I thought oh, she is Jewish, or maybe the Germans -- she's not, maybe the Germans taught her to speak Hebrew, and she would go out and s-spy on Jews, and -- so I asked her this time, I asked her, "Tell me, when do Jews pray Koniterra?" Koniterra, this is a prayer that we pray in Yom Kippur. And without thinking, she answered Yom Kippur. Then when -- when she said Yom Kippur, she started -- she stopped, and she said, "Wait a second, wait a second. How do you know about Yom Kippur?" She said, "You wa -- don't tell me," she said, "you -- you -- you -- you -- you, too, you too?" So -- and she started -- and she had tears in her eyes. So I said, "Yes, I too, I too." And then later, so I knew that she is Jewish, and she knew that I am Jewish, then I told her what I need, said I need the plans. She said, "Why didn't you tell me right away, I would gi -- I have the plans." And she went with me to the other room, and she opened the safe, she had the safe, and she gave me the plans. Now also, before we went in there, now -- so we, between us, we spoke -- we said, "Well, if we will get the plans," -- we didn't know if it's a woman, if it's a man, now somebody has to kill the person, because if we got some information like this, the person had to be liquidated, because in case let's say she would give me the plans, she could notify her superiors that we already have the plans, and she would spoil the whole thing. So -- and then when we f -- when we find out there is a woman, so they s -- it came

-- it fell on me, why? Because a day before we did a job, something similar like this, this so -- they did it, so they said, “Now, it’s your part.” It means that I had to do it. And -- but when she gave me the plans, so we had the -- if she wouldn’t give us -- if she wouldn’t -- I wouldn’t find out she is Jewish, I definitely would shoot her. Not -- she shouldn’t call up her -- and -- to the -- so -- so then later she gave me the plans, and the plans were exactly how then -- the columns, everything. So I brought it over to the -- to the Russian intelligence, which we -- we worked together, and they had the plans, so they send out engineers and they -- and they did everything that it shouldn’t be -- yeah, because when she gave me the plans, so she said to me -- she said to me -- so I said, “I have to run,” took the plan, because any minute the columns will blow up. She said, “No, don’t worry, they wouldn’t blow up, because,” -- I asked her why. “Cause,” she said, “two days before, I got a phone call for the camp’s commandant from Kraków, from that commander in Kraków, and he ask if this is the company Meyerader and Krauss, I said yes, and -- and so he said -- he didn’t ask questions, he only said, Springen zie dez oilen.” So detonate the columns, because before her boss left, he told her that she will get a phone call, that in -- they would tell her that the columns have to be destroyed. Se -- I mean, dek -- will be detonated. So she got this phone call, springen zie dez oilen. Now, he didn’t ask who she is, but she didn’t -- she -- he didn’t ask, s-she was not afraid in case she wouldn’t do it, which they will come to her. So meanwhile when she got this telephone -- so she notified the Akar, the Polish underground, because she wa -- was a member of the Polish underground, and she told them that -- what the telephone was, and

she was -- she was sure that they will come, and they will do something, but they didn't do anything. And then when -- and then -- okay.

Q: -- interrupt here, because --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Norman Salsitz. This is tape number two, side B. So the AK told your --

A: The AK didn't do anything, they didn't tell us, and then later when we did it, [indecipherable], she thought it's done by the AK, but they didn't do anything. So -- so it was -- it was that the columns were taking away the electricity, but the columns were staying there for about four weeks til they destroyed it. And this is how Kraków was saved. Actually, she was the one who saved Kraków. And then after, when I came to America, there were films, reports, and there were about 20 different versions how this happened, because everybody knew that it was prepared for detonation, and there was different versions. There was even a book came out r -- r -- out in Russian, it's called, "Miore Vihar." There's a Miore Vihar, a Major Vihar -- Vihar, it was [indecipherable], that he did it, and that was made a film, the film was so important that it was serialized on television. All right, a Miore Vihar was there, but he describes that he was the hero as if he got the -- then was a other film, and they -- they portrayed the pope when he was a young fellow, and that the pope was the one who find out about it, and he came, he cut the wires. I saw the film, the pope wasn't there. He was in Kraków, but he didn't have

anything to do. And there were other -- other versions how it is, because nobody knew about it, she didn't -- they didn't know til our book came out. When our book, "Against All" sa -- "All Odds" came out, so we wrowt -- write about it, so they then -- University Agaloinski, Agaloinion in Kraków find out about this, so they invited us we should come to Kraków, that I should come with my wife, but we didn't go. I didn't want to go to Poland. I wrote them a letter, and -- and this -- and this was the end of this episode, that she actually saved -- saved the town, the most historical town from Kraków. I don't know if she saved it hundred percent, or she had a part in it, that it was not if she -- if she would say to the camp's commandant that nobody's there to detonate, they will send over some people. And you also must know one thing. Now, you would ask a question, why did the German high command call up, and that's it, and they let it go. You see, when a ger -- when the army goes forwards, like the German army went forwards, there was never a better army in the world. Everything was so accurate, poom. And this was also the -- the problem with the Holocaust, because they were so accurate sa -- during the Holocaust, they made everything so perfect, that everything was in order. The same thing with the German army. When they went forwards towards Russia, everything was so perfect, it was the best army. But, when the German army retreated, it -- it was no different than -- it was same as the Egyptian army retreated in the Negev, you remember in the Six Day War? When the Egyptian army retreated without shoes, without pants, without underwear. Yeah, this is how the German army was, because when the army goes forwards, and specially when it's well organized like the Germans, everything --

everything is in order. But when the army retreats, nothing is in order, no command, no -- nobody knows what the other is doing. And for the same thing, when they left Kraków, everything was disorganized, there was no command, so for this reason, they didn't follow up with the destruction of Kraków.

Q: So what happened then? You stayed -- you stayed in Poland for awhile?

A: Well, I stayed in Poland, and I became -- I became a -- a commandant of -- o-o-over -- for a certain units for the county of -- of Poland -- of Kraków. Well, the -- the county, which was the town, and the county. And I stayed there from -- this where -- I came in actually January the 17th, and I was -- there were so many things happened during the time in the beginning to organize, and the -- the community's organized a civil administration and everything. And then -- so now in the new book I'm writing episodes about it, and I was there til -- til -- I would say til August '45. August '45, I was transferred to Breslau, which became Brauslav.

Q: Give us -- give us just a brief idea, maybe just one or two episodes to see what it was like in Kraków at that time, and what -- what your duties -- what you did.

A: Well, in Kraków in that time, it was chaos. Everything was falling apart, and -- and we had to put together that Kraków it should -- it should function. Now, we were the first Polish unit who came into Kraków, cause it was occupied by the Russians. And the Polish unit was not a big unit, and then later more came in, and we took over the administration, til about two, three months later, where there was a civil administration. And -- and -- and first we had to clean out Kraków from all collaborators, because there

were a lot of Polish collaborators who worked with the Germans, who worked -- especially the Polish police, the Polish police who were in-incorporated into the German police. We used to call it in Polish granna toppa policia. It means the navy blue granna -- the navy blue police, because they had navy blue uniforms, but this was the police from before the war, and they didn't behave so hundred percent like the Polish people desired. Well, there were some who belonged to the underground illegally, but the majority, they worked with the German -- they were collaborators. So now we had to clean out the Polish police which were collaborators. There were a lot of volksdeutshen. The volksdeutshen lived there, and the volksdeutshen had full rights under the Germans. And when the volksdeutshen, when they were di -- discovered, naturally some of them were arrested, some -- some were collaborators openly, and their apartments were confiscated. And this was -- this was mostly -- this was mostly the work for us. Also, the Polish government had a big problem, because as you know, in Warsaw, in August 1944, was the uprise in Warsaw. And the uprise -- the Polish people wanted to have the uprise in Warsaw, and to declare a free Poland wi -- go -- government. But the Russians did -- it was a trick what they did, as their [indecipherable] went forwards, they were quite -- quite successful, and when they came to the Vistula, to the east r -- side of the Vistula, which is the river, this -- the Russians stopped. They -- their excuse was that the -- the -- their supply line ended, but this was not true. They stopped because the Polish people wanted to be very smart, and they wanted, when -- as the Russians approached Kraków, so they wanted to make the uprise, and the Germans were -- had involve with the Russian

front 10 divisions, so they figured they were busy -- busy with the Russian front, and they will make the uprise, and they will establish an -- a free Poland government. But the Russians said well, they thought we are fighting, and they didn't want the Polish to establish a free Poland, which the government was in exile in London. Se -- they wanted to have a Communist regime. So they stopped, and naturally then they withdrew, the Germans withdrew the 10 divisions, they brought them to Warsaw, and they suppressed them -- their uprise, and -- and they killed 200 fighters, they killed 200 civilians. They didn't kill them just like Jews, you take them to extermination camp, but they were killed fighting. And then they took 400 civilians, and they took them as prisoners. They put -- put to a town there, and -- and then -- then th -- about a few months later, the Russians made the last offensive, and they occupied Warsaw. So -- so -- so in con -- so tha -- all th- the -- the -- the b -- the manage -- the big shots from the uprise, who were not killed, who were not taken as prisoners, they moved the whole headquarters from the uprise to Kraków. And then Kraków had to be the same uprise as in Warsaw. When the Germans will leave, they want to make the uprise. So they were in Kraków. So this was one also of the reasons that -- about the destruction, they wanted to make destruction we -- there were three reasons actually. The first reason was that they wanted to make this destroy because they were afraid for a other uprise like in Warsaw. The second reason in -- in -- was because they wanted to slow down the Russian approach. If the town will be destroyed, so they will slow down. The third reason was because the Germans considered Kraków as a German town, and they cou -- like they always -- like all the scientists from

before, and they always said that they were Germans, not Polish. So they considered that this a Polish tow -- as a German town. And then when they -- they had to leave it, so they -- they didn't want to leave it [indecipherable]. They said well if we cannot have it, we will destroy it. So those were the three reasons, but actually the biggest reason was that they wanted to destroy the town, because they couldn't live with it that Poland should get the town untouched. Because in Kraków there was never bomb, in Kraków was never the house destroyed, so they wanted to destroy the whole town. Now, would this work, the 287 mines, Kraków would -- not one house would be left, because they -- the way they mined, and they put in the columns, it was the whole town would be blown up. Naturally with the pe -- and people, there were hundred maybe -- hu -- hu -- thousands, and thousands of people would be killed. So -- so this was the reason, because the uprise had to be in Kraków the same way.

Q: So how did your relationship with your now wife progress? What did she in the meantime, while you were busy doing this other thing, and how did you come together then?

A: Well, when -- when in this time, when I got the plans, naturally she -- sh -- [indecipherable] our group, she was admired, and -- and then the -- I -- I was busy with my -- with my things. Then one day -- yeah, the ne -- but in Kraków there was no food, because there was war, there was no food, and then she didn't have food. So the next day, or two days later, I took my adjutant, and -- and I -- and we had everything, so I remember I made the package salami, and -- and -- and -- and butter, and everything, I

made the package and I send it to her. And she was there with her fr -- friend, the -- the -- this daughter-in-law from -- from the house. And when I send it to her, she wrote a n -- a note, she answered she got it, and -- and -- and -- and -- and people who started to come out from hiding. And there were cases there I remember, there was one man, he was a lawyer, when he came out so that he walked like an animal, because he was two years he was laying like in a grave. Somebody kept him, and he was under the floor, he was laying, he only came -- they fed him, gave him something, but he never came out. And people started to come out, they didn't have what to eat, because even the Polish people didn't have what to eat. So she wrote me that she needs more food, she needs more food, so every day I raised -- see, I didn't see her -- every day I raised instead -- yesterday I send her two loaves of bread, the next day I send her four loaves of bread, one salami I send before, and each time I send it because I had those things. And she wrote that she is giving this to people who came out. And the people who came out find out that there is somebody who has food. So they came to us, and she gave them. So this went on for -- I would say about -- about two weeks in the -- I didn't see her. So then one day -- one day i-in this building, where she was there, it was the most beautiful and best section, Yu-Yushalaya, that's the -- the street, Yushalaya, 98. It was on corner Ujaneetja street. And the German took over the best houses for their administration. So -- so the Polish government started to take over th-those apartments, and one day somebody came in, and they saw this apartment, was a beautiful apartment, and they took it over, and they said, "We confiscated apartment, you have to look for another apartment." So she notified me

that they taking away the -- the apart -- the apartment. So I -- I send over -- oh, I think I came over in this time, and I made out an -- an -- I typed out an -- a paper that I lived there, that I took over the apartment, I put it on the door. Once I put in door, nobody touched it, and she could stay there. I was not staying there, but this -- so then I didn't see her again for a -- for a few weeks, and yeah -- and then she -- and -- and we started also, to arrest a lot of German volksdeutshen, and we took away their apartments and they left a lot of stuff, the apartment, so -- so I -- I gave her a lot of clothing what I got from the people, so every -- so I gave her that. About a few weeks later she came to my office and she said she had to register to the army, because in her year, she -- sh -- sh -- they had to register. They took women to the army, too. So -- and she didn't want to go, naturally, to the army. So I gave her papers that she works in my office -- she didn't work in my office -- that she's occupied. So she didn't go to army, and then later I started to go out with her, and then each time a little more, and -- and this is how we started, and -- to go out til -- til we were ready to -- to be married, but we didn't get married in Kraków, we -- I was transferred to Breslau, and then she came after me to Breslau. So this was Kraków, but --

Q: Was it -- was it difficult to slowly relax in times that were not quite normal yet, but to something sort of normal, like romance, to just to begin to feel like a human person?

A: Well -- well, I will tell you this time was very -- I -- I welcomed the time, and to be involved in it, because after going through so much, and losing everybody, and here, later, life gave me a purpose. It gave me a purpose that this was Poland renewed, and like I told you, I always liked Poland, and -- and -- and I was important in this renewal, I was

important in the rebuilding. So it gave me a very -- and I think this was one of my -- of the best times, and also -- also, it ga -- instead -- instead I -- like I had to work, let's say, eight hours. I wanted to work 16 hours. Why? Because it gave me opportunity to -- to look for the people, for the collaborators, and to put them behind bars, and to do things that -- that this was my dream. So I was very i-interested. Now, my superiors liked it. My superiors liked it because I was -- I did more that they asked from me, see? An-And I think I was capable in doing it, and -- and I -- each time I was praised more and more, and -- and -- in-in -- because I could produce more than they -- that they asked from -- from me.

Q: So you had established -- you began to establish, or you had established a Polish identity [indecipherable]

A: Yes.

Q: Did you -- did you, both of you then, later, intend to stay in Poland, or how [indecipherable]

A: Well, no. In this time, to stay in Poland, I don't think so we intend. But we had a conversation between us, later, when we were in Breslau, we -- we -- we spoke between us, and maybe -- you see very -- you see once I -- I had this position, I always notified the leadership. There was a Jewish committee. There were not too many Jews c-came back, but how many came back, they organized a committee. I went to the Jewish committee, to the president, and I told him, "Listen, I am a Jew. And anything you have a problem, come to me." Because officially they couldn't do anything. Because officially the

government, and officially all the people who worked, in the -- even in our office, oh, everybody hated Jews. So I said, “If you had something to do, and if there is something I can do unofficially, I will gladly do it.” And they knew that I’m -- a few people knew. And every time something happened like this -- specially there was one rabbi, his name was -- well, anyway, I have it written down.

Q: Maybe it will come back to you.

A: Yeah, it always ca -- so -- Steinberg, Moja, he was a son of a very famous rabbi. Now he -- I told him I was a Jew, and he became the rabbi in Kraków, he was not from Kraków, he became the rabbi, and every time something happened, he came to me, he told me this. Unofficially I did it, not as a Jew, but I did it from my pos -- my -- my position. And I was very happy that I could help. So -- and I was officially as a non-Jew. And -- and once I am -- we had a discussion with my wife, and we said, “Well, listen. Maybe it is time that we should remain,” we were already established. Now, she was accepted to the medical school, to the University of Yaggalonian. And this what she always wanted to be, a doctor. Now, you are already accepted, and I have a -- well, important position. So maybe it’s time that we should cut off, but not being Jewish, and may -- who knows, maybe in 200 years will be another Holocaust then, and the -- and my -- our grandchildren wouldn’t have to be killed. So we had a discussion about it, and she said no, she cannot do it, because she had a sister, and a grandmother, and uncles in Palestine in this time, and she wouldn’t like -- she would like eventually to go to them. Now, with me was a different story. I -- I had family in America, but it wou -- didn’t

mean so much to me. So, to me the different story I told her, I wouldn't like to cut off because -- see, by Jews, there is a sect, we call it Cohamin, the priestly tribe. Now, the priestly tribe -- now I am -- the priestly tribe started with Aaron, the brother of Moses. And this goes on for 4,000 years. The son becomes a priest after the father, priest after the fa -- and it never changes. Now I -- my father was from this tribe, and I am from this tribe. So I told her, said, "If this lasted 4,000 years, and I don't know how many from my forefathers were killed because they were Jews. My father was killed because he was a Jew. Who knows, maybe his grandfather, his great-grandfather was killed because he was a Jew. So who am I that I should say by me I should cut the chain, and by me to say it stopped." So I said, "I cannot do it, because if this lasted for so many thousands of years, there is something, and I wouldn't like it should be destroyed." And for this reason we decided not to remain in Poland as Poles, that we have to go out, and we have to continue to be Jews. And naturally, our dream was to go to Palestine, we never dreamt about America. We ne -- we wanted -- specially me, I wanted to go to Palestine because if somebody would tell me that see, I was in the underground, in the Polish army, if somebody will tell me that I would be in Palestine, and I would be able to fight for a Jewish state one day, one day to have a rifle in my hand, and they will say the next day you will be killed, I will always agree .That if I could fight one day for my homeland, not for strangers, and then I could be killed, I would be very happy. So, we wanted to go to Palestine. So then there were the things -- reasons why we didn't go to Palestine, because you couldn't go that j -- if you was a -- were illegal. So they took the people, they send

them to Cyprus, so we said we'll go to America, and -- and we will go to -- which one will come first, Palestine or America, and then from America we can always go to Palestine. So we came to America, it's a -- and a -- and a -- but -- but --

Q: But it wasn't that simple, right, because Brauslav or Breslau was in the Russian zone, was it a [indecipherable]

A: No, it wasn't Russian --

Q: No.

A: It was Polish, Poland occupied -- Brauslov was -- Breslau was taken over Szalasia, then Neederslazin, and Obershlazin, this was part of Poland. It was not -- i-it was not the Russian zone of Germany, this was Poland.

Q: Yeah, but it still wasn't easy to get -- to get just out of there.

A: No, we -- I escaped, no we -- I could -- special I couldn't go out because on account of my position. I remember I wanted -- see, I had a very good name in my -- in our outfit, and -- because I did more than they -- they ask. So then later, when -- when -- when they started to organize groups to -- to go to Palestine, to fight, I wanted to -- they -- I just wanted to get out legally, because I didn't want to escape, because I didn't want to spoil my name. So I remember there was a -- I had a friend, he was a major in the Russian KGB, and I went to him, and I told him, "Listen, I want to get out, and -- and how should I arrange it?" And now I didn't know that he would betray me. He went to my superiors, and he told them that I want to get out. The next day they called me in, and there was a whole -- about 10 high officers, and one said, "Well, I heard you will -- you want to get

out," [indecipherable]. So he said, "Well, we'll give you three choices that you can go out. The first choice is you take a revolver, and you shoot yourself. The second choice is, if you don't like to kill yourself, we'll send you to Siberia for 10 years. And the third choice is you go back, [indecipherable] march as you did today, you have to do 10 times a march, because til now we didn't check you because we have confidence in you. But from now on, every step will be checked, every way we'll check." So I knew that -- that they will have an eye on me. And then, well, we decided that we have to get out, so we arranged to run away, so --

Q: How did you -- how did you manage?

A: Well, it's a --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- it was [indecipherable], it's a long story. So I managed that. I run away through Gearlies, but it's a long story, so I run away, and -- and after I run away, my wife was arrested. They arrested her because they thought by -- by her being arrested, I will find out, I will come back to try to save her, so this way they did. But, they arrested her, and she claimed that I was not her husband, because we were never officially married there. Said [indecipherable] he -- I was a boyfriend, we were lovers, and now we -- I run away, and that's it. So she was two weeks in jail, and after two weeks of jail, there was -- the man who was in charge, he was the head of the whole --- the army of the whole state, said -- said that he will let you -- yeah, there was a [indecipherable] of my wife, he was working in the ministry, and then he went to the head from the army, he said, well he

wants to take her out. So he said, “Well, I will let her out if she will become my secretary.” So they let her out, and then later she escaped. But the -- those are a lot of details, details, details, but this is how -- how it went.

Q: Okay, so where did you -- where did you meet again, where did you go first then?

A: I -- I run away to Munich. First I went out to Berlin, and I was in Berlin, and from Berlin, I -- see, I went -- I run through Gearlies, and then from Gearlies I went to Berlin. And in Berlin I started to work, we -- we call it here -- we called it Bricha. This was a organization that it means escape. W -- I started to work in Poland in the Bricha, so we -- we took Jews who wanted to escape, and we smuggled them through the border. And then my job was, from Berlin, I took the groups of Jews to Munich, because I -- we couldn’t take them to the American zone, first I had to go from Munich. I -- I took them to the -- to the English zone. I remember I made th-there some acquaintances in Ashfaiger, you know where that is? And through Ashfaiger we took them, and -- and then to Munich, and in Munich somebody else took over, and they took the Jews to Italy, and from Italy they smuggled them on ships, and they were caught in Cyprus. So I worked in -- in this Bricha a few months, then later I find out my wife came [indecipherable] my wife came, so -- so we got an apartment in -- in Munich. And see, she wanted to go to school, but then later we figured we have to -- we have to get out. So we registered -- we registered to -- to Palestine, what I just said, to America. We said, which will be first, and there we’ll go. So America came first, and also, it was a very, very big problem, because all the DPs who wanted to come to America, hardly they could make it, because in the

consulate -- in American consulate in Munich, there was one woman, she was one of the secretaries, and she had some friend, and they had a business. And then -- and then they -- an-and there was a vice-consul, and he was also a partner, and everybody who wanted to come in front of the consul to have the application asking questions, we had to pay her 500 dollars. And people didn't have 500 dollars, and if you didn't pay 500 dollars, so they didn't forward the -- the -- the papers. And -- and also, when they came to the consul, the consul asked for birth certificates, and passports. Nobody had their birth certificate, I mean they were all survivors from the camp. So nobody could -- could go. So one -- and see my wife spoke quite good English, she had six years English. So in this -- nobody could go and do something, so one day there was the -- the then chief consul, his name was Clark, in Munich, so we waited -- we waited when he came back from lunch, so my wife and I, we stopped him, and she started to tell him the story, that Jews cannot go because first they had to pay money. And the second thing, who will have an -- a passport, a birth certificate? We came from concentration camps. And she -- he listened, and when he listened, I remember she explained to him everything, then later, after, when we stopped talking, so he went to us, and he put the hand on our head, he was a tall guy, yeah. So he said, "Don't worry. We need people like you in America." He said, "I will," -- and he gave out new orders. First thing, he fired the secretary, and he gave out new orders that we don't need from the concentration camps -- people in concentration, those documents, only what we need is two witnesses, that they know the person is from here and there, and this is sufficient. So the people started to come. Now,

for instance, all the German people who made applications to go to g -- to America, they all got visas, because they had their papers, they could come in. And mostly people, their husbands were in -- in the army, in the SS, and then -- they all were welcome, so we told them all those things, that they -- why should they have the priority, and after this, all the [indecipherable], it ended, then the people from the camps, they thanked us, that we made out that she is it -- they changed the whole law, and then we came to America.

Q: This is the end of tape two, side B, interview with Norman Salsitz.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Norman Salsitz. This is tape number three, tape A. So, I thought we are going to America, but we are not quite going to America.

A: No, so then later when we got the visas, so we had to go with groups with -- with survivors, and we were sent to Bremenhaven. And in Bremen -- when we came to Bremenhaven in this time was a strike, a coal strike in America, and we supposed to leave Bremenhaven in June, 1946, and we were in Bremenhaven six months, til the strike finished, because they didn't have coal. And we -- the -- we -- the strike was finished, and we started in Bremenhaven in January, 1947. So it was winter, and it was a very, very big storm, and -- and it was -- the voyage was terrible, it took over two weeks, and during that trip, the boiler broke in -- in the ship, it was a old liberty ship, and it took us over 12 -- 14 days, and it was the -- everybody was very sick, especially I was very sick that I was -- and also, the DPs, the -- the Jewish people didn't get the choice locations. Like, for instance, the German people, who got the visas because they knew everybody, they had the documents, all of them had cabins, and then they -- they had the -- the -- the ch -- the -- the best accommodations, but the DPs, we didn't pay for it, the Joint paid for it. So they put us in, and I was in the basement, in the basement there were about 150 people laying like -- like -- like rats. And my wife -- they gave them other cabins, there were 40 women in one room. And I was so sick that I prayed that the ship should sink, and -- and I didn't eat anything, and it was -- I was terrible sick. And I figured -- and I really wanted

them -- we should finish [indecipherable]. Well, anyways, my -- s -- because I was laying in the basement, and -- so my wife, and -- she made up with the -- with the people who were in her room, that she came, she put in a kerchief of my -- my head. [clock chiming]. She put in a kerchief, she put in a housecoat, and she practically carried me to her room, and I was sleeping with the -- in this room, which was much better than in the -- on the floor on the basement, and we came to, after 14 days we -- the captain announced that tomorrow we are entering New York. And I remember the whole night, because we didn't know when, all the people were so excited, we coming to America, everybody pulled out his best suit, and the suits were made in Europe, and with big lapels, with big white hair, you know, it was the best in Europe, but it was not like America. And everybody got dressed to kill. And we were standing on the deck, waiting for the -- the Statue of Liberty. Finally [clock chiming] Fi --

Q: Well, that's the bird, right on cue here.

A: Okay, yeah. Finally, we -- we saw the Statue of Liberty, and this feeling, I don't think that somebody can -- can describe this -- this feeling when we saw it. Everybody was standing there and crying, cause this was all, they were all survivors, and finally we saw her. And everybody was nice dressed, and -- and th-this was the minutes that we waited for. And we pulled into the harbor in New York, and then later we had to go down, and -- and then in a very, very, very big hole, and all the people from -- from the whole ship, there were signs like all A, B, C, and everybody went to -- to their initial, and they brought in the suitcases what we had. And then as we are staying there, a man came in, a

husky guy with a -- with the lumber jacket. And he goes around, and then -- and he looked around where the initials are, and came to S, and he goes into my wife, and he said, “Maybe you know where the -- some people name of Salishitz is.” She got very scared, and she pulled my leg, she said, “Well, they’re looking for us.” We didn’t know who this is. So we were so afraid that maybe something is wrong, maybe they will send us back, or something. So she didn't know what to say. Then later, she said to him -- he as -- he ask her, “Do you speak English?” She said yes. So he said, “So, do you know wh- where the Salishitz is?” So she said, “I am the Salishitz, and this is my husband. So what’s wrong?” He said, “There’s nothing wrong,” and he grabbed her and kissed her, and kissed me. He said, “I am Yarkey. I am Yarkey, I am the son of Risel.” And Risel was my father’s sister, and this was her son Yarkey, who -- he became Jake in America. And he find out that -- that we are coming, so he came to -- to wait for us. And all the people looked at us, they didn’t know in beginning, they were afraid something happened beca -- then later when they see sa -- he said, “Don’t worry, you don’t have to wait for a -- for a -- for a -- the inspectors.” He called two longshoremen, they took the suitcase, called sa -- called the inspector, gave a stamp with the -- others had to open the -- the -- the luggage, we didn’t. And he right away took us out in -- in the -- in the -- he took us out, and there was a car waiting in a place where it’s -- was not allowed to park, and there was my brother waiting, and they took us away. Now, what happened, I didn’t know why he’s such a big shot, this -- this y -- uncle, he came in a -- in ’99, said he had a luncheonette right near the piers, and -- and everybody who worked there, all the

longshoremen, all the inspectors, they all -- they all ate there. And -- and when he find out we have to come, so he went, and he waited for us. So it happens that I just wrote the story about it, because I want to send it to his daughter. So, and then we came to America, and -- and -- and we went to my brother, my brother took us to his house. He had a house in Bensonhurst in Brooklyn. And we lived with him about -- I would say about two, three we -- two weeks.

Q: Now I do have some questions.

A: Okay.

Q: You hadn't -- you hadn't seen your brother for a long time?

A: I -- my brother left our home before I was born -- before I was born, I never saw him, but in 1934 he came for a visit, and this was the only visit he came, so I saw him in 1934.

Q: How -- how well were they aware of what had happened in -- in Europe? Did you talk about that? [indecipherable]

A: Yes, yeah, well, naturally we talked about it, but then later, little by little it came out, they -- they say well they didn't know how m -- how -- how the whole situation naturally [indecipherable], but i -- so I -- I remember there was once a lecture in a temple, and rabbi and all of them, they said that they didn't know how terrible -- because I ask questions, like why didn't you do more, when they ask me what could we do. So I told them what they could do more. So they said they didn't know about it. So I went -- the next day I went to the -- th-the Jewish pi -- to the forwas that is a Jewish forwas, and I picked out -- they had microfilms, and I picked out microfilms from the time where we

were destroyed, for the time of July ’42, August ’42. And every day, in the re -- paper every day were articles about what was going on, which came porskal -- maybe it was not in the New York Times, the New York Times maybe there was something on the -- on page 18, a piece of this, but in the forwas, there was every day in ice -- I had my -- and then later, when we came to a next meeting, and when the rabbi again said so, I said to him, “It’s not true, because I just looked over them, and that was mentioned every single day.” And we were very bitter, because in the beginning -- in the beginning the people in America didn’t want -- we started to tell stories, nobody wanted to listen. And if somebody listened, they thought that we are -- we got nervous breakdowns, that the -- we told them stories that it is not true, because how can somebody listen and imagine that somebody deliberately takes six million people and kill. It’s not -- and you talk about six million people like -- like a -- once I saw in the New York Times, an article on one page, six million Jews were killed. In the next pages, six million stocks were sold today on the stock market, in the same breath. So, w-w-w-we couldn’t understand how -- people couldn’t believe it. Not only -- you see, when the Germans killed six million Jews, if they will kill the six million Jews the first day when they came in, it will be a terrible thing, they killed six million people, but it will not be so terrible. The terrible thing is for six years they tortured the people. They starved them, they beat them, they died from sickness, and all those things. Then, on the top, then finally, they killed them. Take for instance the Jews who survive concentration camps. Jews were in Auschwitz, some for three, four years. And then later, when the Russians were already next to the

concentration camp, they had to be liberated, they took them on dead marches that all of them died. Being three, four years in the camp, without food, and they had to walk without clothing, in this cotton dress, without underwear, without shoes, without food. And if somebody fell down because it was slippery, even no f -- s-- strong people they would fell down. The minute they fell down, he was shot. Now, the German soldiers, they were all dressed in fur jackets, in fur coats, with heavy boots and everything, and they went with them. Here they had to be liberated. So this is the cruelty. They had to -- they had to take them on marches to be killed. So this killing was not so terrible if they would do it the first day, but after six days -- six years, to be destroyed. Take, for instance, Demjanjuk. You know the story about Demjanjuk, that he was a guard in tr -- in Belzyce, he was the man who operated -- and in Treblinka, who operated the gas chambers th-there. Now, Demjanjuk, his biggest pleasure was when they brought in the Jews, and they were naked, and they walked through the maze, to go in in the dead ca -- t-to the gas chamber, to the -- to the room. Demjanjuk and others like him, were standing there laughing, and everyone -- every time when they saw a young girl, with the firm breast, yeah, they went and cut off the breast, or stabbed there. Al -- it's a -- it was a joke. They knew that in 15 minutes this person will be killed, but before the person was killed, they had to stab her, they had to cut off her breast. Those are the terrible things, the cruelty. The cruelty was -- now I'm ri -- reading a book, Treblinka, and the cruelty in Treblinka is that every day they brought in transports, thousands and thousands of people. The people who worked there, they couldn't lift up their head, they had to run with their

head down. Why? Because there were special people, special Germans and Ukrainian helpers, that they hit them with -- with -- with some sticks, or with some rubber hoses, and the minute -- and at night, when there was the appelle, when they was the roll call, and when they saw somebody had a sign on his face, he was taken, they called it to the hospital, to be liquidated. So they had to run around with their head down they shouldn't be marked. So the cruelty was so terrible. It's not the killing, but now how can people be so cruel that you take a guard, let's say, in Auschwitz. A whole day he goes and he kills the children, but he had there his wife with his children. At night he went over and he played with his children, with his dog, with his cat. Like -- like nothing happened. And the next day again he went out, and he killed. There were people who went over to Vienna for the weekends. A whole week they were staying in a concentration camp, killing, killing, killing. And then for the weekend he goes home, he goes to the opera with his wife. He goes to parties with his wife, he goes to dances with his wife. He enjoys his children during that weekend, and Monday morning he goes back and he kills again. So how can you imagine that there are people on this world that they are not -- they are not human beings, and they are not even animals, because animals wouldn't do a thing like this. But they did it day after day, year after year, kill -- they killed six million innocent people. And they played around with their children, they were beautiful children. Their children were beautiful, but the Jewish children had to be killed. This is the tragedy. The tragedy is that how people can do things like this, and what made them do? After all, the German people didn't come out from tha -- from jungles. They didn't come out from

underground, this was not 5,000 years ago. Even 5,000 years ago people wouldn't do it. Now this was the 20th century. The 20th century, a nation who created a Getta, who created a Schiller, who created a Mozart, who created such -- such geniuses? How could a nation j -- sink so low, and then later you speak to them, you sp -- I -- I feel bad I'm talking this to you, because --

Q: That's -- that's all right.

A: How could pe-people sink so low that later they don't want even to talk about it. It's a little like nothing happened. There is even jokes. Jews make jokes, and they live with their jokes. When Eichmann was called -- and he caught, you know, he was brought to Jerusalem, and naturally you know what happened to Eichmann. So he said to the Jews, "Jews, what's wrong with you, can't you take a joke?" For him it was a joke. Six million Jews, this was a joke. The Hungarian Jews, 400,000, it was almost after the war, they knew that they will be defeated, they still had to take the Hungarian Jews, 400,000 to Auschwitz, and to destroy them. They knew their war is lost, why did they do it? When they come to a camp, that the Russians were already shelling the camp, they had to take them out, and put them in in a barn, close the doors, and put the barn on -- on -- on fire, and to kill them. The Russians were already there, why did you do it? Why did you have to kill them? People say, "Well, it's only the leaders." It's not the leaders. I don't know if you read Goldhagen's book. Goldhagen wrote a book, and he say -- he called it that the willing -- "Hitler's Willing Executioners." And he described, those were ordinary people.

There is a other book, “Ordinary People,” written by -- by Bronig, and he describes it -- did you read the “Ordinary People,” no?

Q: Yes, I did.

A: Yeah, so ordinary people. Home he was a -- a -- a barber, he was a mason, then they took him over to Poland, and what did they do? They were not forced to kill. If he had an excuse not to be killed, they didn’t do anything to him. But they wanted to show to kill more, to show off for his friends. And those were ordinary people, those were not people who were trained to be murderers. They’re not people who were -- it’s special to schools, like for instance who -- in -- in Ukrainian people, there was a school in Travniki, in Poland, there was a camp in Travniki, and this school was a special school to teach guards how to be cruel in a concentration camp. And if somebody graduated from Travniki, he was a bigshot. What did they teach him? Teach him how to be cruel, how to kill. Demjanjuk was a graduate from Travniki. Now he said he doesn’t know anything about it, he was a victim, he was in the Russian as a prisoner. So this what we cannot understand, how people, normal people in the 20th century, intelligent people -- now, take for instance the Einsatzgruppen, you know what the Einsatzgruppen are. The Einsatzgruppen are, when they took over the Russian territory, they didn’t send the people to concentration camps. When they took over a town, the Einsatzgruppen came in, and they killed all the Jews. They made ditches, they killed them, women, children, old men, everybody. Now the Einsatzgruppen were volunteers. This was not soldiers that they said well, you have to go to the Einsatzgruppen, all volunteers. And which

volunteers? Mostly were graduate -- people who graduate high school, who graduate musi -- in universities, who had professions; lawyers, doctors, they were in the Einsatzgruppen. Now, how can people who were educated become such murderers? People ask me now questions. What do you think about the second generation, what do you think about the new generation? I said, “If the new generation knows what their parents did, what their grandparents did, maybe they would understand something.” But they don’t know, because the grandparents and the parents don’t want to speak about it. They are quiet. Nobody was in the Einsatzgruppen, nobody was in the Gestapo, nobody was in the SS. The SS was only volunteers, the volunteers in the SS. Now, people say -- everybody say -- now I have a speech now -- everybody -- everybody says, well, this what the Nazis did, this what the Nazis did. I am very angry. I never use the word Nazi. And if you see my book, in my book you don’t have once a Nazi. And I always ask that question, why do you say Nazi? There were 90 million Germans, eight million belonged to the party, which you can tell them, they were members of the Nazi party? What happened to 82 million? So 82 million were staying home and saving Jews? What happened to the 82 million? So I said, you don’t have to say Nazis did it, the Germans did it, with their collaborators. Nazis were in the party. Okay, some had bigger jobs, some had smaller jobs, but the Germans did it. And I am very much -- every time when I go and somebody has a speech, and he talks borgas about Nazis, I always get up, and I always say please, don’t use Nazis. And I tell them why. I tell, because the Germans did it. In the beginning maybe there were some Germans who were against Hitler. They were

Communists, they were Socialists, but then later, everybody was pro-Hitler, why not? Hitler went to ge -- to France. They didn't have cognac so much. They brought over all the cognac to fran -- from France. They didn't have enough butter, they went to Denmark, to Holland, brought over all the butter and the cheese, and they gave it to the people. They went -- they didn't have wheat, they didn't have corn, rye. They went to the Ukraine, brought over everything from the Ukraine. They didn't have coal, they went to Poland, they brought over everything from Poland. So naturally the one who were against him, later they became -- they were in love with him. Why? Because they had br -- butter, they have cognac, they had bread, they had everything. Why? Because they took it away from the people. Money? They had plenty of money. They had special people, they called them the dentists. In every concen -- d-death camp, after they killed the people, there were special people, they knocked out the gold teeth, and they got tons of gold, which they send it to Switzerland, and they exchange it for money. Whenever you start to think about all those things, I mean, they fit, but a human being, can a human being think about it, that a thing like this happened in the 20th century?

Q: Going back to your early time in America --

A: Okay, okay.

Q: -- when people did not want to hear much about it --

A: No.

Q: -- and couldn't quite believe it either, or chose not to know the whole picture, did you s -- did you find that in -- true for the Jewish American community, as well as for --

A: Yes, yes, I accuse the Jewish community also, because -- and I give you exan -- again example. Now, I accuse that from all the American president, the worst president in United State was Roosevelt, because Roosevelt could do so much, he could save so many Jews, he didn't. He didn't. He said -- there was a interview with Jan Karski, a Polish runner from Poland what came to him, and he even describes the way Roosevelt was sitting. So Roosevelt was sitting smoking the cigar, and he said, "After the war, we will punish the guilty, after the war." But during the war he didn't do anything. You know how many Jews could be saved? The Jews were one -- th-they -- from friends, when -- when it was the Vichy government that wanted to send all the Jews to north Africa, the American government didn't let them do it. There was a cordy -- Hill, he was the Secretary of State. He didn't allow it, for two reasons. The first reason, he didn't want to annoy the Arabs, so let the Jews be killed. And then he said we could not afford -- we didn't have enough trucks. They let the Jews be killed. Now, I'll give you an example. I had a brother in America, my brother was here from 1920. When we were in the ghetto in our small town, once we received a package from Turkey, in the ghetto, and we didn't know who sent the package, and di -- they delivered the package, and this was a package that there were things that we never dreamt that this exist in the world. There was a can of coffee, there was a package of cheese, two packages of chocolate, two sar -- packages of sardines. So I -- sugar, everything was in this package. My mother rece -- two salamis. My mother rec -- when we received it, she took the salami, she's -- put in slices, and everybody tried got a slice. We got this package, every -- the whole town envied us. We

got the -- we didn't know from where the package cames, came from Turkey. When I came to America, I ask my brother, "Did you ever send a package to us?" He said, "Yes, there was once in the paper, that for 15 dollars, you can buy a package in Turkey, and it will be sent anyplace in Europe." So he went and he paid 15 dollars, and they sent the package. I ask him, "How many packages did you send?" He said one. Why one? He said, "Well, I didn't receive an answer that you received it." I said, "We were in the ghetto." I ask him, "Could you afford every day to send 50 dolla -- 15 dollars?" He said, "Yes, business was wonderful, we did a lot of business during the war." I ask him, "Did you go to the theater?" Yes. "Did you go to the movies?" Yes. "Did you go during the war to restaurants? How much cost a dinner in the restaurant? Couldn't you take every day 15 dollars and throw it out? Maybe, maybe somebody would received it. But you didn't do it. You sent one package, and we received it." Imagine if we would receive every day a package. Not only we, the whole family would have everything, we could sell it. Nobody did it. Then he, when I came over here, he cried. He had five sisters, all the sisters are dead. I said, "What did you do to save the sisters?" "I -- what could I do?" I gave him 20 things that he could do. He didn't do it.

Q: Tell me -- tell me a few.

A: All right, tell me a few. The first thing, before the war, when we knew already what's going on in Germany, we wrote letters, we begged him, send us an affidavit. Nobody send it back. You know how much it would cost him to send affidavit? 25 cents. Why 25 cents? He had to notarize the affidavit. If he would do work with the bank, the bank will

notarize it for free. If he wouldn't do work with the bank, he would go to the drugstore, the [indecipherable] was a notary, and he will ask him to sign, he pay 25 cents. So for 25 cents, he could send affidavit. He didn't send affidavit, we asked him. And the same thing the other family members, too. This is the first thing. They knew what's going on in Germany, nobody thought about bringing over somebody. They lived in freedom i-in America. Af -- during the war, packages. They could pay in packages. Then the other thing I ask them, "Did you ever think about it, you did business a lot, to go to Turkey, to go to Switzerland, to go to any neutral country, and to be there, and maybe for money, to bribe, to give some German official money, and he could do something somebody should come out." There were Jews who did it. I know rabbis who were taken out during the time from ghettos, because they had followers here. They had followers in America, and they went out and they bribed. Germans liked money. Fo-For -- for money you could do a -- the Gestapo could be bribed. I said, "Why didn't you go, you -- you were here making -- making money, why didn't you go there to Turkey? In Turkey there were special Germans that they made arrangements. You paid them off, you could bring over the famil -- or some from the family. You didn't do it." "I didn't think about it." "Now you are crying they are dead? Now when I survived already the war, I wrote to you -- I wrote to you to send me affidavit, did you send me an affidavit? No. This was already after the war. So the Joint Distribution Committee had to send me affidavit, and they paid for the affidavit. I had a brother here. You didn't do it." A other thing. My -- I had a -- I had a brother-in-law, and he came from a ver -- from a rabbinical family. And once, in 1937,

one of the rabbis came for a visit to us. And he was his cousin. When he went back, so my brother-in-law said to him, “You know, my wife has uncles, one is a doctor, one is a dentist, one is a manufacturer. See if they could send us the affidavits.” He went to America, and we didn’t hear anything. So we -- he wrote a letter to this rabbi, he said, “Well, we asked th -- we asked you to see the family.” He said, “I saw the family. I called them, they didn’t answer. I went to their home, and I told them the whole story, that you want to come, you want to go, you are a nephew with your wife, with the children.” But nobody did anything. They didn’t say anything, and they didn’t send you affidav -- only what they needed is affida -- and they were rich, they could do it. So you see, you ask about the Jewish community, the Jewish community didn’t do anything. There was only one s -- group of the Jewish community, it’s called -- oh, I -- I -- you see, I forgot the names, I -- I know [indecipherable] all right. There was a religious group, they were very religious Jews, and they got together -- Vadatsalla, this was the name. The Vadatsalla got together money, and they sent over a delegation, and pulled few people to the countries what I told you. And if they had outstanding Jews, outs -- Jews, I mean rabbis, they brought them out from there. And they are survived, they send money. Now how come the Vadatsalla, a group of religious Jews could do it, and other Jews couldn’t do it? Then we had here a rabbi who was in charge of Zionist organizations. Now when they find out from Switzerland that Hitler is killing all the Jews -- and they find it out, by the way, from a German industrialist in Switzerland. He came -- he couldn’t take it, and he went to the representative from the Joint in swi -- in Switzerland, and he told them the whole

story. He sent telegrams to England, telegrams to America, telegrams to Roosevelt. Roosevelt called Rabbi Weiss, who was in charge, and he said to Rabbi Weiss, “Let’s not rock the boats.” And everything was quiet. This man told him everything what happened in the concentration camps, in the death camps. They said, “Let’s not rock the boats,” and nothing was done. So you blame, naturally, the Germans, they did it. You blame the collaborators, the Ukrainians, the Croatians, the Slovaks, the Lithuanians, the -- the Latvians. They all did it. But the American Jews didn’t do what they supposed to do.

Q: This is the end of tape three, side A, interview with Norman Salsitz.

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Norman Salisitz. This is tape number three, side B. I wanted -- I wanted to ask you, Norman, what became of the relationship with your brother?

A: The relationship of my brother was -- well, it was never a relationship like brothers, because he didn’t know me, I didn’t know him. But when I came, I wanted to know him, after losing my whole family. But it was never -- for instance, I needed a job. I came over here without money, without knowing the language, without having a trade, so I needed -- and also, I wanted -- my pride i -- was that I wanted to show that I can do something. Now, he had a big business, he had a tr -- a trucking business, and I asked him, after I couldn’t get a job, I ask him he should employ me. So his excu -- his answer was -- he had a foreman, and the foreman told him -- now, he was the boss, but the foreman told

him well, he shouldn't give me a job, because when they will have to deliver packages to stores, and my English is not so well, so how will I deliver the packages? So this was his excuse. In Poland, after the war, being 25 years, I could rose to a rank of a lieutenant colonel. But here, to deliver packages, I was not good, because I wouldn't read the addresses. So, it was not like -- like it should have been done, but according to the other family members, he was good, because the other family members were worse. I mean uncles, cousins, who were Americans. I give you a -- examples. I had -- my father had a first cousin here, his name was Showel Salishitz, he became one of the largest silk lining manufacturers. If somebody had a fur coat, the silk, the lining, came from his fa -- he had seven factories. He retired when I came, the children took over the -- the business. I went over to him with one uncle, I had one uncle was very nice, he was the poor uncle, he never made a living. He didn't have time to make a living because everything was on his head. So he went over with me, and we went over, and so it was a Sunday morning, so he said, "You know, I don't own the business, my son Saul has the business. But if you will go to him, he probably would give you a job, because we have 300 people working by us." I went over to him, was on a Sunday morning, I put in my best suit, a European suit. It was not so fashionable in America, but for me it was good. I came in, and there was the receptionist, a beautiful, blonde girl. And she ask me what I want. So I said to her as much as I spoke English, that I want to see Mr. Salishitz. "Who should I say is calling?" So I said, "Tell him it's his cousin from Europe." After a few minutes she took me in. He was sitting by a bis -- big desk, and I came in, I never saw him before. He ne -- he didn't

get up, he didn't give me a cent. And he was lick -- he looked at me, he said, "What can I do for you?" I says, "Well, I saw you father yesterday, and I'm looking for a job, and he is my father's first cousin, so that means we are second cousins, we have the same name." This was before I changed the name. "So, he said you probably could give me a job." He looked at me, didn't say anything, he took out his wallet. He took out from the wallet a hundred dollar bill. He put it on the desk, and he said, "Take it and get off my back." When he said it to me, I couldn't answer anything. I wanted to cry, but nothing came out. My eyes filled up with tears, and I looked at him, and the minute I looked with him -- at him, so I imagined w -- how would we be if he would come to Poland for a visit when I was in the military? And I imagined that I would make a special review, I will stay on the -- on the -- on the reviewing stand with him, the army will go through, the music will play, I will salute, and I will introduce this is my cousin from America. He said -- the money was laying on the floor -- on the table. Then he said, "Well, on the second thought, I will give it to the United Jewish Appeal, let them do what they want." And he took it and put it back in his wallet. I run out, and as I came in, where this receptionist was sitting, I burst out, not with a cry, I burst out like with a sob, like some [gasps]. I couldn't cry, I couldn't [inaudible]. She said, "What happened, what happened? Should I call a doctor?" I said no, and I went out to the hallway, and when I staying in the hallway, and I was crying. I was 27 years old. A man goes through, he sees I'm staying there and crying, he said, "Hey mister, what's wrong?" And I said to him, "Are you Jewish?" He said yes. I said, "I wish you would be in Auschwitz." He said, "Why are you

sending me to Auschwitz?" I said, "Why should my father be killed because he's a Jew, and you are sitting here, you have everything, and you are not being killed." And I tol -- I don't know why I told him this. I was -- when I came out, I was so bitter. So he said, "Hey mister, wa -- I want to know why you're telling me this." I said, "I don't want to talk to you." Well, all those stories I have in this new book. He said to me, "Do you eat lunch?" I said no. I said, "Come with me to eat lunch." I went with him, we went down to a -- to a cafeteria, he ask me what I want, I said, "No, I will have the same thing as you have." He ordered, I remember, and I will never forget, he ordered topcheese, sour cream, and chopped vegetable, radishes, and onions, and everything mixed up. He had it, I had it, it was wonderful. I a -- ate it, he said to me, "Do you want a other one?" I said no. He said, "Now, tell me the story." So I told him the story about this. So happens that this man was a buyer in their company. He knew him. He says, "What I want is you should go with me up there, and you should punch this son of a bitch in his mouth, and I want to see blood. Don't worry, nothing will happen to you, I will be with you." I said, "No, I don't want to go, but the one thing I can promise you is that so long as I will live, I will never speak to him again." He said -- we finished, he said, "Here is my card. Come and see me." But a few days later I came and saw him -- I remember his name was Louie Segal. See, things like this you don't forget. I came to him, and he was a converter. You know what a converter, they -- they send over raw material to be dyed, and everything, but anyway -- and he sold remnants. In this time I say remnants's, because there was a lot, it's remnants's. One is a remnant. I didn't know that you say [indecipherable]. So he

said to me, “I will give you every week a case of remnant, and will charge you what I pay for it, 45 cents a pound.” He gave me a address where to go and sell it. He said, “You go and sell it, and they will pay you three dollars 50 a pound.” He could sell it, he sold his. He gave me a case of remnant, I picked it up, and I went to those people. I made -- every week I made a few hundred dollars. He did it every week. He was a stranger. Every time I came to him, he said, “I still want you should go with me to this son of a bitch.” Always he said this. Then later something happened that he did something, it was not hundred percent, he lost all his connections, and I was out of it. Do -- yeah, so I’m telling you an -- a episode from my family. Tell you other episodes when I came over. So my family started in what should we do -- they called me the boyjik. You know, in Yiddish you say, a boy, a boyjik, yeah. They got together to think how they should do -- I should make a living. And they brought me to a uncle whose son had the big factory from bluebell dungarees. You heard about blue baga -- bell -- well, a big factory. So they were sitting there from the family, started to talk, then, what should we do with him. So, the first thing is, we have to change his name, because he cannot have a name like Salishitz, a long name. So the family had different names, the family -- some had Sales, some had Sallis, some had Sanders, some had Saleeshi. All different names. They didn’t get along with them, they didn’t want to have the same name. My brother’s name was Salsitz, I said Salsitz. Now the first name. What should be -- my name was Naftali, Naftali’s not for America. Well, the name -- maybe we should make it from Nathan, for short is Nat. I didn’t like the word Nat, because Russia, nyet means no, everything is no. So I said, “No,

I don't like it." Norbert, there was alread -- there was already a Norbert, because every bro -- see, my father had seven sisters and brothers, all of them had children the same age, and when my grandfather died, Naftali, everybody had his son Naftali. So one was Norbert, no good, one was Nolan, so Nolan. And so on, and so on. So one said, "Well, what's about Norman?" So I ask him, "Norman?" "Yeah." Nathan, Nat, what I didn't like, so one said, "Well, how much can he make by a name, Nathan? The most he can make 35 dollars a week." So I ask him Norman, how can Norman -- oh, Norman's a better -- nice name, you can go up to 65 dollars. So I started to think in my head, I will live til 80 years, and I will make 30 dollars a week more by having the name Norman, just for the name I'm going to die a millionaire. So I said, "I want to have Norman." They gave me Norman. So my name was Norman Salsitz. Then they said, "You have to have a cemetery plot. In America everybody has to have a cemetery plot." So I said, "I'm 27 years old." "No, there is a saying in America, the saying is, it's better to have and not to need it, than to need it and not to have." They had a family cemetery plot, they sold me four plots. I didn't have children. Four plots for 300 dollars, you can pay it up. I still have it. Four -- solda -- cemetery plot. Then later a job. The most important thing, how's about a job? So one uncle said, "Well, you know, it would be nice if he could be a salesman for the company." So the others said, "A salesman? He doesn't speak English, how can he go and [indecipherable]?" Then one said, "He can be a cutter." So the other one said, "A cutter? In the union? He will never get in the union." Then one said, "A designer." Well, anyway, everything was the union, the union. So one uncle was smart, and a cousin, he

said, “Well, if he can be a machine -- a ma -- to fix mach -- yeah, a machinist.” No good. To fix machines he can be a independent contractor, he doesn’t need the union, and he can fix the machines from your factory. Wonderful. So one said, “Do you know something about machines?” I said, “There is one machine that I can take the machine apart blindfolded, I can put it together blindfolded, I know this machine through and through.” “Good, good, is it a Singer machine?” I said no. “So what kind of machine is it?” I said, “A machine gun.” When I said a machine gun, they all got quiet, and they knew -- because I knew I wouldn’t get the job from them. So I walked out with a new name, with four pem -- pr -- family plots, no job.

Q: Where did -- where did you stay at all -- all this time? With your brother?

A: Oh, with my brother.

Q: Still with your brother.

A: Yeah, yeah, it was my brother, yeah.

Q: And your wife was there?

A: Yeah, yeah [indecipherable]

Q: Did your brother ca -- Lyebish, did he come to America?

A: No, he came about a half a year later, yeah. So -- so wait. So -- so I no job, but I had a problem with my name, with my second name, with Salsitz, I have a big problem. Later, I went in, I be -- I got jobs. I got, during the first year, I got about 10 jobs. Most of the jobs I was fired, cause I have a big mouth. S -- I wanted to tell the boss something to improve something, he said, “Who the hell are you to tell me to improve something?” I was fired.

Then later I became a peddler, you know what a peddler is? I used to sell from house to house things. There's a stories about the peddler, I think. So then later I -- from peddler I advanced, I sold first socks, then later dresses, t-til I became -- I sold furniture, only furniture, I had a warehouse. So there was one man, he was a manufacturer of -- of furniture, I remember his name was Horowitz. He had his office on Canal Street in New York. So I went in, I wanted to buy some furniture. So the girl ask me down -- said, "What's your name?" So I said, "I -- I'm Mr. Salsitz." So the way she heard it, she thought I said that I am Mr. Saul Shit, because they wen -- so she calls up the man upstairs, and I could hear it, she said, "There is a man, but his name is Saul Shit." I went -- so -- so I -- so she said to me, "Go up," and I went up. So the man had to me -- to say -- and I heard what she said, so she said, "It's nice to see you, mister -- it's nice to see you mister," -- So I said to him, "You can call me by first name." "Saul, it's a pleasure." And everything I wanted from this man, he did it because I told him he should call me my first name, so he didn't have to call me my last name, Mr. Shit. So this was -- those are the -- the -- the -- the -- the s -- in the beginning, what I -- I told you there are some comical stories, but there -- there are -- it's true stories. And -- and -- and -- and this is how -- and then later, after I was a peddler, about -- about 10 years, then later I became a devel -- a builder. I got -- I got a customer, he was a Italian guy, his name was Joe Rulore, and he was -- he made a small stuff, like a sidewalk. I said, "Joe, everybody's a builder, why can't we become builders?" He never was a builder. So I said, "You know what, I will buy a lot, and you put up the house." So I bought a lot to put in the first house

[indecipherable], and we made out all right. And then later he was afraid to buy more, so then later I bought land, I subdivided the land, and I had the construction company, and I made all all right, yeah.

Q: And that's the profession you stayed in?

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: In -- in Poland you had wund -- I na -- you remember that you said your -- your dreams was to become either a --

A: A doctor or an actor.

Q: A doctor or an actor.

A: Yeah, but here I couldn't be a doctor, and I couldn't be an actor. An actor maybe I am, but in my own way. So now -- so -- so I -- I did all right, and -- and I developed, and -- and I built, and then later I took in partners. Then later, my family was proud of me. I made a living, so I remember we had the family circle organization, and when I started to make money, I bought my wife a mink stole. And this time a mink's -- it was the first mink stole in the family. So when we came to a meeting, so -- they elected me for the president of the si -- family circle. You know, they took me, and they -- they went with me to the front. So when they said, "You are the president from the family circles," I took off my wife's mink stole, and I said, "Please meet the president of the family circle." He said, "What do you mean?" So I said, "If I wouldn't be able to buy a mink stole, I would never be a president of my family circle." They didn't like it. Okay. So -- so -- so they -- then later they started to say -- I started to make a good living, they said, "Well, he is all

right. He is all right. We put him on his feet." Nobody did anything, they put me on his feet. So --

Q: I -- I -- I wanted to ask you one --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- one question. Your life has been very much impacted by betrayals.

A: Yes.

Q: A lot of betrayals --

A: A lot of them.

Q: -- by very close people, by -- by friends of yours.

A: Yeah, right.

Q: And in a sense now in America, even by family [indecipherable]

A: Mm, yeah.

Q: How does one -- and it's so -- for so many years, how did you learn to adjust to normal life, and to trust people again?

A: Well, because I had people who I -- who were good to me. I had people wel -- those were -- you see like, for instance, my wife had an uncle here. She never knew him, in the end she never me -- this was a sister of her grandmother. When we came over, they became very cl -- they -- they -- they wanted to do anything for us. And they were practically strangers. I remember when I was a peddler, and it was before Christmas that I used to give out merchandise, and they paid me out two dollars a week, three dollars a week. I didn't have money in the beginning. So this man came, and he brought me a

blank check, a signed check. He said, “You need the money, make it out as much as you want.” I never used the check because it was not -- it was blank. I never use it. But he gave it to me. I mean, he gave it to me, I gave him back the check. So there were people who were very -- strangers, who were very good to me, and to my wife. But the people that I expect them to be good, they were not. The same thing in Poland. There were people, peasants I didn’t know, and they were very -- they saved my life. But the people who I knew, they were not. Maybe the people who I knew, they thought that they had, because they know me, they have a right to do it. And the people who didn’t know me did it because from the goodness of their heart. It was me or somebody else, that they would do it for everybody. But here in America, I was very, very disappointed. There were some who were very nice, who couldn’t do -- like for instance, I remember I had here a first cousin. She’s still alive. And the first cousin, I wanted to see her. I never saw her, because she was born in America. I know my father got gray on account of her, because she was already 32 years and she wasn’t married. So here in Europe he was worrying -- he always -- my father, he had a habit, if he was worrying, he used to bite his beard, he had a long beard. So you -- so when he start to bite his beard, so my mother said, “What are you worried again because Frances is not married?” She already knew. So when I came over here, she was -- she was already married, and I was here about six months, once I called her up, and I said to her, “Frances, I’m here already six months, I would like to see you.” So she said, “Yeah, yeah, come over sometimes.” I said, “Sometimes is no good. Today is Sunday, I don’t work, how’s about if I will come over

today?" She said, "Oh, today is no good, because I invited already some guests." She invited guests, which she was afraid to this animal should come and introduce me? We wanted to meet people, we wanted to get somebody, we wanted to have friends. So she said -- when she told me -- she told me as I was in the telephone booth, because we didn't have a telephone. No, well -- she said, "Let's go -- let's see us sometimes." So I said, "What's wrong today?" So she said, "I already invited some guests." So those were the things that they were -- but, like when instance my wife has a aunt from her -- the aunt di- didn't stay with -- with -- with her husband, but the husband was her father's brother. But when we came, she took us in like the ga -- we would be their children. But with the children, til today we are very close. There is a son who was our age, he didn't go out on a date if he wouldn't invite us to go on the same date. He took us the first time to Radio City, to show. And all those -- every place he went. There were people, but the people that you expected the most. And I have an a -- an answer for what. You see, my family, my father, from the seven sisters and brother, he was the only who remained home. All of them came over here in the ninet -- in the 1880's. One came -- and they were very poor. They come from a village. They never saw -- they never were educated. And they told their children -- well, they children went already to college, you know, they were [indecipherable] they got professions. They told their children their life, how they lived in this village, in the 1880's. When we came, they looked at us with the same eyes. Why? Because they forgot, or they didn't know that America had a progress from 1880 to 1947. We had a progress in our house -- in our home. Maybe not so fast as here. They couldn't

understand, they ask my wife what she will do. She said, “Well, I studied medicine home, I would like to continue.” But this was out of question. She said, “I can be a teacher. I can be a Hebrew teacher.” They showed us, “You see here hair? Like hair will grow here, so can you be a teacher.” “Why?” “To be a teacher here you have to go to college.” She said, “I went to college.” They couldn’t understand this. Why? Because they knew the stories from their parents, and they looked at us like we would come out from this village in 1880. And for this reason they had a different feel. Now, for instance, I told my wife, “We go to America, and we’ll have a lot of friends, because all my cousins are my age. So we will have something in common.” They never invited us to -- to go out with them, they never invited us to go to a theater together.

Q: When you -- when you did make friends, finally, were they mostly other survivors, or --

A: Yes. Mostly other -- there were some exceptions. Mostly other survivors, because we had a common language, we had a common past, and everybody tells a -- mostly others -- even til today. There are some exceptions, that they are Americans. Again, the same thing. We are strangers, we are outsiders. There are some that -- and some, if we started to make good. So some were jealous. I have a cousin, so when I had the first apartment in Bensonhurst, I bought beautiful, new furniture, it was under water. And the cousin went to college here, and he hardly had the job. So the mother and father came to visit me, so I heard -- she said to with th -- to the husband. “Look, look, Albert went to college. Look, he’s a greener, he just came. Look at his beautiful apartment.” Instead to be happy that

we did it, and nobody gave us a penny, and they -- a lot of American people who didn't make it, they look at us, and they are jealous. Why? Because we did better than they. But we are mostly comfortable with survivors. We know their stories, they know my stories. We know their pain, they -- in this. So mostly where we have [indecipherable]

Q: Did you continue at that time, even after those first upsetting experiences, to -- to speak, to talk about your experience, or was it [indecipherable]

A: No, I always spoke.

Q: You always --

A: I always spoke, I never -- I never stopped, even in the beginning, people didn't want to listen, I always -- I -- see, my wife didn't. I always -- some other survivors didn't. I always wrote about it, and I -- I never stopped telling. Other people, even today, they say, "Well, you know, you are obsessed with the Holocaust." I tell you a other thing what happened two weeks ago. And this is a thing that I spoke a week later in Queens, and I told the story, they couldn't believe it. I am an -- on the board of the B'nai Brith. You know the B'nai Brith yeah? So, I am on the executive board, and we have meetings once a week. So when we had the meeting two weeks ago -- so we started to make plans for the next year for our meetings, what will be our meetings, what will be [indecipherable]. So one came out, and he said, "Well, last year we had a meeting, we had the movie. And we had a lot of people, and the people appreciated the movie. So let's have a movie next week t -- next year, too. So -- so one said, "Okay, we'll have a movie, I know a nice movie by Woody Allen, from 1934, a comedy." Well, I personally don't like Woody

Allen, he's not my type, and his comedies are not -- so there -- they started that. So I said, "Well, instead to have a Woody Allen comedy, there is a new tape came out, I just -- I have it here, about two ladies who saved Jews during the war. One is from Poland, and one is from France. Beautiful film. It is about the Holocaust, but it is not so bloody, it is not so depressing. But it's a beautiful -- to see what the two ladies did -- they saved. I have it here. So let's have this movie." When I said this, one man gets up, he said, "You stop with this crap about the Holocaust. I had this crap enough. I don't want to listen to this crap." First I thought crap, I don't know if it's with a P, with a B, so I figured maybe he doesn't like to eat crabmeat, I don't know. Later I find out it's with a P. And he started on the crap, and crap, and crap, yeah. In the beginning, w -- I looked at him, I couldn't say anything, because I was so -- I couldn't believe it. So I said to him, "Do you know that the Holocaust, it happened to me fif," -- [clock chiming] Okay. I'm waiting for the bird.

Q: Well, maybe we should just wait for the birds --

A: Yeah, yeah. [indecipherable]

Q: -- because I'm sort of at the end of the tape again, too. Let's -- let's --

A: Okay, now. No, no, notay. No, le -- I'll finish it. So I said, "Do you know, six million Jews were killed. It only happened 50 years ago. Survivors are still alive. What do we demand from people who are not Jews, if there are deniers? 250 books were written by non-Jews that the Holocaust never happened. Here, on a Jewish organization, you started the story with the crap business?" I said, "What -- we suffer." I said, "You? What did you

suffer? You suffered? You have your parents, you have your children, you have your grandchildren, they are here. Surely, you suffer, because I know you couldn't get enough steaks, because steaks you couldn't buy enough, you had to eat chicken. Every day you had to eat chicken. You couldn't have enough sugar, it was rationed. You didn't have enough toilet paper, it was rationed, so you suffered." I said, "I am still alive. People are still alive. It was 50 years ago, a million and a half children. And when I say Holocaust, you say this is crap?" I had a ver -- I almost dropped dead. Now, what gets me more -- I walked out. Now, I will never go to a other meeting there. What gets me more is that from all -- there were 18 people. From all the 18 people, nobody stood up and said a word. Nobody. If it will be another occasion if I will be there, I wouldn't sit quiet. I mix in. Nobody said a word. I walked home. A man born in America, went to college in America, and he said, "Stop with this crap. I heard this crap enough."

Q: This is the end of tape three, side B, interview with Norman Salsitz.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Beginning Tape Four, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Norman Salsitz. This is tape number four, side A. Before we get back to America, I wanted to ask you, have you ever gone to Palestine? I know that your family was always Zionist oriented, and Maya's family is also very str -- was very strongly Zionist. Did you ever go?

A: No.

Q: And whe -- and when?

A: No, we didn't go to Palestine, because when we came from Germany, we came to America, and in this time, I wanted -- I started to work here in -- there are -- there were -- when I came to America in 1947, I started to work in our organization, it was the -- not the Hagannah, it started -- it worked in the organization, it was more to the right. It was the ha -- the -- it's like from the hirute, more with Begin's organization. And I wanted to go to fight, because this was my dream, to go to fight, I told you earlier.

Q: Actually, I meant as a visit, because I understand that your [indecipherable]

A: Well -- well, we come --

Q: But did you ever visit?

A: -- so I -- f -- 31 times [indecipherable]. So -- so I wanted to go to fight. Then I got in contact -- they contact me. There was a Major Wiser, he was a major of the English army, and he was actually from South America, but he was in the English army. He came over here, he organized a group, and he called it the George Washington Legion. And he

wanted to have a group here to be equipped in America, like there was once a Irish army that they went there. And he wanted to go with this group to Palestine, in this time before Israel was a state, in to fight. And I was involved with this group, and we had me -- had meetings every single week, and he, because on my background from Poland, I became the head of the military police in this group, because we had to have a military police. Well, anyway, we had to go, and we had quite a bit volunteers, and we also had, between -- we had mostly Jews, veterans, but y -- we also had a few Black who joined us, who went -- came up in the ran -- but we also had a few Irish. Now, the Irish veterans, they said they didn't care where they go to fight, so long it's against England. And this was against England. So it was funny. So we -- we organized it, and we had to be equipped, and then later the American government didn't allow it. They said we will not allow the equipped army to go, and it fell apart, so I started to work in the other organizations, and to go to Israel. And I was ready to go to Palestine in this time, and we send out in this time, people individual to ru -- to go to Marseille, and from Marseille, they dropped us to Palestine to fight. And one, it was on a Friday I remember, and it came -- my wife knew that I belonged there, but she didn't know exactly what. Friday I came, and I said, "Sunday morning, I am going. It's my turn to go," which I was very happy. So she was not angry, she said, "Well, it's your choice if you want to go. But one thing you should know, if you go, you have no way to come back. I will not wait for you, because I lost enough people my family, and I don't want to have somebody else to lose. And I know if you will go, you will be killed, or you will be wounded, and I don't want -- so, it's your --

your choice to go." Well, we had the whole day to think about it. Sunday morning the group left, and I didn't go. And I was -- now, if people will ask me -- if people will ask me what is my biggest regret in life, there are a lot of things that I regret, but my biggest regret in life is that I didn't go to Palestine to fight. If I survived the war, and I didn't go to Palestine, this makes me somebody -- I don't want to say a traitor, but some -- this is my biggest regret. Because if somebody will tell me that I will have a choice, and a chance to be in Palestine for one day -- I think I told you this yesterday, if I will be -- have a choice to be in Palestine to fight for pa -- for a Jewish state one day, and the next day to be killed, I will always say that this would be my choice. Because if I could do it for Poland, which I was not a first class citizen, I should have done it for Palestine, and I didn't go. In 1939 -- in 1949, after we started to make a few dollars, my wife was a Hebrew teacher, and this time they send over a group of Hebrew teachers for courses to Jerusalem, which she didn't need it, but she went anyway. This was the first plane that went with visitors to Palestine. So we went, and we went to stay there. We went to settle there. The family [indecipherable] had a family, and they said, "You are in America, and Israel is very bad now." People didn't have work, didn't have what to eat. "So, if you come over, you -- you missed your chance, because there is no work. During the war we could use you. Now, you missed your chance, there is no war, so you better go to America, make money, send us the money." So we didn't stay there, but, I have to tell you one -- this was the first trip, we were in 1949. Since then, my wife and I, we were there 31 times, but I was more than 31 times, but I'm say -- staying for the 31 times. The

-- th-the time in 20 -- in 1949, when I was a -- I met then a young fellow, his name is Lonna Guerrera. And he was in my unit, he was a captain in my unit, and then later he went to Palestine, and he was -- he fought there in the war. When am -- I met him in Jerusalem, he was a major, and he was very glad to see me, so he said, “I have to show you something.” And he took me to a place in Jerusalem, you know, in this time Jerusalem was divided, and he took me to a place where there was a wall, and in the wall you could see new cinder blocks put in in a hole -- in the -- replaced. So he told me that -- that his group, they wanted to break through, and to go and to liberate the old part of Jerusalem, but they were not enough, and more than half were killed, and the rest came back, and he was one who was saved, and he showed me this. When he showed me this, I started to cry. And he ask me, “What are you crying?” He said, “Do you know why you didn’t take it in this time? Because I wasn’t here. Because I wasn’t here, and for this reason [indecipherable].” So he said, “What do you mean? We were about 80 people, and what would me -- make a difference if you would be here? You probably would be killed, too.” Cause I always was the first one. I said, “No, it’s not only me. Because if I would be here, and thousands like me, or two thousands like me, we would be able to take it. I wasn’t here, 2,000 like me who survived were not here, and for this reason you couldn’t take it.” So I will never forget this -- this minute, when he showed me this. And I felt very -- I had very -- a big regret. Even America is very good for me, I have everything in America, there is not a thing that I cannot have. But this was my place. If I survived the

war, from the whole family, and if I -- in Israel, had a war of independence, and I wasn't there, this was wrong.

Q: Did you feel Jewish in a different way in Israel than in America? Your identity as a Jewish person?

A: No, I didn't feel Jewish -- you see, you -- the different how you feel Jewish. Now, you see, I was very religious home. I am not religious now. I am not religious, I don't know how far I believe, or disbelieve, I don't want to think about it, but I am not religious, why? Because, when I needed God, He wasn't there. Now, you ask a question why. See, I didn't make peace yet with God. When my n-nieces needed God, He wasn't there. But being a Jew, to me, is something else. Being a Jew -- I am proud of being a Jew, because we survived 4,000 years. People who were stronger than the Jews, more than the Jews, they vanished. Who were on their own ground, on the [indecipherable] place, they vanished. Jews were not on their places, they somehow survived. Jews were sa -- were tortured and killed for so many places, started with the Crusaders, with the Inquisition, with the Chminiski, with the pogroms, with all those things, finally with the Holocaust, they survived. So for me, being a Jew is something else; that we survived. And also, what we gave the world. We gave the world so much, more than any other people. The Germans gave the world a lot of things. They get artists, and players, and this and that. But they gave also a lot of misery. We Jews didn't give misery, we Jews contributed, and even til today, ta -- in every field, doctors, scientists, everything you -- singers, actors, Jews contribute, starting with the ancient times. The Jews contribute the 10

commandments. No other people contributed the 10 commandments. Now, if the God -- let's say you belo -- you believe in God. If God wanted to choose a family, and to bring like the Catholics say, to bring the son for the world, who did He pick out? He didn't pick out the Mexican family. He didn't pick out the Irish family, or a German family. He picked out a Jewish family, who were very religious. And they He picked out, and there was created a Jesus. I don't believe in it. I believe Jesus was a great man, but he was a man, that's all. He never dreamt about being a God. Because if you will tell Jesus when he was alive that he would be a God, he would probably commit suicide, cause he was a very good Jew. But God, let's say I'm n-now saying from the sight of the non-Jews, if he create -- he w -- he picked out -- he picked out a Jew. Why? So the Jews gave the world a God. 2,000 years later, look, a billion people believed in him. Did they get a thanks for it? No. They didn't get a thanks, well you gave us a God. They killed the Jews for the God. Now, they say that Jews are Christ killers. Now, this is not true. I was interviewed two years ago, and there was a question about the Holocaust, then wha -- was a t-time that people ask questions, and one man asked the question, he said, "Isn't there -- isn't this a time to forget and forgive?" So the man -- the moderator said he's going to answer it, I said no, this -- I answer this. So when I ask this man, I said, "Tell me, what nationality are you?" He said, "Polish." "What is your profession?" He said, "A priest." So I said to him, "You asked, isn't it time to forget and forgive?" I said, "This happened 50 years ago." I said to him, "Do you know there was a nice Jewish young man 2,000 years ago, and he was killed, not by the Jews, he was killed. Did you forgot and forgive 2,000 years

later? Here, a million and a half childrens were killed, and you ask to forget and forgive?" He hung up, he didn't answer. So, this what gives me, the Jews, in every respect, in everything, they contributed. They contributed in Germany. You had famous writers in Germany. Later, they were forbidden. You have famous composers in Germany. You have famous composers in Vienna. You have famous psychiatrists in Vienna, the first casa -- psychi -- Freud was in Vienna, and so on. Did the Jews get a thanks for it? No. What's wrong with Mendelsohn, what is wr-wrong with Lessing? What is -- one -- and now we start to -- to -- to -- to give all those a -- so this is -- and also, they were always held back, they never had a place to go ahead. Thank God in America they don't -- nobody holds them back. But they doing all the generations, they always were held back. But still somebody said, "Jews are like quicksilver." You know what quicksilver is?

Q: Yes.

A: When you try to press it down, it always runs away, it always -- the quicksilver run. So the other said no. Jews is like a bamboo stick. Take a bamboo stick, you bend it down, it straightens out, always. And this how Jews are. For this reason I am proud to be a Jew. My heritage gave to the world a lot. We're not appreciated for it. We are capable. We come to a country, maybe we establish ourself better than others. Maybe we are better businessmen, maybe we think a little more. Well, there is a -- a -- a joke, and I don't know if you will like this joke.

Q: Well, tell it anyway.

A: There wa -- there was an auction, and they sold brains from different nationality, you know the story?

Q: No.

A: No. So they sold a brain -- there was a brain for fives dollars, a brain for 10, and there was -- to transplant brains. A brain for 50 dollars, a brain for a hundred dollars, and a brain for thousand dollars. They took a Russian brain, the Russian brain was -- no, the Polish brain, the Polish brain was the cheapest, five dollars. Then they took a Russian brain, was 20 dollars. Then they took a English brain, 50 dollars. A German brain, hundred dollars, a Jewish brain, thousand dollars. No, I said the story wrong. I said the story wrong. It was --

Q: Okay, let's -- let's do again.

A: It was the opposite, it was the opposite. The -- the -- the -- the Polish brain was -- was thousand dollars, the -- the -- the what's I said? Russians --

Q: Russians.

A: -- was hundred dollars. The German was -- the Jewish brain was the cheapest, five dollars. They ask, why is the Jewish brain the cheapest? He said, because this is a used brain, so this is the cheapest. The Polish brain was not used, so you had to pay thousand dollars for it. Now, I don't think so this -- so, I -- I don't know why I made the mistake, but it --

Q: Well, I would like to ask you for another joke --

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: But let me -- let me go back just [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, but this is -- but this is -- but this is -- this is what I think, yeah.

Q: Let me ask you just one more question about Palestine. H-How did you feel that survivors were perceived there? Was it different, the image that -- or the way people responded to you as a survivor than in America, or was it --

A: No, because there were -- the majority of -- don't forget, when Israel -- when the Palestine was -- before Palestine there was 400,000 Jews, 450,000 Jews, and then later, when the people start to come in, come in, come in, there are four million Jews. So majority, people who survived went to Palestine, later to Israel. And there are the children of the survivors, so there are the majority of the people who survived. So you didn't have the feeling that you are an outsider. And also, when I came to Israel -- when I already came to Israel, I came home. This was my home. When I came over here, and tha -- and we had an organization, and I gave a report, how I experienced, how I liked Israel in this time. So I remember I told them, I said -- they -- they say -- I had a brother in is -- in Israel. Did you have a lot of friends, and how did they peer -- so I said, when I came to Israel, I had friends all over, all over ma -- I went over to the massada, I had a friends, the people who committed suicide, the massad -- I lived with them. I -- when I went over to Teberius, I had friends. In Teberius, there is the rumbum. There i -- there is old sages that I lived with them, I was brought up rabmaya bel harnis, I don't know if you know there is a man that they called him the miracle man, he is buried in Teberius. I said, "I came to them, and those were my friends, because I was brought up with them." I was started

since I was three years about them. So you see, all those people were with me. I went to Marron, I saw the people who created the caballah, the mystic. Those were my friends. So I came home to Israel, because they were there. It's the same thing like naturally, a Christian goes to Israel, and he walk, and he said, "I am walking the same road that Jesus walked." I went, and I walked the same day with -- the same road with Jesus, but not with the Jesus who mi -- was made a God hundred fifty years after his death. I walk with Jesus when he was a Jewish boy, a very religious Jewish boy. So I knew all those things. I walked with Mary, with the mother, that she was a Jewish mother, who lived in Nazareth. So for me, Israel was home. I came home, because I knew the people. The people, I knew them for thousands of years.

Q: But then you could not stay --

A: No.

Q: -- because you were advised to --

A: No, I -- not that I couldn't stay, because my family told me, and this time was that center -- I don't know if you know, there was a question with food, a question with war, and the same. If I would bring over money in this time, I didn't have money. I didn't have a profession. If I would be a doctor, a carpenter, or anything. I -- I was here, I started to be a peddler. I couldn't be a peddler iwa -- in -- in Israel. I didn't have one Jewish customer in America being a peddler. If I -- I couldn't make a living from a Jew, because he was smarter than I was. So I had Polish customers. So what will I do in j -- in a -- what will I do in Israel? Well, somebody who listen to this tape, they will laugh a lot.

So -- so -- so what would I do in Israel? I had there a family. My wife had three uncles, but they couldn't do anything for me. So for this reason they said, "Go back, you are a," -- they said, "we needed you two years ago, we needed you to fight." Which I would be happy. "Now, we will have two more mouths to feed. We don't have the food. Go to America, make money." And this what I did. We went to America, my sister-in-law needed help, somebody else needed help, we were always there to help. Charity we needed -- needed help. So this is a difference of but toos -- to live. See, we -- I came -- I missed the boat with Israel.

Q: Yeah. [inaudible]

A: Well [indecipherable]

Q: In -- in the -- in the 1950's, the Cold War, during that period, did you agree with the sentiments there, with the strong feel of -- of Communism, and everything, or did you have --

A: No, I didn't -- I didn't feel commits -- you see, I lived under Communism. You see, in Communism, it depends on which side of the fence you are. I was on the right side of the fence. Not that I was a Communist. I never belonged to the Communist party. As a matter of fact, when I had a big position, the people who were above me always came, and they gave out ankettas, to write down to become a member of the Communist party. And they always gave me anketta, and each time the anketta had 25 questions more, always they add more. And every time I g -- I -- I reg -- received a -- you know the anketta is. When I received the anketta, and they said to fill it out to become a Communist party member.

The reas -- the answer I s -- gave, I said, “I am not grown enough to be worthy to be a member of the Communist party.” This was my a-answer, and this what they liked. I said, “I have to learn a little more about the Communist party, I want to give an answer.” But I never believed, because to me, you see, I come from a very Orthodox family. I come from a rich family. Now, those two items were alien to Communism. And this was I had from my home. I give you another example -- you see, I always give you examples. When I was in Poland, I had dealings with Sappearha. Sappearha was the head of the co -- of the Catholic church. He was the cardinal. As a matter of fact, the pope who is now pope, he was a prodigy of Sappearha. So I had some dealings with Sappearha. I looked on Sappearha, he was the head of the Catholic church, I looked with him, and I feel terrible. Why? The Communism regime -- Communist regime was against him. What did he want? He wanted to have his religion. When I looked on Sappearha, I didn’t see Sappearha there, pol -- the Catholic cardinal. I saw my rabbi by which I studied. With -- til 17 years I studied in the Yeshiva, you know what a Yeshiva is? I saw my rabbi, the very Orthodox Hassidic Jew. I didn’t see Sappearha, I saw my rabbi. Why? Because would he be alive in 1945, he would be treated the same as Sappearha is treated, because he will be -- he will represent a religion what the Communism was against, the same thing as the Catholic religion. So I saw my rabbi sitting there instead Sappearha. So for this reason, my feelings, when it came to Communism, was different, that mostly young people who embraced -- I never -- and also, my wife was always against this belief, why? Because she comes from a home, and if -- her home suffered very much. Her father lost

his job, they threw her out in the apartment, why? Because they were considered the bourgeoisie. They were afraid they will send them to Siberia. So you see, the difference is, from where -- would I come from a very, very poor home, that we suffered, or from a home that we never believed in religion, I would embrace Communism, because this would be my dream. I came from a different world. So even in this time, this was the regime, but my aim in this regime was one -- my purpose was only one thing, to take revenge. This was the only thing that I was happy with. But I wasn't happy with -- with -- with all the other doctrines from -- from this regime. You understand?

Q: Yeah. So your feelings were quite -- more complicated then, when McCarthy started really --

A: Well, no, McCarthy, what I thought of him, I felt that this is a betrayal of America, he -- because the people were not guilty, and I think he was a traitor. And to me, if you will ask me if I like mctar -- McCarthy more or less than Goebbels, I will say the same way. The same, because would McCarthy be on Goebbels place, he wouldn't be better than Goebbels. I'm not talking about Hitler, because he was -- nobody is above him, but Goebbels, I -- I would sing -- I would say that McCarthy and Goebbels were the same, because he was a man that he accused innocent people. I was very, very, very much hurt in this time.

Q: Were you ever contacted, since you had a position in the Polish Intelligence, were you ever contacted in America, here, by officials, about [indecipherable]

A: No, no, I -- no, no, I was only contacted when I escaped to Germany. When I escaped -- I worked for a cert time for the CIC, you know, they had the CIC in this time, not the CIA. And the CIC was a military Intelligence. The reason why I -- I could be of help, because I could find out from camps, when people were ga -- got their visas to come to America, to find out from Poland, not from Jews, from pole -- because I masqueraded as -- well, then I didn't masquerade, but I could, to find out who was a collaborator, and who was not worthy to enter America. So this I worked, I had a man from the CIC, that he gave me directions, and I worked there.

Q: Yeah, we are nearing the end of the tape again, but let me ask you one personal question. All this is personal, of course, but --

A: Well [indecipherable]

Q: -- different question, when was your daughter born? Do you [indecipherable]

A: My daughter was born el -- 11 years after my marriage. 11 year -- my daughter was born in 1956. In the beginning we didn't want to have children. But of course, we spoke, and we said no, we don't want to bring children to such a cruel world, because this was [indecipherable]. But later we figured, well, without children -- we wanted to defeat, to be a victor over Hitler. Now, when we survived, so we were the victors. Even he killed six million Jews, but I am alive. But then later, we decided, if we will not have children, Hitler will win the war. So this way, we will have children, like we have now three grandchildren. This means that we succeeded, and we defeated Hitler. So this was when we wanted to have them, it took 11 years til we got our daughter.

Q: Do you f -- h-how was your -- your parenting? Do you think that was affected by your experience before, or -- and let me combine this with another question, what kind of values did you want to hand to your child?

A: Well, our -- well, we wanted to have the highest values. My parenting was -- we did something very wrong, because we started to talk about the Holocaust too early. And this pushed away my daughter, because we didn't have to start to speak about the Holocaust when she was three, four years old. Now, she always said, "Look, all my friends have grandfathers, I don't have grandfathers. All my friends has aunts," she doesn't have. But we started to tell her stories about the Holocaust, and this was very bad, because we -- this was true, we -- we pushed her away from it. And the same thing with her grandchild -- with her children, when we started to tell stories about the Holocaust, my daughter says not to tell her, they are too young. They cannot understand, and we shouldn't always -- now today, when I speak in schools, and I speak sometimes to first and second grade. As a matter of fact, not long ago, I spoke of it to a kindergarten. Now, I don't tell them cruelties. I tell them there were bad people, and there were good people. Now, for instance, the children -- I collected six million pennies, it was on television, and I tell them -- and they collected pennies for -- for this Jewish Foundation for the Righteous. We send money to non-Jews who help Jews. So I tell them we have to collect pennies, because there were bad people, who wanted to kill children. Those people saved the children. So I said, "Imagine if somebody would try to kill you, and there came some -- came a man, and they saved you. We have to remember that there were good people."

But I don't tell them stories, cruel stories. When chi -- when children are 14 - 15 - 16, then I start to tell them. But long ago I spoke in a Catholic church --

Q: Before we get in to that story, we should change the cassette.

A: Okay.

Q: This is the end of tape --

A: Na -- we have a half hour.

Q: This is the end of tape four, side A, interview with Norman Salsitz.

End of Tape Four, Side A

Beginning Tape Four, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Norman Salsitz. This is tape number four, side B.

A: Now --

Q: Yeah, we talked about --

A: I -- I start to say, I was invited to a Catholic, Polish church, and the Polish church, it was in Hackensack. And this name of the Polish is Koschumat Kobosscachins Tahoffsky. It means the church of the mother -- Black Madonna of Chancetahoff. So when I came in, and the mother superior, they were Polish, and I thanked her, and I said I'm glad to be -- in Polish, I said, "Koschulen mas -- matkabosska chanstahofsky." She said to me, "You know, since the church is a church, nobody said it correct, you are the first one who said it correct." So then I asked her, "What should I tell the people, should I tell them stories, the real stories, or should I make it a little nicer?" She said, "No, tell them how it was."

Because I spoke -- I speak about Polish people worse than I speak about Germans, and I will tell you the reason why. So when I spoke, and I told them stories about the Polish people, so I thought, that's it, she will never invite me. About a month later, she calls me up, she said, "You know, we have a sister church in Jersey City. Would you come out there to speak?" So I thought it's not so bad. So -- now, the reason why I tell you what I s -- speak about Polish people more -- more against Polish people than the Germans. Nobody did so much harm as the Germans, because after all, they created the Holocaust, they did all the killings, they had all the ideas about extermination, about all those things. The Polish people collaborated in a different way. Now, when a German went into the SS, or to Einsatzgruppen, or became a Gestapo man, or killed just for pleasure, he was raised with the idea since he was in Hitler yugen, and he knew that Jew was worse than garbage, worse than a cockroach, that the Jew had to be eliminated. He was prepared for it. Even his parents sometimes didn't teach him, which the parents later taught him, too. But he was taught in school. The Polish student was not taught to kill the Jews. The government didn't give out directives to kill the Jews. It came from within. When it came to a Jew, they knew they had to hate them. So, for this reason, I have more -- not blame, I feel worse when I speak about Polish anti-Semitism as hit -- as Germans. Because nothing is worse than the Germans, because they did that, the worst thing, but each individual in Poland -- why did the Polish people have to collaborate with the Germans where he was under German occupation. The Germans killed see -- three million Poles. The Poles were se -- garbage, second class citizen, undesirable, so -- so instead to have

two people -- somebody said to me, your enemy's enemy is my best friend. Some -- if the -- i-if the -- if the Germans were Poles enemies, they should have -- have compassion with the Jews, who had the same problem, but they didn't. So for this reason I feel -- there were Poles who helped, very few, small percentage. People ask me -- I go and speak, they ask me, what percentage of Poles would kill a Jew -- I'm not talking about Germans, I'm talking about Poles, what percentage of Poles would kill a Jew, what percentage wouldn't kill, but wouldn't help, and what percentage would help? And I was thinking about it a long time. I came to the conclusion 75 percent of the Poles would kill a Jew for no reason at all; giving out to the Germans, or kill them themselves. And don't forget, if a Pole gave out a Jew during the war, he got a kilo of sugar, or he -- he got a quart of kerosene. If he gave out five Jews, he got five kilo of sugar, imagine what a sweet life he had. 75 percent. 40 percent -- not 40 percent, 20 -- I said 23 percent -- 75 percent would give out, 23 percent wouldn't give out, they wouldn't help. They would say go away, I don't want to be involved, but they didn't give them out. We have nothing against those people; they didn't help us, but they didn't kill us. See, the pope was within the 23 percent. See, I know the pope very well. I was with the pope together eight months. It's a different story. We were very, very good friends. He called me Taddek, I called him Lolek, cause Karol is the nickname Lolek. And I used to meet him two times a week, and it's a different story, well. He, til today, he doesn't know that I am Jewish. He still knows that I am a Pole, but this a story besides this. So 24 -- 23 percent wouldn't

give out: like the pope, he's not a murderer, but he didn't help. Two percent helped Jews. So I read Ringenblume -- you know who Ringenblume --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Right. He wrote, and he wrote about the same question, and he came out with the same answer. He came out that 75 percent Poles will give out a Jew, or kill a Jew, but he said 24 percent wouldn't help, and wouldn't give out. Only one percent helped.

Q: How did you figure that, though?

A: Well, so let me answer you. One percent will give out -- will help. So I said, who is smarter, I or Ringenblume? Naturally Ringenblume. A historian, a well known historian, and who am I? I am from a small town in Kolbushova. So I took my town as an example. We were 2,000 Jews, 2,000 Poles. If I would be right, that two percent Poles saved Jews, so it means my townspeople had to save 40 Jews. Two percent from 2,000, right? They didn't save 40 Jews. Now, Ringenblume will be right, one percent. So it means my town had to save 20 Jews. Did they save 20 Jews? No. Did they save 10 Jews? No, not even a half a percent. But to give them -- to -- to how you say benefit of the doubt, I say Ringenblume was right, one percent saved Jews. So this is why I say from where I came to this conclusion. I came with my town, and every town was the same. In a -- now, you will ask -- you asked me this before, before it's finished I want to -- to -- now I will tell you why I want to do it, and I'll do it fast. My mother, as a hobby, used to make sweaters, for as -- she liked it. When there was not too much wool left, she made it very fast. And they ask her, why you rushing? She said, "I want to finish the sweater before I'm out of

wool." So the same thing, I want to finish it before we are out of time, we out of [indecipherable]. You ask me before about -- I told you that I sing a song, when I was interviewed -- when I was a moderator for this history. And the person, Ray Farr, ask me, "Why is there anti-Semitism in Poland so strong, stronger than the other countries?" So I said, "I wouldn't answer you, but I will sing you a song, what I learned in school, a Catholic song, a church song." I re -- I remember this song, and the song has 12 stanzas. I wouldn't sing you -- for her I sing all the 12, for you I will only sing one. It's a beautiful song, a beautiful melody, I learned it in school. And this song is that Jesus talks to his people, to the Jews. And the song is -- [sings] Lo do may lo do. Sool zamchi woochi nue, chemyap secrotchill, Eacham zaveenue, yachem visbolue zmotza farra oana, atish sheshoenju, shish namare ramyoana. And this is the song. People, my people, what did I do to you? With what did I trangress -- transgress against you? I took you out from the bondage of p -- pharaoh, from Egypt. And what did you do to me? You put me on a cross. The second is people, my people, what did I do to you? I brought you in in a land with milk and honey. What did you do to me? You crucified me. The third one: people my people, what did I do to you? I elevated you among all other nations, and you elevated me on a cross. And so on and so on. Now, when we learned this song in school, and if a Polish boy learned this song, and he goes out, and he see a Jew with a beard, he goes to him, and he pulls his beard, kicks him, beats him, beats him, why? Cause they taught him -- what did they tell him? The Jews killed Jesus, which is not true. And this is what I told her, from there is the anti-Semitism. And I tell you a other story. Catholics --

this is a story about the Puerto Rican. I had a house in Hoboken, and there were Puerto Ricans living there. The -- the janitor was a Puerto Rican. And once I came in, he had a boy about 10 years. He wa -- started to speak. So he ask me, “Hey, Mr. Norman, you Polacko, you Polacko?” Because they called me Polacko. I said, “No, I’m not a Polacko, I’m a Hoodeo.” I’m a Jew. So the boy asked the father, and I understood what I understand, “What is a Jew?” And the father gives him a whole lesson. And I could hear he gives him a lesson, Jesus, and Jesus, and Jesus, and Jesus. He told him a story about Jesus. And after he finished the stories -- the story, the boy goes and pulls my sleeve, and he says, “Hey, Mr. Norman, why did you kill Jesus?” Because the father told him a story. So he asked me why did I kill -- why I killed Jesus. So those are the stories about anti-Semitism. When I was a peddler, I came in, and always my customers lived on the fifth floor, they never lived on the second -- on the first floor, because I had to go up, no elevator. So I ask him why somebody should live on the first floor. And I dragged my suitcases on the fifth floor. So I come in once, and the door was open, there was a young woman, she was born in America, she must be about 26 years. And the door was open, and I hear that she yells -- the child was crying, and she yells to the child, “Be quiet, because the Jew will come with the sack, and he will take you away.” This happened in Jersey City. And then she turns around, she sees me. She was a little embarrassed. I asked her, “Tell me, why did you tell the stig -- th-the girl that the Jew will come with the sack and take you away? Did you ever see a Jew comes with a sack and takes away a child?” She says, “Why, I don’t know, but my mother always used to tell it to me, and I was

always so afraid I stopped crying." The mother told it to her, she telled it to the child, and the child will probably tell it to her child. And this is from where the hate, the anti-Semitism comes. Cause children are not born bad.

Q: Did you feel that there was a ch -- a change at a particular time, with regard to more acceptance of -- of ethnicity?

A: Where, in Poland?

Q: No, here, in -- in America [indecipherable]

A: Yes, yes, I -- I --

Q: And -- and also -- all that -- there was more of a change with regard to wanting to know more about the Holocaust, or being more interested in learning about it?

A: Now some people in schools pu -- especially in New Jersey, because this is a law in New Jersey that's pe -- they have to learn about the Holocaust. So the children learn. Indell and I go out and speak, and they have it a -- but in general, I don't think so. In general, I think that the people say -- well, what do I have to go to strangers, when you have a man on my board meeting for B'nai Brith, and he started to yell, "Stop with this crap about the Holocaust. Stop, don't bother me with this Holocaust." He's a Jew. His parents came from Europe, they were saved His children are, and his grandchildren -- I said, I don't think so. I think maybe -- maybe, if somebody has a interest, there are more books. But also they -- they -- you know that in the Holocaust museum last year, 80 percent of visitors were non-Jews. Because the Jew probably figures, well, I know it already. The -- the young people, I know it already. For the non-Jews, it's a novelty.

They want to go in to see it. But the Jew knows it already. So every time I think it will get weaker, and weaker. We are farther, farther away. Take for instance the Inquisition. You know the story about the Inquisition., huh? How many people speak about the Inquisition? And the Inquisition was a terrible thing. How many people speak about the Crusaders? Do you know that in Crusaders, 400 Jewish towns were destroyed? 400. And this time in Poland, in Poland were 400,000 Jews. During the time of the Crusaders, from the 400,000, 200,000 Jews were killed. Nobody knows. 50 percent. Nobody knows about it.

Q: D-Do you think though that sort of movies, like the cam -- the NBC movie "Holocaust," that came out in '78, and other films are shaping a certain understanding, or [indecipherable]

A: Yes. Take, for instance, "Schindler's List." So because this was last one. Now, to me, "Schindler's List," so happened personally that I knew Schindler. "Schindler's List," was a very good movie for the American people. For me, it didn't even scratch the surface. It showed a lot of things, but what we went through, it didn't show you w -- that -- th-the real misery. But for the American, it showed enough. One thing I liked about "Schindler's List," and the Polish people don't like it, is there is one scene when the Jews were taken to the Kraków ghetto, and when they were chased away, and they were killed, and isn't it -- there was a Polish girl staying there, a blond girl, and she said, "Goodbye Jews, goodbye Jews." It is typical, but the Polish people didn't like it. Then a other thing they didn't like that in Auschwitz, a lot of kapos spoke Polish; they were Polish girl.

Because if a Polish girl was taken to Auschwitz, she got a good job. For instance, from my town, there is a girl Zoshka Vinyarska Esertanay. She was in Auschwitz, and she was in Auschwitz not for being a Jew, she was in au -- because she was caught with black market -- black market stuff. And she was taken to Auschwitz, she became a kapo. And she became such a --a -- at -- a -- a true -- for the Germans, that when she used to take children when there was an extermination job, a selection of the children, she had to take the children to the gas chambers. But there were always open pits with fire, because the gas chamber -- the -- the crematoriums couldn't burn enough. So she used to take the children, and throw them in in the fire, alive. Now this girl came from a town from where I was born. After the war, so long I was in Poland, she was hiding, because she -- I find out about it -- she knew that if I will get her, I will kill her. She didn't know nuf -- now she lives in -- in our town, openly, people know about it. Nothing happened to her. She used to take live children and throw them in -- in the fire. Why did she do it? She wasn't asked to do it.

Q: Did you ever testify? You have seen a lot of killings. One -- one person, but also mass killings, you have been vit -- witnessing 400 people being killed. Did you ever testify?

A: No. I didn't testify because the people who I would testify, they were not caught. My wife went to testify two or three times, because Krieger, who was the chief of the Gestapo there ma -- I -- the people who I saw them kill, like Tvardo, I wish -- and the others, Aihause, they were not caught, and I didn't testify. I was te -- I was -- I la -- I was -- I wrote a letter, there was one Mac, a Gestapo chief in Jheshuf, he was arrested, and

there was a trial, and I wa -- I -- I wrote to them and said I want to tell -- because I saw him killing, but they never called me.

Q: Did you meet any survivors from -- that you knew from -- from -- from the war, or from even before in -- in America?

A: Oh sure, we have organization. I am very active in the organization. We have organization of the Holocaust federation. I am a national executive board member, and we have -- and I am very, very much involved. As a matter of fact, that every year, we make, at Yom HaShoah the year, and we -- and we -- and I am doing this for 30 years. And before we used to have it in Madison Square Garden, and for the last five years we have it in Temple Emmanuel. And I am in charge of the arrangement and security. Before this it takes about six months to arrange it. I am with the police, with the fire department, with tran -- trans -- the transit, and ever -- and a -- we have meetings, and I -- and during the day I am there with the police, I arrange the security, because with the parking and everything. I am very much involved. We had in our organization, we had 85,000 members. Now, we -- th-three years ago, we lost about seven percent, two years ago we lost 10 percent, and this year so far, we lost already 15 percent, because people are dying out, you know. But I am very much involved in it.

Q: I was -- I was thinking about maybe you could name one person from your earlier life, that you met again here. I think you mentioned you brought a gir -- a girl runner, who was a runner in Poland, did you bring her to New York? In the videotape? I thought you mentioned that.

A: No, I bought not a runner, I bought -- I bought a Polish girl.

Q: A Polish girl.

A: But she was a runner between two --

Q: Right.

A: -- two Polish organizations, and she saved my life a few times. But here, I-I could give you a list of 200 people, so -- so that -- that I knew, that I met them here, and they live here, but now a lot of them dying out. A -- from -- from my group, unfortunately, they are not alive, but -- but from other camps, and -- we always -- in -- in -- in -- like for instance now, we had, for a week we had the lectures in Rutgers, I think I told you this. Now, I -- I was lecturing there, and all of them who wu -- came to listen, were mostly a lot of survivors.

Q: And what -- in your opinion, what are the lessons of the Holocaust, and has the world learned them?

A: I don't think so the world learned anything, cause if the world will learn the Holocaust, you wouldn't have Rwanda, you wouldn't have an -- you wouldn't have -- not Kosovo, and oh, what is the other place?

Q: Bosnia?

A: No, no, no, we'll talk about Bosnia, and -- near Cambodia. [clock chiming] You see, you wouldn't -- you wouldn't have those things, because there are -- see, Bosnia, and ka -- and -- and -- and -- and -- and Kosovo, it's a different subject. It's all [indecipherable] I don't think so that Bosnia and Kosovo, that -- that -- that Clinton in America is hundred

percent right, because I think they did a very, very bad thing, because of Milosevich is not an angel. He is a strong man, but -- but he's -- what he is doing doesn't mean that America has a right to go and bomb, and kill Kosovian civilians, Serb civilians, he doesn't help the situation, and what does he do? He wants to show that this big America, the rich America is stronger than the poor Serb? So what's a Serbian, nothing. A very poor country. So they want to show that whole European countries, they going to be stronger. They da -- sh -- they should be made pe -- but there were o-other ways, but not to go and kill, and destroy bridges, destroy their economy, destroy every -- because Milosevich, supposedly, is not a nice fellow. There are other people, there were ways to do it. You had -- but not to go and bomb innocent people and to kill them. So what did they do? They killed them. They destroyed everything. So ame -- why? Because Clinton wanted to get out as a hero, from being his presidency to cover up Monica's sins? This is not the right thing to do.

Q: So how do you feel about American involvement then, in those kind of --

A: They s -- no, the American involvement is -- in Kosovo was very bad, because why didn't America get involved in Rwanda? Now, in Kosovo, it was not the Serb's guilt. The Kosovian, they wanted to start a rebellion, and to unite with Albania. They wanted to have a large Albania, a large Muslim nation. Then later they would take care on -- on Serbia. One thing I can tell you, that the Serbs were the nicest people in the Holocaust. The only one who saved Jews, the only one who took in and there -- Keeto took in in his ga -- in his underground Jew -- any Jew who wanted to go in. The next in -- in command

was a Jewish general, Pattie, I think was his name. He was a Jew. In the Polish underground you didn't accept a Jew. So the Serbs were ver -- and they were very good soldiers. Germany had 10 divisions SS. In Serbia they couldn't do anything, because they are very patriotic. So now, America wants to show they are stronger than Serbia. Well, how -- to take the American army, the air force, and to destroy Serbia? For what? Because the alb -- the -- the -- the Albanese, they had in their constitution, they had, not in constitu -- in their rules, they had that every mon -- every week, they have to kill three Serbian policemen. Every week they kill a -- so they started it, they wanted to have a independence. They ha -- had the underground against Serbia. So what should Serbia say? Wait -- I will sit and wait til they kill us? So howa -- Serbia an-answered. And I don't say that Milosevich was an angel, but the Serbian people didn't deserve it. And what did they do? Not only the Serbian, they killed the Kosovian, too, because they bombed kos -- Kosovo. They bombed -- they destroyed everything what they had, the people with the electricity, and bridges, and everything. So I think that you cannot compare it with -- with any other. Ha -- why don't America go to Tibet, and help them? Why do they -- don't they go to the Kurds? There are 22 million Kurds, and they -- wh-what they are doing? America doesn't go to help them. And they have a right to do something, because they are on their land. Kosovo was never a nation. For 800 years it was under Serbia. Besides, Serbia, all their religious and national things are in Kosovo. The same thing as Jerusalem is for the Jews, Kosovo is for the Serbs. Now, they will go -- Clinton will s -- next week he will go the Jews and will say, give away Jerusalem and

everything, if not, we going to bomb you. This is very wrong. I wrote to them, I didn't get an answer. So we -- so we finished already the Kosovian business.

Q: Almost. I want to get somehow back to your daughter, actually, but I think we'll make that another tape.

A: Okay.

Q: This is the end of tape four, side B, interview with Norman Salsitz.

A: Oh, so you have sa -- some people what do you have, four tapes, or you have more than four tapes? For some people? What is the most that you have from every [indecipherable]

Q: Well, so far I have five, but we'll probably go beyond five.

A: Oh, you have five?

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Oh, you have -- so far you have somebody talk so much, five?

Q: Well, if somebody is interesting enough, we'll do that. So this was not the end, this is the end now of tape four, side B.

A: Okay.

End of Tape Four, Side B

Beginning Tape Five, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Norman Salsitz. This is tape number five, side A. I would like to know whether you can pinpoint, at least to some degree, the time when you felt comfortable with your identity as an American. And what did that mean to you?

A: Well, I think that I felt right away very glad that I'm in America, the minute I came. Naturally, in the beginning, I was very unhappy. I was glad that I'm in America, but I was very unhappy, and as a matter of fact, the first year, probably, I went around with ma -- in my mind to commit suicide, for a few reasons. The first thing, I looked around, and I didn't have my family. And I expected to have a family here, a new family, but I didn't have it. And then, it is very -- I know people who had this experience, maybe they will understand; you know, it is like you are on a very, big, beautiful horse, and you fall down from the horse. I was already in Poland, after the war, I have a high position, I had -- I was established, I -- I ruled -- not ruled, but I -- I could do a lot of things, and people respected me, and here I came over, and I was nothing. In America, later I find out, you could be smart, you could be intelligent, you could do -- be a lot of things, but if you didn't have money, you have -- you are nothing. And I didn't have money, and these things that -- what I did in Poland, and what I was in Poland, meant nothing There were a lot of people who, they were thankful, I did a lot of things for them in Poland, but when I came here, everything disappeared. So, of course it was such a vacuum. I came down from -- from a high position, to nothing, and I was very disappointed. And I didn't know

what will be the future, what I will do. Like I mentioned before, I didn't have a trade, I didn't have money, and I didn't know what to do. So I was very -- then -- then the -- the -- the story with Israel this appears, that I didn't go to Israel, which I wanted. And -- so I ask my -- question myself, I said, so what's now? So a lot of times I went around with ideas that I probably -- the best thing is that I should commit suicide, and the thing is a lot of times when I went in the car, and I start to think it will better when I wouldn't come home alive. It's very sad that I was thinking about it then, but this -- this was the reality.

Q: But what did it mean to you to be an American at one point? Or was it not very sp- spectacular [indecipherable]

A: Well, in the beginning, it was nothing -- like I said, I was glad that I'm here, because this was a dream that we have. But I was not so happy, because I was not in Israel. So this was -- see if you a dream only to be in America, and you are in America, so it's different. But I was here, and -- and I have plans to go with this group, I have plans to go with this group, and I couldn't go, one didn't realize, and the -- with the group I couldn't go, then my wife was against me going in this time when it wa -- so, it -- it was not this what -- what I planned. So I was in America. See, if in America in this time, if I would have somebody from the family, and they would take me in, it was not so much as the -- the -- the material things that they would -- I didn't ask for them, but to be in America, and to have a large family, to have cousins, and to be far away from them, I didn't feel the warmth, and -- and this was more important, like I thought we will have -- we will

have friends. And who were the friends? The friends will be my cousins who were my age. And -- and I was a stranger to them. So this meant a very -- it was very painful.

Q: Which -- which events in this country had a particular impact on you? Give me just sort of like one or two examples.

A: Well, events that -- I would say the first events was very important, they impact when they -- when I was in -- outside of the United Nation when they voted for accepting the petition of Palestine in this time. W -- I was there, an -- and after they voted, and it was f -- by very small vote that they won, and naturally outside the people started to sing, and to dance. So I think this was one of the most -- well, the first -- the first thing was with the -- which -- arriving in -- and to wait to see the Statue of -- of Liberty. This was the -- the -- the very -- very emotional. And the second thing was when Israel became a nation. This -- when I saw that the abba eben pulls up the Israel [indecipherable]. And I was there, so this meant a awful lot, because this was a dream which lasted 2,000 years. I only felt sorry that my father and my sisters are not alive to -- to live, and to see it. But this was one of the -- of the most important things in -- in America. Well, then later there were other things, naturally when my daughter was born. So this was one of the -- the mo -- because we waited a long time, and when she was born, so this was a very, very emotional thing.

Q: Let’s talk a little bit more about your daughter then, because we never quite continued talking about her. You said earlier that you pushed her away a little bit, unintentionally,

by talking too early, but tell me a little bit more. What did that mean? How did she react, and how did you come together again?

A: I-I didn't push her away, but I talked too much about the Holocaust, and she was too young, and a -- she was not ready for it. So then later, when --

Q: But how did she respond to it? What was the response?

A: She was not interested. She was not interested when I spoke, it's like I saw some children where they are a little older, that everything th -- they -- they talk about the misery, and the bad times the parents went through, and -- and she -- she didn't react like this. Later she explained it's because I started to talk about the Holocaust too much, too early, and she didn't care for it. But then later, as she got older, so she started -- she realized now -- she's still not very what -- what I would say very involved. Like for instance, I have a lot of friends, and their children -- there is a movement of second generation, and she doesn't belong to second generation. I ask her a few times. And -- by the way, her husband, who is a fifth generation American, he's more -- more involved -- not involved, but he's more for the remembrance of the Holocaust than -- than she is.

Q: Does that hurt you?

A: No -- not that it hur -- yes, it hurts me one thing, because she doesn't remember so much -- my sisters -- an-and it hurts me because we depend on the second generation, on the future generation, that the Holocaust shouldn't be forgotten. And if she is not very much involved, so it means that it will not be remembered so much. And after all, she feels very bad that she didn't -- that she always cried, she didn't have a grandfather, a

grandmother. Like for instance, she had here a friend, she had two sets of grandmothers, so she always has questioned them, when they knew about it, so one set of grandfather [indecipherable] they adopted her. So I would like she should be more involved, because we are so -- I am so much involved, not so much my wife. I involved because I belong to every organization -- Holocaust organization, and everything what has to be done, I'm very much involved. I'm involved with the -- with the -- the money part, I'm involved with speaking, to go -- meetings, and all those things, I am involved.

Q: I -- I -- I would like -- I would follow up in just a -- to another question about your work, and we'll talk more about this, but let me just stick with your daughter. What is her -- give me h-her name, and what did -- was her education? She is a law -- she's a lawyer?

A: She -- her name is Esther, her -- Esther Sylvia. Esther she is made -- named after my mother, and Sylvia after my wife's sister, who was killed when she was 17 years. And her maiden name is -- I mean marriage name is Dezube, D-e-z-u-b-e. Some people don't realize, they think it's not a Jewish name, that it is a Italian name, but I mentioned that her -- her husband's is the fifth generation American, and -- and it used to be Dezubinsky, which is a Russian name for a dentist, something. But then later this was changed. And she's a lawyer. She has her own office, and she employs a other lawyer, with a secretary, and she -- she's satisfied with her -- we wanted she should be a doctor, b-because my wa -- my wife was it, but she didn't like it, she didn't want, she wanted to be a lawyer. And she always was very good with the debating, and talking. And as a matter of fact, when she was in college, sh -- the lawyer, or the -- the -- the professor [indecipherable] said,

"You should be a lawyer." Well she -- she -- maybe this -- she has a little bit from me, I don't know. And [indecipherable] she married the husband, he is a medical doctor. He is now assistant professor in Harvard, and he is in Beth Israel Hospital, and he is the head -- he is oncologist hematologist, and now he's the head -- he started to work with AIDS research, and he goes around all over the world, and they send him to have lectures. As a matter of fact, he just came back from -- he was in Japan, he was in Hungary, he was -- he goes over -- and they have to go now, in about a month, they have to go to Portugal. And he's also now a member of the Food and Drug industry; he goes once a month to Washington, because when they have a new drug, that has to be approved. So he is very dedicated to it, and in the beginning we were a little worried that he picked out the AIDS, but he wants it because h-he's a idealist. He's -- he's very much involved in it. And we -- the beginning we were wor -- worried a little because we thought that doctors, contagious this, but now it's -- it changed a lot. An-And -- and he -- he's happy, and he likes it, and -- and now -- we want he should be for -- he shouldn't be in that hospital, because if he will be a private doctor, he could make much more money. But he doesn't care about the money. So --

Q: You also have grandchildren. When --

A: Yeah, I have three -- three grandchildren. And this was also one of the highlights of our life. When the first one was born, he was born in -- about three years after she was married. She was married -- my daughter was married in -- in -- it was just 22nd anniversary for her. So her d -- Dustin is now 16 and a half years old. He is the oldest

one. Then she has one, he is Arlen. Arlen is 11 years old. And then she has one, he is Michael. And Michael is -- is nine years old, yeah.

Q: Is -- is their observant house, or is it --

A: Well, you see, we -- our -- for instance by us, everything what is tradition, I keep up. It's not observant. We don't have kosher, and we don't do serf shab -- the Shema Shabbas as we call it. But w -- it's more like -- like everything traditional, every national holiday, and -- so -- well a -- so -- but se -- m-my wife, she doesn't come from such a home. She comes from a home that -- see, in Europe, everybody was -- was religious.

Q: Shall we [indecipherable] for a second?

A: N -- I no --

Q: All right, is it [indecipherable]

A: So, w -- everything what is traditional, I w -- as you can see upstairs -- you didn't see it, I have like an Jewish museum. Everything what has a Jewish character I buy, and I like to collect. And I have certain things that they are so unique, that it's probably the one in the world. And if you are interested, I can explain to you, I can show it to you. And so, if I have guests, like for instance Saturdays we don't make the observance like it should be, but if I have guests for this, I do it. See, I know how to do it, [indecipherable] because like I said, til 17 years I started, and I don't know if you'll say to be a rabbi, or to what, but I -- we were very, very in-involved in it. So -- but now, after the war, n -- everything what has to do with the connection, with -- with the -- with the God, we let it go a little bit, because we each were asking a question, and we don't have answers. My daughter for

instance -- and my daughter is more observant than we are. And -- like for instance, every Friday night, and -- she lights the candles, and her children come, and everyone has to wear a kippah, and then they say the blessings, and they sing what they have to do. Also because they go to Solomon Shechter, which is a religious Jew telly school, and they go partly to Solomon Shechter, because I pay for it. And I said to them if they will go to Solomon Shechter, I would pay, and this is quite expensive, because -- because it cost almost 10,000 dollars a year for each one. Now, her husband, for instance, comes from a house that they didn't know too much about Judaism. Now, her husband's parents, like for instance his father's siblings, they all married por -- Protestants. His mother's ma -- family married Catholics. So -- but none of them married Jews -- well, one maybe married Jews. So her husband, because he was afraid that with them the Jewish tradition, everything would get lost, so he became more Jewish. And he did it himself, he asked for it, and as a matter of fact, in his sophomore year he went to Israel, and he went for a year to Israel, but he didn't go on the English faculty -- English part, but the Hebrew. And he speaks perfect Hebrew. He ri -- and he gets all the Hebrew newspapers, and he's very much involved with Israel. The oldest son, til he was three years, he spoke to him only Hebrew, because he -- he thought English he would learn anyway. So they are very much -- they belong to a temple, and with the children they go to temple. Now, for instance, the Israeli government sends over certain people, and -- for a year to be on Harvard, or in MIT. So there are certain families that they adopt a family for a year, so they adopt every year a family. And they stay with them Saturdays, holidays, because it's ver -- and they

were a few times, like for instance the oldest boy went yesterday to Israel, and he's 16 and a half, and there is a group. It's called gesh -- Geshert. So they -- it's -- it is like they are part with the milit -- military part. They go there for six weeks, and then they travel. So he went with the group, they went about 150 American -- 50 were boys, hundred were girls, and their age, and they went there, which we agree to what they should go. And it is very important.

Q: Just a few minutes ago, you mentioned your -- one -- one part of your many collections, so I would like to talk a little bit more about your recent activities. There are a -- a lot of them, but maybe you can give us a sort of a sampling, a brief --

A: Well, I --

Q: -- you have written books, you give talks.

A: Yeah, I -- I -- the activities, like for instance, I organized, 30 years ago, a chapter here from Mogandube tadome, Mogandube tadome, as they say the Red Cross, and fo-for 30 years I'm the president. I'm trying to give it to somebody, there is nobody who will -- takes it. And we are a member from the national, and we went a few times with them to Israel, and now it starts to go down, like all Jewish organizations, and the new people don't go in, and old people dying out, and I say that my members -- I used to have a few hundred members in this chapter, now I have very little, so I said all the members, or they go up, or they go down. So they said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Oh, they go down to Florida, or they go up to heaven." And this is mostly what -- what happened, the new people doesn't come in. Also, I organized Gimmilis hassoudim organization, it m -- is a

free loan society. This was after I came to America, so I started to organize with the -- with the people here, and we took a -- collected money, we send it to Israel. And in this time the people were very poor, and everybody had a chance to loan -- to take a loan, then they paid it out in a year, and two years, and they got back. So this is still there -- al -- existing. My -- this was the [indecipherable] that mis -- the people from my town have it. So then I belong to a lot of organization, like I organized in our temple a Israel bond drive, and the -- the UGA drive. I was, for about seven years, the chairman of Israel bonds for Essex county religious council, and -- and I -- I always was involved in -- in -- in -- in all kind of -- of charitable organizations.

Q: Wh-When did you start giving talks in schools, or public talks, and what -- what -- where have you been? Just to schools, and -- or other areas?

A: No, no. I -- I -- well, people started to know about me, so one from the others, and I will say in the last 10 years. So I go public schools, high schools, and sometimes not Jewish high schools. And I also spoke right in Princeton. They invited me, I spoke in Harvard. And I spoke in -- in -- in Connecticut they have Notre Dame University. And this was very important for me, because they were not Jews there. And -- and there is even it's not a anecdote, is when I came to Notre Dame, they invited me there for a day, but they kept me there for three days, because when the -- this is a Jesuit school, and they are dressed like priests. So when they introduced me to the headmaster, and he had a book under his arm, that he had the book, so he had the book, the "Jewish Boyhood in Poland," my book. So I was very pleased, I said, "Oh, you got the book because I came to

speak here?" He said, "No." So I said, "Do you know whose book this is?" He said, "No." "So how comes you have the book?" He said to me, "I just came from Washington, from the museum, and I saw this book, and I saw that the book is, "A Jewish Boyhood in Poland, Remembering Kolbushova," my town. So happens that my grandfather came from Kolbushova." So he brought the book. So he told me his name, I remem -- so I remember his grandfather, and he -- his father came to America, he was born here, and he is the head of the Notre Dame University. So instead one day, he kept me there three days. And -- and [indecipherable]

Q: Y-You ju -- you just mentioned one book, you -- earlier, throughout the -- this interview, you had mentioned -- you di -- never said the title, but you always referred back to a book. What is the other book called?

A: Well, the first book -- the first book, it was printed in 1961, and this was printed in Israel, and this book in -- in the English, it is a memorial book for my town. And in the -- in -- all it's -- in Yiddish it's called, "Kolbushova Pinkus." Pinkus is memor -- a memorial book. And it's a very good book, it's one of the -- because every town gave out -- called the yeeska book, a memorial book. And this is one of the best, because it has 1400 pages, and it has about a few hundred ph-photos. So it's a very good book, specially for the people from my town, they didn't have the pictures. So this was in the -- in '61. And then now, people a lot, children, they want to have the book, but it's not available. The only time I got the book is when somebody dies, and the children don't know Yiddish, so I buy back from them, and I could give it to them. This is the first one, then I

had a lot of articles and papers, that two, three, four times a year in the -- in the "Jewish News," and there are some good articles. Like, for instance, last year I had an article, and it was reprint -- reprinted in 25 different papers, because it goes from one, they take it. And then later I -- I got copies from the other papers. It was from California, from Florida. Now I even got a copy from a paper from London, that they got a -- a -- reprinted this article from -- in London, and somebody send it to me. And then came out a book, "Against All Odds," which is -- was very successful, and then after against all is, "A Jewish Boyhood in Poland, Remembering Kolbushova." This is my youth in Kolbushova. And now, two other books will come out this year, which I told you one is being written by Amy Hill Hart. This is the author of, "Having Our Say," which became very popular, and it was a show on television, and it selled over two million copies, and --

Q: That book is about your life?

A: This -- no.

Q: No.

A: The book from Amy Hill Hart? No. This is -- because she's the daughter of German immigrants, and this -- because she wrote this book aga -- "Having Our Say." This is about a minority, about Negroes, children of slaves. So she wanted to write aga-again a book about minorities, and because it was such a successful. And she wrote in -- in -- in papers, and in -- in Associated Press, about me, about when I collected the six million pennies. And she wrote it, so she got in touch with us, and she said she would like to write a book about us, about our life during the Holocaust, from the -- so we told her we

have already two books. She said no, she wants to write it from the viewpoint of a German. So this was -- for this we were interested, because we wanted to see how she will -- she will handle, how she will approach. So she had interviews, and we sent -- she was even to Israel, and she went to Yad Vashem, she went to the museum to see all those things, because she didn't know too much about the Holocaust, and we arranged interviews with the director, and with the director from ADL, from -- with Mr. Foxman, with Elie Wiesel, with others, and so she -- she just finished the book, we don't agree with everything. Not that we don't agree, she let out and she had -- but she said this is the first draft, probably there will be a few drafts. And she wants to have -- because she can have publishers where she's now known, because her book was such a success. It was a show on -- in -- in Broadway, and then it was on television, on channel two, and it was sold over two million pa -- copies. It was for six months the best seller on New York Time list. So -- so we are preparing this book, and then I prepare this book what I told you, with the vignettes, which I'm very much interested in the vignettes, because this is stories that didn't go in in the first book, in the second book, in the third book. Those are stories that I don't want to let them out. Stories from before the war, stories from the war, from cruelties, from -- so I have this, and I have the title, so we worked this. And then later, when I wa -- finished those two books, which I think it will be this year, so then later we'll think about something else.

Q: Well, two -- two -- two follow up questions. One is, what -- how do you evaluate the impact that survivor testimonies and recollections like yours have had on the collective Holocaust memory in this country, if you will?

A: I think this is very important, because the survivors co -- testimonies is more important than even reading a book. Because, you see like for instance, I was not long ago I was in the -- to speak in a -- in -- in a school, and there was -- it wasn't -- there were not Jewish students, there were mostly Christians. So the -- who -- with they -- the teacher, when they introduce, they said, "You -- we -- I want we should see this man, because in a few years, you'll be able to say, I saw a survivor, because then there will not be survivors. So you saw the survivor, and you heard it from a survivor." So this is very important when you go to schools, and then -- when you did -- it's also depends how you tell the story. Now, when I go -- so I ask always how old the children are, if they are -- what nationality they are, wh-what a -- what ethnic background. It's very important because you have to tell them stor -- different stories. Now in -- how old, and how many -- and I never prepare a speech. When I prepare a speech, it's a fiasco. I have to come and look at the faces, and then I speak. As you can see, I cannot -- I cannot read a speech. Now, not long ago I was in Elizabeth, and this was three high schools put together, and there were about -- I would say about 250 students, not one White, all of them Black. And it was a different experience. And I told them, and naturally I compared the Holocaust with -- with the life of the Black people in America. Se -- so you have to cater

to each one different. So for this reason I ask what nationality, what -- not so much nationality, what religion and -- and age, and it's so you --

Q: D-Do you -- do you find the students in schools very open and interested?

A: Yes, they are very interested. It's also depends how you tell the story, because I went to some -- to some -- somebody spoke, and because we were two, and when the other person spoke, so the teach -- the students were talking to each other, they didn't have no interest, because -- I didn't blame them, because the way the person talked, it was very monotonous, and -- and then later when I spoke, they had a different interest. I was in a school, and they had about 400 children, so then the principal came to me, he said, "I can tell you only one thing. This is the first time that they were sitting for two hours, and they listened. And they -- I could never keep them for so long, and they should have a interest." Again, I see what the children -- what interest it is. Now, if you go, and you see la -- when I speak to a Jewish group, and when the Jewish group is let's say between 16 and seven -- 15 and 17 years, I don't tell them stories about the death camps. They have no interest about the death camps. They want to know what did the Jews do. How did they protect themselves. So then I tell them stories about my activity in the underground, in the woods. This what they want to know. They want to know if I did something, if I killed somebody, if I -- this -- this what they into, they're not interested in Auschwitz. They are not interested se -- in the -- in the ovens, and the cruelty, what the Germans did. This is ha -- no. They -- the same thing in Israel, and I spoke in Israel, the children are interested what did the Jew do. And if you tell them a story from a underground, from a

resistance, from this, this what they associate, and this what they like to hear. So for this reason you have to fa -- you have to face the people, and to see what they have -- what interest they have.

Q: Do you think that in -- in general, even when you came to -- to America, was there a little bit more appreciation of -- of the resistance fighters? Of people who had done something because just -- you just bring -- bring that up as something that's of importance.

A: Yes, yes, there was, but nobody knew about it. There was, like for instance, they were very -- with everybody, like now you -- when you speak about the resistance, you speak about the Warsaw ghetto. Now, there were a lot of resistance story, but the Warsaw ghetto, this is the emblem, this is the -- the -- the main thing that -- that you talk about resistance. It was important, because this was the first resistance in Europe against the Germans. And also, the resistance was in Warsaw -- the resistance was in Warsaw, where they didn't have no help. It --

Q: I'm sorry, I have to interrupt. We have to -- to change the cassette.

A: Okay.

Q: This is the end of side A, tape five, interview with Norman Salsitz.

A: Okay.

End of Tape Five, Side A

Beginning Tape Five, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Norman Salsitz. This is tape number five, side B.

A: So we spoke about -- about [indecipherable] didn't know too much. And then -- now the Warsaw uprise, this is the main thing, which was a very important thing, because they didn't fight to win a war, because this wasn't how -- because they knew that they would be killed. This was only for a fight to pay back a little bit, to take revenge. Not to go and be killed without killing somebody else, and also to show that there are -- there is some resistance. This is for the honor of the Jews, for the honor of the Jewish flag. And there were other camps that they were resistance, but people don't know about it, it -- very few. Like for instance, there is a film, I -- probably you saw it, is the, "Escape from Sobibór." Did you see this? It's a very powerful video, and -- and how they tried to save m -- unfortunately from the people who escaped, they all practically were killed by the Poles, very few survived. As a matter of fact, the man who was the leader, his name was Friedlander, he was the leader and the organizer of this revolt, he -- after he escaped, he somehow survived, and he went back to his small town, he opened a small store, and six months later he was killed by the natives, by his friends, after he went out from Sobibór. So this is a very -- it's a big tragedy that even the people who did something, they were s -- they were killed later. Now, I have friends who were in the resistance in different places, but after the war, they were killed. Now -- now, take for instance, Treblinka, it was the most horrible camp, because Treblinka was not con -- con -- was not converted from a labor camp. This was built as a death camp, and they -- everything was done there

for the death camp. It was very terrible. 700,000 people were killed there. And when you say 700,000 dollars, I say it so fast, like -- like -- like we will count 700 dollars. So the -- an -- and from Treblinka they had also revolt and escape. From the escape on -- 600 escape, and how they escaped. Not from the people who had to be killed, from the people who were the permanent prisoners, who did the undressing, taking out the gold from the teeth, and from the 600, 40 survived from the -- from the 600, cause on the -- fr -- through the time they were killed. There is even a story that a Polish group, two Polish people found 12 people from Treblinka hiding in the woods, and they killed them. And when after -- after the war, somebody denounced them, and they were taken to court, and they got -- those two got three years jail for killing the 12 people. And after three years, they were -- came out, and imagine, for killing 12 people who escaped from Treblinka, they got three years. After they escaped, and they -- they were living in Poland, and later when the government changed, it wasn't any more a Communist government, in 1989, when -- after Lech Walesa, when they had the solidarity. So the people sued the government that they were arrested in -- and they -- and they were in jail three years. And the reason why they sued the government, they said they killed Jewish Bolshevik bandits. The people were Jewish Bolshevik bandits. Now, the people escaped from Sobibór, they're hide -- they were hidden -- them -- they hid themselves in the woods. So they said that they were Jewish Bolshevik bandits, and the reason they killed them is because they were good Polish patriots, and they wanted to kill the Bolshevik bandits. And this what they -- when they ki -- they say -- they sued the government. So th -- so one got in --

from the government, they gave him something, 400 million zlotas, which it was not millions, it came out to about 40,000 dollars compensation because they were three years in jail. Because they say tha -- this what -- they killed the Jews doesn't mean anything, but they say they killed Jewish Bolshevik bandits. And -- so th -- after this, when they got this in court, so about 300 Poles who were arrested for killing Jews, all of them started to sue the government, that they say that we killed Jewish Bolshevik bandits. And it's a very unfair. Now, I got -- when -- when I'm prepare -- I'm preparing now the new book, so I got a order from Bukonroffsky. Bukonroffsky was the head of the Polish underground in Poland, from the AK, General Bukonroffsky. So I got a order from Bukonroffsky, from September 1943, that he gave a order to all Polish AK members, that they should go out in the woods, and to find the Jewish Bolshevik bandits, and to kill them. And this is when, about three months later, when I approached my friend, he should take in my group, into his group, and then when they shot me, probably this was on account of the order that they have to kill all -- and also the order said, first you have to kill the commandant, and once the commandant will be killed, it will be easy to kill the rest of the group. So for this reason, probably, they got -- wanted to get rid of me, and then later they would kill the rest of us. So I got from England, I got the original order, the date, the number, because tho -- this is in the archives of this Polish underground, which is still in London.

Q: And I'd like to come back for the last two questions to America, and you mentioned before the Holocaust museum in Washington, D.C., and also Yad Vashem in -- in Israel.

How do you see the role of the Holocaust museum here, and do you keep up with some of the politics that are swirling around? And let's -- the first question first, how do you see the role of the museum here?

A: Well, the role of the museum, I am very disappointed, is because the museum actually -- this is -- it is a government institution, it is a government museum. Now, for this reason I was very much for Dr. Royach, because Dr. Royach was very dedicated, and he wanted -- he did not need this job, because he had a very good practice, he's a psychiatrist. But he wan -- because I know, I had discussions with him before he took the job, because he didn't want to take the job in fir-first place. Then later -- and I talked him in -- well, in --

Q: He was the previous director?

A: He was the previous director, and he spoke to me, naturally he didn't take on my work, but he ask me what I think about it, we are very good friends. So he wanted -- he wa -- took this job, because he wanted it should be a Jewish museum. It should be -- it -- the Holocaust shouldn't be watered down. Because there was a case that the -- some other nationalities or other ethnic groups came in, and they said well, we had a Holocaust. Holocaust was for the Jews. The Polish people say Polish Holocaust. Poland didn't have a Holocaust, because by Jews, every Jew had to be killed. No -- in -- in Poland, if you did something wrong, they arrested you. If you were in the underground, they caught you with weapons, they caught you with black mart -- mark -- market, so they arrested you. And wi -- and if they arrested you, it doesn't mean that the whole family had to be killed. By Jews is -- they're like Elie Wiesel said, not all victims were Jews, but all Jews were

victims. So -- so he wanted to keep it as a Jewish museum, and -- and -- and now, when he is on -- now that he received the best proof, he was pushed out because he didn't want Arafat should come as a Head of State. First thing, Arafat was not a Head of State, and th -- he said if Arafat was not such a Jew lover, and if he wanted to s -- that they said to learn about the Holocaust, he had Yad Vashem right under his nose. And he knew very well what the Holocaust is, because if Arafat will come as a Head of State, they had to close the museum, and give him the VIP treatment, and he was against it. And for this reason he was fired. So he -- I am afraid that this will be watered down, that the Holocaust, the Jewish Holocaust will be watered down, because other people will came -- come in. Like there was once in -- in a -- what was it, not a -- no, Croatia wanted to make a -- make something about the Holocaust, and Croatia was -- they were the worst murderers in -- in the world. They had the Oestasha, the Oestasha killed thousands and thousands of Serbs, thousand and thousands of -- of Jews, and now they are the victims, the victims of the Holocaust. Now, they were collaborators with Germany. They were not occupied by Germany, they were collaborators, it was never occupied by Germany. So this -- so I think that the Holocaust museum will be watered down, because it will not be strict that it's a Jewish Holocaust, where Yad Vashem is only a Jewish Holocaust, because they don't have other ethnic groups to be Yad Vashem, and to do -- to say, well, this was my Holocaust. And -- so it's a big difference. Now you have a other -- a -- a memorial museum in -- in New York. Now this is a new story, because this is a Holocaust museum, but it has three tiers. The first one when you go in, this -- they show

you the book -- the -- the life of Jews from before the war. And if you go in, you will see there's some of my pictures there. Then you have -- you have the -- the second floor is the Holocaust, and the third floor is how the Jews picked up their life after the Holocaust. It's a whole different -- it's a -- it's a all different story. But in Washington, I am afraid that the -- that the people who are now in charge, they will water down the Jewish Holocaust, and they -- they are artifacts, I gave them a lot of artifacts there what they have. But they arti -- and this was the reason that Dr. Royach was pushed out, because he wanted it should be a Jewish Holocaust museum, wa -- that the Holocaust was only Jewish.

Q: I have only one question left for you. Is there anything that I didn't ask you, or that you haven't mentioned yet that you think is very important? And you can think about it for a second. One or two things. One or two things.

A: Well, to be -- which is important that -- look, we can talk and talk, there is a lot of things important, but, about the Holocaust I think the most important thing is, is not to forget that there was a Holocaust. Because we cannot have the six million people die in vain. And in vain I mean they die, and there will be no remembrance, and there will not be no -- ho-how should I say it? That the people should not cry after them, because they died for no reason at all. That we should talk about them. So this is very important. And -- and the boo -- all the books, every book which is written, from every Holocaust, if the book is good, if the book is bad. Some are better, some are not so good, but everybody has to tell a story, and it's -- I encourage always when people say well, I want to write a

book, I encourage them, and if I can help them in any way, I do. Because everybody has a different story. So naturally some book are not so important, they are not -- but still, it's an important thing, because this is written by a survivor, and if he survived, it is important. [clock chiming]. Well, so this is -- this is mostly what, you know, so the children should be -- they should be taught -- they should be rem-reminded, and they should be told about the Holocaust. Because, if the children of my sisters, who were three and a half, four, five years old, if they will know that 50 years later, somebody will speak about them, maybe their life, their death wouldn't be so horrible. There will say somebody will remember me 50 years later. But if -- and also, I want -- now I have my -- I have my pictures that I saved, 500 photos. I remember the names, I remember the organizations they belong, and I want now to have an album. I don't know if you ever saw Vishniak's album. There was a man tha -- he wrote -- he had pictures from life [indecipherable] in Jews. I want to have this album. The reason why -- and I want to mention everybody who is in the pictures, everybody's name, because I want that someday -- not someday, this -- everybody's name should be mentioned. It shouldn't be like he lived like -- like comes in autumn, the leaves dry out, the wind comes, blows away the leave, and the leave disappears, like this was never -- it was never a leave. It's the same thing, I don't want that the person who lived, and the Holocaust killed them, the people were killed, and they disappeared, and the name was never mentioned. Because he was a human being, he was alive, he had dreams. He wanted to live, and to have a future, to have children, have grandchildren. But he was wiped out. So I want this person, should

be written down that there was a man who lived. I have his picture. And then the pictures should see this is how he looked. This what I want, and this what my dream is, to have an album with everybody's picture, it should be recorded that there was once a man like this, and he was destroyed. So there are certain things that I still would like to do. And if I will do it, I don't know. I try.

Q: My last question has sort of two parts. One is, you mentioned in the videotaped interview that you didn't want to come to America, but you -- you went, and you never thought you could as -- achieve as much as you have. My question -- my first question then is, what did you achieve?

A: Well, yeah, I didn't want to come America, because -- I think I explained to you, my aim was -- my dream was a --

Q: Yes, but what did -- but what did --

A: -- and then when I came America, like I said to you that when I -- in the beginning, I couldn't make a living, I didn't have a job, and I was nobody, because here in America is -- even if you are nobody, but when you have money, you give charity, you become somebody. So then, what I achieved, I established a business, I established certain things that -- donations. I helped my family in -- in Israel if I could. I -- and -- and -- and -- I -- I am involved in -- in a lot of organizations, and -- and people know me. Like, for instance, if we go someplace, and my wife is always, see this is Norman Salsitz, he wrote this article, nor -- so this is an achievement, that I am somebody, and it doesn't mean that I have to make money out of it, but I want to be involved, and I am involved. Some people

they -- they didn't want to be involved. And ever -- if I belonged to organization, I cannot just belong to organization, and to say, well I -- I belong to organization, I pay dues and that's it. If I belong to org -- organization, I have to be active. Otherwise I don't belong to the organization. And achievement is like three years ago, I -- I was the man of the year here in -- in Springfield. [indecipherable] made a nice -- and a f -- and a few years before, from Israel, once, I was honored. This was a -- this is an achievement that I am doing something, and then the people try to -- to pay back something. Not in money, but some acknowledgement. And everybody wants to have some acknowledgement. So this what I meant, that in America, I started to make a living, maybe a little better than -- more than a living, and -- and we live like -- like American people. Live a nice house. My daughter got married, I bought her a house. She opened her office in Boston, I bought her a -- I bought her a -- a office in Boston. Two weeks ago I went, and I bought her a house in New Hampshire. She wanted a house on the -- on the -- on the lake, it to -- should be close to where the ski -- because they going skiing every weekend in the winter, so this will be close. So this is an achievement, that I could do it for my daughter. Now, I don't know if she could do it on her own, but if I did it, and for my grandchildren, this is an achievement.

Q: Well, maybe that was already the answer to my very last question, but let me say this. In the very beginning of this interview, I asked you who was Naftali Salishitz, and then I asked you who was Taddek. Now I ask you who then is Norman Salsitz at this point?

A: Well, Norman Salsitz is all of those things, all of those things. Now, if I speak about something, and if I want to say something from my hometown, Kolbushova, I alway -- I call it home. I am -- I was there 22 years, but I am in the United States 50 years, more than double, but still this -- even America is dear to me, and I think -- I think the best -- biggest patriots America had -- has, are people -- newcomers, because we appreciate America. Some people who are born in America, they don't appreciate America. We appreciate. And then, if -- if -- so I love America, but still, when I say home, I have my little town, this is my home. Taddek was when I survived, and to be -- why did I survive? I fought back. I didn't survive because I was standing there with my hands down when I was laying on the floor, shot four times. And if I wouldn't be able to grab my revolver, and to kill them, I wouldn't be alive, because they were -- today I got a letter from one of the people from my town in -- a very nasty letter, a very anti-Semitic letter. She is the head of the culture and history department. She was a professor in university. A very anti-Semitic letter. And I answered her also a very strong letter. And then later she wrote to me, which I never answered, she said, "Well, I didn't," -- I accused her of being anti-Semitic, she said, "But I didn't kill nobody, but you are a murderer." Why am I murderer? Because I killed those two guys. So when I was laying on the floor, wounded four times, I should have l -- be there, and beg them give me one more bullet, and finish me off. But because I protected myself, and my brother, and I shot them, so n-naturally I am a murderer. So -- so when it comes Taddek, Taddek is somebody who refused to die. When it comes to Norman Salsitz, Norman Salsitz is all of those things. Now, I am

living, I am in a free country, I can do anything I want. I never had anything bad from the government in the United States. They never did anything wrong to me, and I can speak up. If something is wrong, I open my mouth. I have -- I have stories here is that something happens in -- in -- in Hoboken, something happens there, but I always spoke up, and I always could yell, and I always could say what I want. Nobody said be -- be quiet because you are a Jew. Nobody yet. There were some people who have anti-Semitic remarks, but nobody yet told me [indecipherable], nobody kicked me because I am a Jew. And this is what America is. I can be what I am, and I am not afraid that somebody will say you cannot be this, you cannot be this because you somebody different. And this what I tell the children when I spoke to them. You should be on the watch, if some skinhead, or somebody comes to you, and will -- he will tell you a story that this Black is not good, that this Oriental is not good, this Jew is not good. You should always answer, and you should always stay on guard, and then, we will not have a Holocaust in America. But if nobody will say it, who knows? There will be enou -- enough people, they will get bigger and bigger, and we could have problems. So this the people -- the children understand. But being in America I think is a privilege, and the privilege is because I can be anything I want. I can be -- so long as I'm not against the law. The only thing I cannot be is a president, because I was not born here. But otherwise, I can be anything [indecipherable] capable, I can do it. Nobody can stop me. My daughter, she is a daughter of survivors, she is a lawyer. My son-in-law, he's a third generation, he's my son-in-law, he's a assistant professor at Harvard. He's acknowledged, he goes around all the world.

My grandchildren, I hope they will be something. They can do it here. Where we, being in Poland for thousand years -- see, I always -- I always was a Polish Jew. And this what I was hurt. I wanted to be a Jewish Pole. Being a Jewish Pole it means I could be a Jew Protestant, I could be a Jew Christian, a Jew cat -- a -- a -- a Jew Catholic, but I wanted to be a Jewish Pole, but no, I was a Polish Jew. And this is a big difference between a Polish Jew, and a Jewish Pole. And this what I could never achieve in Poland. Like take for instance, in Italy. In Italy the Jews were treated very well, and 80 percent of Jews in ta -- in Italy survived. There were not too many Jews in Italy, but as many there were, 80 percent survived. Now you will ask, Mussolini was a partner with Hitler. Why? Because the Italian people said, “We don’t have Jews. We have Italians with a different religion.” This what they approved the Jew, a different religion. And th -- and again, later, when they had undergrounds, so they asked th-the Italians from the underground, they said, “Why do you go and help the Jews?” They said, “When we on the underground, we fight against Hitler. Everything what Hitler says, we are opposite. He says to kill the Jew, so we save them.” But in Poland, was different. In Poland, when he said to kill the Jews, they said -- my wife had a boyfriend, he loved her, and he was everything. He said, “I hate the Germans, what they do with Poland, but one thing I have to admire and thank them, that they got rid of the Jews for us.” And he was a Polish patriot. But this was very important, he got rid of the Jews. So this is the different America -- I say America is my country. See, when it comes the Fourth of July, I hang out a flag. I am the only one on the street to hang out the flag. And the reason why I hang out the flag, because in Poland, if I

didn't hang out the flag, the police came, gave me a fine. Here, nobody gets fined by the police, and because they don't force me, I want to hang out a flag, because I think this is very important for me.

Q: Was a privilege speaking with you, thank you very much.

A: Well. So I -- I s -- I -- I said what I -- what I [inaudible] so I --

Q: No, it was -- it was -- thank you very much for speaking with us. And this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial interview with Norman Salsitz.

End of Tape Five, Side B

Conclusion of Interview