

Eugene Lebovitz Interview

June 29, 2000

This is a second interview since our first tape didn't work but we're going to make sure this one does. Just to remind you, we're going to talk about pre-war things that were going on with your life and how you lived before the war and then from liberation on. And what was your name at birth?

Evžen Lebovics.

Okay, and so can you spell your first name?

E-v-z-e-n but the "z" has a little thing above it; it's called a hatchet. I don't know ... whatever it's called "zen", spelled "zen", whatever.

And your last name was the same?

C-s ... L-e-b-o-v-i-c-s. But we came and we became citizen and we changed it to Lebovitz because otherwise they say Lebovics or whatever.

When were you born?

April 5, 1924.

In what city?

Berehovo.

You spell it? You're good at this.

B-e-r-e-h-o-v-o, Berehovo, Czechoslovakia.

And where is that now? Is it still in Czecho ...?

It's still there except changed owners three, four times.

So, is it the Czech Republic?

No more Czech Republic. In 1938 this part of Czechoslovakia was given back to Hungary according to the Vienna Pactum. At that time the Prime Minister Chamberlain of England and our idea of friends made a pact with Germany in order to avoid a World War, they cut up Czechoslovakia and this became Hungary.

And is it Hungary today?

In 1945, Russia occupied it and kept it forever so it became Soviet Russia. Since Soviet Russia fell apart, now it's Ukraine. So, this is the last position. It's Ukraine.

Okay.

So, I became a Ukrainian.

Ukrainian ... congratulations. And what was the total population of the city?

About approximately 18,000, 18,500 ... approximately within ...

And what was the Jewish population?

The Jewish population was approximately between six and eight thousand from the record I have now and it's ... right now they're approximately about ten to twelve people living there.

Ten to twelve, wow.

And most time they don't have a *minyan* because most of the ones who there saw the winter married and they go to Szarvas. It is about 30 kilometers from there and jointly a couple of these cities now have a *minyan*. Somebody from America brought a sefer Torah for them and they have a *minyan* but ... It's a sad story.

Yeah, from 8,000 ... wow. What do you know about your birth? Were you born at home? Were you born in a hospital?

There was no birth in hospital. There was a *hebamme* – a midwife. Unless there was some complications they had a doctor but most of the time a doctor wasn't even there but just a midwife.

And you were born in your home?

Yeah.

And what were your parent's names?

My parents' name was ... my father's name was Abraham and my mother's name was Schifra.

Schifra?

... Sharica ... or Shari.

Oh, so Shari. And how did your parents meet?

I never asked them. (laughing) Could have been a *Shidduch* [arranged marriage], could have been who knows....

And what was your mother's role in the house? Did she work out of the house or ...?

Nobody there worked out of the house in those days. They had enough to take care of the family and the household. You know, there was no dishwasher, washing machine, and all this. So it was a full-time job.

Okay. And what was your father's occupation?

He was a custom tailor and we had a tailor shop. So was my grandfather, a custom tailor. But some of the people ... I just sometimes...I'll tell you like ... you would not believe ... we didn't have running water, okay? The house, in the four corners we had a barrel to collect the rainwater. I mean, the rainwater was so, such a, a commodity practically because to do wash, the clothes, they had to wash in rainwater because that's soft. The water, whatever we brought up was harsh so even the rainwater was such a big thing that we had in all four corners collecting rainwater.

And tell me, if you would then, members of your family, their names, ages, and ...

My brother was Sandor, which would be like Alex here.

Shandor?

Sandor, S-a-n-d-o-r, and he was born on September 2, 1920. And my sister's name, Helena. She was born in 1922 and I think June the 21st was her birthday. So there was the three of us.

And you were the baby of the family?

Right.

Did you have grandparents?

I had both sets of grandparents alive.

Did they live near you?

They lived in the same town. One set of grandparents and the other one lived about 20 kilometers away just in a different town.

So, did you...you saw them often? You were close with them?

Very close. From my mother's side, the ones who lived in the same city, they had ... my grandfather was in the transportation business. When I mean transportation, they had wagons like flatbed wagons or sometimes they put up sides so they ... most of the things, whatever, was transported through wagon. We didn't have automobiles or trucks or anything like that. And they had a bunch of horses and cows and every morning I went and picked up some fresh milk that they were milking the cow and brought it home for breakfast.

And did you, would you ever go and stay with the grandparents?

Yes, I stayed with my grandparents a lot and also ... I mean every *Shabbos*, I went to them always with my grandparents. We had - when I said we had a kosher home I don't know one family who didn't have it. I mean, that was the ... Saturday, the city practically was closed down because about 95 percent of businesses were owned by Jews.

Oh, wow, wow! What kind of neighborhood did you live in?

We didn't have such things as neighborhoods. I mean, we had somebody here, somebody there. I mean, um...

Maybe a group of houses?

Yes, the group of houses and then ... there wasn't anything like you see here of houses built next to one another or one on top of the other. There wasn't developed as such. We didn't have any apartment houses or anything like that.

No apartments?

No, no.

Individual houses?

Fairly primitive because like I said, if there is no running water, you couldn't have. You had to have your own well. You had to go ... we bought wood enough for the winter so every morning you have to go and chop woods and chop it to little pieces so you can start a fire in the kitchen and so on.

Did you have electricity?

Yes.

And how many rooms did you have in the house?

Well, at the beginning, we lived in a, in a place where we had the tailor shop together. So actually the house was the shop and the room. Then in 1936, my father built a new house where we had the tailor shop connected to it but was a separate shop so ... it was very lovely but we had a little veranda it's called, you know, like a closed porch. And then we had one, you call it, I always called it living/dining room so ... and we had two bedrooms. One bedroom my parents lived in. The three of us lived in the other room.

Did you have a separate kitchen?

Yeah, the kitchen was pretty big. Yes.

And how did the laundry get done?

How did it get done? We had one of those huge, long wooden thing, I don't know what you call it here, and it was done by hand, whatever.

Using the rainwater?

Using the rainwater if possible. If there was no rain, then we took them down to the river. We had a small, little river, freshwater river, and washed it all there. Then we had cords, or strings rather, and everything was dried in air.

So, would you consider yourself middle-class or ...?

I would say middle-class.

Did you take vacations?

Yes, I took vacations. Went to my grandmother. That was our vacation.

And what kind of foods did you eat?

The food was very good because we ... I mean, there was no supermarkets or other possibilities so my mother ... I used to go with my mother. We had one of those ... how do you call it? Like a basket. Went to the market, bought a chicken or duck or whatever and then I took it to the *shocket*, had it slaughtered and brought it home. We plucked the feather in the slaughterhouse so you wouldn't make a mess in the house and usually meat, I believe, we had once a week; meat, and for *Shabbos* we had fish and generally speaking, vegetables was plenty.

So, mostly your food was vegetables except on *Shabbat*?

Yes, lots of potatoes and cauliflowers and carrots and that kind of stuff.

Did you grow any of those yourself?

Everybody had a little, little garden. I mean we didn't grow enough to live on but we grow, yes.

What was your favorite thing to eat?

My favorite thing was, once a week we had ... you know what chickpeas are?

Uh-huh.

The chickpeas or beans was ground and we had duck with *schmaltz* on top of it. Then rugelach. The rugelach as the thing that you ...

Oh, yeah, fried?

Fried ... oh, and that was the best meal ever.

I loved rugelachs.

Oh yeah. Oh my daughter-in-law comes to house. Oh, she loves it. Kathy always makes it because we don't have a heart to throw it out.

Yeah, right. My mom used to make it. I remember that. What language did you speak at home?

Yiddish and Hungarian.

Did you speak any other languages?

Well, Czechoslovakian. We went ... it was Czechoslovakia went to school but my mom, my dad, both grew up in Hungary. So prior to ... Czechoslovakia was established after World War II [sic - means WWI]. Prior to that, there was no Czechoslovakia. So we were born and raised in Austro-Hungarian time and that's how they spoke ... but when you went to school you had, you had to learn Czech.

Right. Were your parents involved in anything political?

Well, my father was very much involved in the Zionist organization. He was president of the Mizrachi which was mostly ... We had two kinds of Zionism really: the left side ... the right side and the ... they were called the Betar. They were militant but ... I don't know if you ever heard of Ze'ev Zhabotinsky? He was the leader of this. In fact, some of these were very much military, strictly wanted to take Palestine to establish Israel. He, he died here in Long Island. He was buried and later, when we had the State of Israel, they moved his body to Israel. Then we

had the left side who sort of Communist in as sort of like the workman sector and the Mizrachi was the religious party.

And is that what you were involv- ... your father was involved in was Mizrachi?

Right. Now I was brought up in, it was called *Ha Noar ha Zioni inner jugend*, which you are not left or right. You're just a Zionist organization and was more or less a way of life for the young people to get together. But my father was very much involved. This is from Israel from the book from our city and it said, "This is the last excursion of the *Ha Noar ha Zioni* in 1941." Here I am.

Oh, look. Wow, you're a skinny little guy there.

So, now you can see. This is [unclear] organization.

And how old are you here?

1941.

Oh, okay. So, that ...

I was born in '24.

So you're 17?

Seventeen. But this was the last excursion because after this gathering, most of them were arrested. At that time already. So, we moved.

Was that a pretty popular thing? All of your friends joined it? That was kind of the thing to do?

Yes. Yes.

Wow – ok. Now tell me about the ...

This is my Ukraine thing.

This is in a foreign language. I can't read this. Tell me about the schools that you went to.

I went to a regular public school and I finished three years of *gymnasium*.

Is that a high school?

It wasn't a high school. It was a little bit higher level of a high school. We had, and I don't know how to [unclear]. This was the *gymnasium*. I was going to show you

this is the city where I come from - Berehovo. This says that we have Nazi headquarters in town.

Oh, wow.

And this was part of Czechoslovakia, which became Hungary. From this area here, which is number one, there's 288,333 people deported from this small, little area.

Wow, wow.

You can't ... saw it on the ...

Right. It's unbelievable.

... on the tape.

Okay, so you said you went to a public school. Did they have Jewish schools?

We didn't have Jewish school but we went to *cheder* in the afternoon.

Like a Hebrew school?

Well, it wasn't a school. It was a *cheder* but the rabbi just told us how to read from *mizracha*, and whatever, and talked about holidays or things but it was not such a thing as a school.

Was it every day?

Every day, oh yes, every day.

So, your day at school was like from what hours to what hours?

Like from 7:30 'til 2:00 or 1:30, something like that.

Then?

Then we went home, had lunch, and then we went to Hebrew school, whatever, and then we went to play soccer and whatever.

So, how long was *cheder*?

Until it was done.

(Laughing) OK

We played ... we didn't have balls but we made from stockings and rags, we made balls and that's how we played it.

What were your teachers like at the public school?

I don't, I don't really remember if I can convey what they...

Were they antisemitic?

The tone in the population, those was always antisemitic. Whenever there was a Gentile ... any holiday like Easter or Christmas or anything, most of the Jewish people didn't go out on the street. It was always dangerous. They were beaten up or something. It was ... well, it wasn't that bad under Czechoslovakia but the day the Hungarians, which was November 7th, 1938, when they liberated us, okay? That first afternoon when the Hungarian army marched in ... there was no World War yet ... the Jews, I would say probably more than 50 percent had a beard. Probably more. I know very little people who didn't have. As they were marching and the Jews was clapping and - or happy because, like my father, all the older people were born under Hungarian, so they took the bayonets and cut the Jews beard. That was the first time.

So they knew this was not going to be a good thing?

Right. And that was it. Then they started ... I don't know if I should go in or what part go some more detail ... but they started revisioning, in order to have a tailor, be a tailor or shoe maker or banking, you have to have a, a license. And in order to get a license, you had to show that you are four years an apprentice and you passed a test and all that thing. Now they started to revision and see that people who were, who was not born of... that wasn't born there, they took away their license and you had to hire a Gentile and work under his name and you don't have anything - and it went on and on and on so.

Let me go back to here then because I promise we'll get to that. What did you do ... what was it like being a teenager? You said you played ball. You said you were involved in the Zionist organization. Were you involved in any ...?

It was okay ... you know, we didn't know any better. So whatever it was, it was okay. I don't remember ...

What did you do in your spare time?

In my spare time I used to draw, I remember. Like I took some little pieces of silk from my father, from the shop, and I made some little paintings and things. I always did something when I was young. I enjoyed that. And I also, later I learned to play music.

On?

On a clarinet. I played in a marching band.

How, where was that?

Well, we had ... it was called [unclear]. It was like a national guard, like a youth organization, which was not political. But, the Czechoslovakian, it was from like '36 on was a war-like atmosphere. And we had drills all the time, like air raid drills, and they took from the school kids and organized so if there would be an air raid or something to go shout or something ... and I was part of that. And that was one of the reasons I had to leave town later because we were kids but I don't know if you have the Hebrew Academy, if they train kids to go shouters or some ...

During a tornado drill is all.

Okay, but if you have a war like a tornado drill but people expect every day, you would have an organization that kids would help.

Right.

It's like you have a school-crossing kids also. I mean that's the kind of thing it was but with anything you did under ... it was no good. Doesn't matter what it was.

But it wasn't Jewish, it was everybody?

No, this was everybody but it so happened that many of the Jews were other leaders in the school and the business, you know, so that's how it was.

Did you go to parties? Did you date, that kind of thing?

No, we didn't, we didn't have parties. What we had is if we had anything, we sat down in a circle and we sang and then we had some word games. You know, that's it. There's no such thing as parties.

Did you work?

I worked since, since maybe I was seven years old. I mean, I did some, whether it was called work or help ...

Did you have a job like ...?

No, I worked in the tailor shop because my father was said to my brother and sister and me, "I want you to learn the trade. No matter whatever's going to happen in your life, I hope you never use it but you should have something because anywhere

**in the world you will go, all you need is a thimble and a needle and you can work.”
And it was true. That’s the only reason that really I saved my life.**

Right, right, yeah. Did you get along with your parents?

Very much so.

Were you rebellious at all?

No.

Or just always ...

**No, I never ...I never. I mean we didn’t know those things. We obeyed and that’s it.
And if you didn’t ...**

Yeah, right. What values or standards were most important to your parents? Or that you picked up from them?

I don’t know. To be a *mensch* and, of course ... I don’t really remember the concept even if I would think at the time what ... you know?

Okay. So, you had *Shabbat* every week?

Oh yes.

And did you go to serv... to synagogue?

I went morning and night, all the time.

Every day?

Every day, oh yes. We never missed out.

What was the holiday ... What holidays were most important in your family?

Of course the *Pesach*. That was, that was incredible.

Was that your favorite?

Well, absolutely. We, we went and helped make the *matzah*. They were made by hand. You didn’t have, you didn’t have boxes or anything. We had, in the synagogue, they had one place where, every year, they had and everybody went and helped, made by hand.

Wow. Did you celebrate any non-Jewish holidays?

No.

Were there any other – were there any Jewish cultural events in your city, like the theatre, Jewish-Yiddish theatre, or music, or anything like that?

Only amateur, so that you know, in the youth organization, we put on a show. Some were singing, playing. My father played the violin and I learned a lot of Yiddish songs and my grandfather were very musical. As a matter of fact, last time I played here for the [unclear] Yiddish Club.

Oh really? Oh, that's nice.

I used to go to the Shalom Plaza from the [unclear], we had once every three months a little concert sort of for the old people. And I know all the Yiddish songs from those days and it was just fabulous. They loved it.

I'm sure. I'm sure. Did you have much, many relationships with non-Jews? Did your parents encourage you to have non-Jewish friends or did they care?

We didn't have non-Jewish friends. We had like neighbors, non-Jews, we were friends with them, but what I consider friends, no. There was always something that invisible that was there.

Right, like separation. Now when you were, when you were a tailor, when you were working with your dad as a tailor in the tailor shop, did you have Jewish and non-Jewish clients?

Yes.

And was it a successful ...?

Very successful, yes. We had six, seven, eight people working all the time for us.

Okay, so, um, how old were you when Czechoslovak..., when your town was occupied?

In 1938 - I was 14.

1938? So, you were 14 years old?

Right.

So, I was going to ask about marriage but we don't ask about that yet because ... Okay, I'm coming back to that. How did you know ... how did you first become aware of the Nazi presence? What little things ...?

Well, in 1939, the war started and it was 1,600 German soldiers in our town.

They just appeared?

Yes, well, they were going – you know, we are bordering Poland so on the way there, stopped at various German headquarters ...

So, that's where the headquarters ... ?

And from there, well, they shifted them and then in bunches back and forth, whatever they did. So, there was I, the very first day that they came in, those people. When the war started, it was strictly a Hungarian occupation. This was from 1938. In '39, when the war started, then Germany established a headquarters. They made the - went to the president of the Jewish community and told him to make a committee that they negotiated. And they took ... they established ... in the middle of the city there's like the Plaza here, was a marketplace, a huge ... I mean territory was no problem. Everything was big. And they put together some hostages and they said, "Number one: if any German soldier would be killed, we gonna take ten for one and kill people." So, the first ordinance was that we had to put together a headquarters for 1,600 soldiers, which meant to make beds, linens, towels, wash basins, and whatever it is. If not, they gonna kill so many people.

And this wasn't just the Jewish community had to do this, was it?

Just the Jewish community. This - all the things from here on that happened was only with the Jewish community. The Gentile not included. So this was the very first. Then, a couple of ... I don't, I don't know dates or whether it was two weeks after or four weeks after, they said they needed a million penga which is like you're saying a million dollars here because the dollar meant money. And all this was under the threat, "If you don't, we gonna do this or that." So, we had a meeting in the synagogue ... if I, if I show you ... I don't know, you wouldn't be able to see the synagogue. This was our synagogue. (showing photograph from book)

(Gasping) Oh my gosh...

There's no synagogue in Kansas City or United States, very few. But you would see ...

This is gorgeous.

... This was two floors. It, I would say the ceiling was probably 250 ... higher than the temple here, Temple B'nai Jehudah. And it was magnificent thing. They converted that into a theatre the Russians. Anyway, they had a meeting and started asking people ... most of the people knew who had what. And everybody was said, "You have to give 500, you have to give 1,000." I mean, had to put together the money in 24 hours. I mean, this was no ... not ... After that, I think it was the end of '39 or beginning of 1940, there came an ordinance that every Jewish couple must give in their wedding bands because the need for the war effort, they need the gold.

And when you hear today about the Swiss gold, there was not one human couple who lived there who doesn't have a piece in it. And this is the beginning. I don't know if they had more jewelry or not but everybody had a wedding band. But this was an ordinance so it's not something that they took. You gave it in. We did get a receipt but later, a month later, you had to turn in the receipt so it doesn't matter. That's how they... On this, I can tell, this went on and on that had no idea. I used to tell President Truman. He wanted to know how these things developed from day to day. And that's like our people, when they ask me ... so many people in America, [unclear] "You think it could ever happen here?" And I said, "The difference what, of course it could happen except here, in the stroke of a pen they could accomplish as much as took Germany six years. Because, over there we had no banking system, no checking accounts never existed. So, it took so many years and so many ordinances to take everything out. And then you have to sell your farm and you have to sell you ... and borrow ... Here, if one stroke of pen if the government freezes the checking account, you're dead. I mean, how many people carry a million dollar in their pocket? And I have to say to you one thing, this is very important. I'm trying so my kids and also maybe people whoever listen to it understand that when you bought a radio, for instance ... I'm going back even under the Hungarians, you had to be registered. And, of course, we didn't have those little radios. The radio was a telephone ... it's like a television now, one of those big boxes. The first ordinance when the war started, everybody, every Jew, not Gentile, the Jews had to turn in their radio. And if they catch somebody listening to radio, they shoot them on the spot. And I tell people every day whether I meet them, even customers come in the tailor shop that please, the last time, if people in the United States would have to register their guns, that would be the end of society as you know it. Because I hate guns and I don't have to tell you about killings and things, but once the government ... they knew who had a gun ...

I understand what you're saying.

... that was then because they just went, they knew what it is and took it. And you don't know. I mean, one S.O.B. can get in power here, I don't know if it's now or 10 years later or something, and that would be the end. At least you have the right to defend yourself and I think it's the most important thing. They could absolutely ban Uzis and nobody needs machine guns and sub-machine guns and ... but to have a gun for your protection or for hunting, fishing absolutely should be free.

I understand what you're saying.

If we would have had guns, or would be allowed, people did have guns because they were - a lot of them were hunting. You were hunting. That was a way of life, too. And probably 15 – 20 percent of the population would have been alive. But the very first thing ... I'm telling you, would you believe a radio was such a big deal?

Right, communication, right. Did your parents do anything or you just couldn't do anything?

We davened – we davened. We prayed. We prayed so much, God will help and we had a lot of the *Juden*, you know, organizations who wanted to do something but they didn't let them. Look, what is gonna be? God will help so there's gonna be a pogrom so, you know, this is not, no ...

Nothing you really could do?

Nothing.

Did you remember Crystal Night?

Of course I remember it.

I mean, but you were aware ... news spread about it?

We didn't have news then. Some of these things came, somebody somehow find out ahead, you know ... but we didn't know at the time. We knew after ...

Did you know about book burnings and boycotts?

Well, we - to tell you exactly, most of the information that I know today, we find out after the liberation, you know, more. Even the places where I was and the thing ... no, we didn't know, we knew ... You know, Kathy worked for the Swedish Red Cross for Wallenberg. I'm sure I don't know how many times I seen him or knew him, I never knew the importance of the thing, what he did or anything until after the war we find out. When I was in a compound, in a labor camp. The most important thing was to stay alive. I mean, it...

Right. When did you have to wear a star? Immediately?

No, not immediately. I think it was '43 or '44. I don't remember exactly.

And, and ...

Well, I didn't ... no the labor camp I was, I didn't have to wear a star. I had an armband, a yellow band. We were in civilian clothes. We were part ... the labor camp was ... how it started, the civilian population was all called into the war. It was a war. So, there's no people ... there's factories and fields without harvest. There was no way that they could do the work. So, what they decided first to take from 16-35 (reference to their ages) young men and we went into a place where ... like I don't know, like Fort Dix, New Jersey, or... When I went in the first day about 30,000 people from all over and from there they requisitioned ... each unit of labor camp consisted of 225 men. 225 men had five soldiers and one captain in charge. So even if they didn't need that much, they did not break up units. So they took 225 or multiples of them, whatever they needed. So, we went ... I was not in one place terribly long. Like when we harvested the fields, it was like six weeks. And also

don't forget the communication wasn't ... practically zero because they didn't have all these things that you have today so even to get an ordinance or requisition to work, it could wait two weeks. Somebody had to go or somebody to come. There was not even phone connections there.

So, when you were 16, you went to a labor camp? Is that right?

I was later. I said they took from 16 ...

From 16?

Right.

So, what ... they came in when you were 14?

Right.

What was that life like between when you were there ...?

Life like was nothing. It was fear because, first thing, in a year later the war started.

Did you go to school?

Yes. We still went to school up until end of 1939.

And then what happened?

Nothing. I'm talking about strictly Jewish, okay?

Right, yeah. Did you work with your dad?

I did. I did work and then I had to ... we were sort of half hiding, and working, and whatever. And we already had an underground organization. There was ... this Zhabotinsky that I was talking about, came in 1936 to our city and recruited people to go to Palestine. It was illegal ... and illegally. And we probably had at least 150 people went to him and he warned us at the time. And, the problem was also, like we knew what was going on in Poland. There was some people who escaped to our city telling us what they did, how they killed people and we told them that, "If you spread such rumors, we are gonna give you up to the ..."

Oh, you didn't believe them?

We didn't believe them. Two weeks later, it came to us and then we went somewhere else. Same thing, it was unbelievable tell me that we didn't...I mean, it was just...

Too horrendous to believe that it would really happen. So, what happen ... what did you do? Where did you go from ...?

I don't remember exactly. I know that I was home until end of it was '40 ... '41. We had - this was the last excursion that ... the picture I showed you. I think it was 1941.

It was '41.

After that, we had to leave, all of us, because they find out about it. Whatever it was ... and they arrested quite a few people and where we could escape.

And where did you ... Did you escape?

Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Where did you go?

From then on, I never was home anymore. Well, we ... I went into the labor camp.

So you were taken away?

I was taken away. And luckily, you know, when we went in, the first thing they asked, "How many...who's a tailor?" "Who's a shoe maker?" "Who's a lawyer?" "Who's a 'this and that'?" So, later on, I wound up in a tailor shop making uniforms. So, that saved my life and then we got in to Budapest where there was a factory ... my parents knew my wife's parents. My grandmother and her mother come from the same town. And they said, "If you ever go up to Budapest, I want you to look them up." And I did. I had a little more freedom being in labor camp because I, if I want I just put the yellow band in my pocket and I went, I visited them many time. And when we got married, really, probably, normally, I don't know really, it's very possible that we would get married. By the time we thought it's the end of the world anyway. We didn't think we was going to make it so might as well.

So, when did you get married?

We got married in the ghetto in Budapest during the war, in 1944, August the 5th.

Okay, so I'm trying to get this ...

Anyway, let's go [unclear] ...

Well, I'm almost to there. So, you were put in a labor camp and then you went to Budapest and you worked in a tailor shop ...

And from Budapest, they took us in November, I think that was the 22nd when the war was already, they were bombing Budapest every day, we walked to the border of Austria and they let us go over there.

So, you spent ...Did you... How long do you think you spent in Budapest? Was it the most of the time?

Yes, most of the time. But first we went to the factory, a woodworking factory, then we harvested the fields, then ... it was five different places doing different things.

Lots of different things. Before you were taken away ... or even while you were in the labor camps, did any non-Jews help you?

The commander of my unit where I was, I was his personal. I took care of his clothes, I shined his shoes, and I was, he was a superior court judge and he liked me very much. And when we were deported, he gave me a pistol. He gave me a gun.

Really?

Yeah. I went back to Budapest, I don't know how many times. I was back after war. I tried to look him up. I never ever hear of what happened to him. A very humane, fantastic ... oh, he hated those guys. The worst people were the sergeants and the ones below the sergeants. Mean son-of-a-bitches. I mean, there's no reason to beat people. They walked around with that, a big (clearly gesturing) ... just for pleasure. I mean, no reason. We worked 12 hours a day or more. We had every morning a bowl of dried cabbage soup and a loaf of bread. There was no facilities for cooking.

Let me ask you this. You said when you, when you were deported he gave you the gun. Where were you deported to?

Austria

Oh, when they said you could go?

They already ... they took all the Hungarian ... whatever they could - Austria.

Okay. I was going to ask, the question was the circumstances leading up to your liberation, did they just realize it was the end of things and they let you go?

No, they didn't realize anything. It was far from liberation. The war ended on May the 9th and this was November of 1944.

Oh!

They just deported people.

Oh – I see.

It was a deportation.

Okay. So, when you were liberated, when you knew, when you went in to Austria, did you know you were free?

We wasn't free.

Who took you to Austria?

They took us to the border and let us go. I don't mean "that you can go free." We had to walk from there to the campsite.

Oh, that's what I thought that you meant, that you were free. Okay.

No, no, no. We are just ... they deport us from Hungary and then they gave it over to the ... to the authorities.

And where did you go in Austria? Where did they deport you to?

We are going to go to Mauthausen.

Oh, okay.

Walking. So, there was various places and times. I mean, this was really a horror. But we found out, I don't remember the date, in January, I found out already that Hungary was liberated. Russia occupied, I think was January 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, something like that. The first week in January because the Russian troops occupied Hungary. So, somehow or other, there was always somebody or somehow through somebody, however, they found out some things, and we knew that Hungary was already ... that's the reason ... I don't know if you ever read the story of Wallenberg. Raoul Wallenberg?

Uh-huh, I did, I did.

So, that tells you also the date and that date, I think, it was January the 9th that Wallenberg wanted to talk to the Russian commander who occupied Budapest and he disappeared from then on. Nobody knew what happened to him.

You, did you marry Kathy while you were still in Budapest? Is that what you ...?

And while I was still a member of labor camp.

Right. So, did she go with you?

No, she stayed on in Budapest.

You found her later?

I came back after ... Yes.

OK, then I'll go one with... So, you were on your way to Mauthausen and then what?

And then we were... I don't know exactly but we were liberated by the British.

Did you, were you in the camp?

In the camp. And, uh you know, in just one day, you found out that they were there. I mean...

You just saw the British? Were the Nazis leaving? Had they fled or anything?

They disappeared. They fled and, of course a lot of them was caught and a lot of them ... I watched last night, I have a tape from the Palestine Brigade. I don't know if you ever saw that. If you like to spend an hour, I'd like to loan it to you.

I'd love to see it.

It's a very interesting thing because we were part of that.

Oh, oh.

I have goosebumps. We watched it, both of us, Kathy and I. We were on the trucks.

Oh, my gosh. So, when the British came in and, and they liberated you, what happened? How were you treated? How did things change?

Badly. They were very mean.

The British?

The British was very mean, very bad. We were practically like prisoners but not in a way of killing or beating or anything like that but they were just rude people, very rude.

What did they do with you?

They didn't do nothing. They were just ... I mean, we had a very minimal care. I don't think they really cared for you.

So, did they take you someplace else? Did they feed you there? What did ...?

No, stories, if you know, that the Palestine Brigade ... at that time, was no Israel ... was part of the British liberation forces of Italy. This tape is the most fantastic thing. It tells you how this came about. It's the most interesting thing that I know. I know that very few people in the community really knows. Anyway, they ... when I had ... and they, one night they came 20 trucks, identified themselves ... they had the British forces and they had the yellow star. They said that they part of the Palestine Brigade. They put us in trucks and camouflage the trucks, in the back they put furniture and stuff, we were inside, and they smuggled us over to Italy. They smuggled over 30,000 people from all the concentration camps. They had some spots that specially rent them executed they killed Germans wherever they found them, as a revenge and as a, whatever. It's ... I'm sorry I didn't bring it, I want to make sure I bring it to you because you learn something that is unbelievable. Anyway, they put us in camps in Italy. We were in a camp, first we went to Milano and we had all identification cards from the Jewish community and they already gave us some clothes and some, and a little money and the Joint Distribution Committee started giving us packages, food and stuff. We were put in to a camp about a hundred miles south of Genoa in a port city called La Spezia. There were many camps like this, too, from Naples to north and south, all through Italy because they couldn't put 30,000 people in one place. Now, there's a lot of things yet that I haven't find. Whatever I tell you and whatever the tape, the documentary, tell you is still not accurate because they did a lot more things that I don't think anybody want to ever publish it. This camp was totally off-limit for civilian population. They told that these are refugees; that they have typhus and all kinds of things. They ... Palestine Brigade every day trucks came in and they stole armaments from the British, from the Italians, from the Germans, from whoever they can, and this, most of those people worked for the *Haganah*. These were the people, the soldiers who you will see in the tape who, the most important thing was for Palestine. They had ... Chaim Weizmann started, I think, when the war started, he wanted Churchill to have a Jewish army, in Palestine. They resisted us for three or four years. Finally, when they came down that they really needed it, they allowed to form the Palestine Brigade with the Jewish identi-..., they had on the arms that says Palestine Brigade with a, they picked a yellow star because people had to wear yellow star. So, this place, they put on little boats guns and ammunition and shipped it to Palestine. A lot of those, of course, were confiscated. The British had a blockade from Palestine. So, half of them went in ... whatever went in was [unclear] we say. So, they also put people on to go to Palestine. When I say they put them on boats, they bought ships from Greece like 1,600 tons, or 2,000, small, little boats practically, and put people on. Young or old, whoever it was but there wasn't too many old people. There were not... When I say young and old, it's probably a couple of people maybe in 40s, 50s, a couple who survived. And everybody went to Palestine. The ships were caught. They put the people in Cyprus. You know, the Cyprus were a detention camp. So, what happened, my wife got pregnant and there were 16 other couples who ...

Well, wait a minute. How'd you get to her? Wait a minute.

I went back from Italy. Oh, I went back before. When I knew, right after liberation that Budapest was already, we knew it already. I went back, got her and we left.

So when you went to...

I came back to the camp in Austria.

From Italy?

From Austria. We went to Italy together.

Ah, okay, all right. I got you.

So, everybody else was shipped except the 16 of us so they didn't know what to do with us. There was an Italian magnate, a banker, who offered his villa in Genoa for the pregnant women and we had no idea there was still, I'm talking about 1945, there was no, not even a hint that we ever going to ever state of Israel and we didn't know where we going to go, what's going to happen. And my son, George, was born in Genoa in 19-, January 17, 1946. There was just nothing. We just lived, we were fed and that's about it. I started working there a little bit in a tailor shop but anyway, in June, the first, there was one Jewish man over there lived in Genoa who befriended us very much, who came to visit us. If somebody needed something interpretation or - he helped us out. He says to me, he says, "Listen, the American..." There was a ... it's not an embassy, like a legacy - legation.

Legation.

Legation opened up, said, "Why don't you go up and just tell them? What can you lose?" He took me up because I didn't know Italian or English, I just talked Yiddish, and he told the story to the, at that time, the wife's counselor. I have all the papers here. And told them the story what happened to us and he says, "Before you finish anything, I would like to come out to see the people and talk to them." He came out and saw my son, George, we had two Carnation boxes that we got Carnation, we put them together and he was in the cardboard box. When he came out and looked at it and saw how we lived and some of the stories, he said, "Why don't you come up to my office?" We came up June the 12th and on the spot he made us visas, 1-2-3, to go to the United States. This was June the 10th and July 20th we arrived in the United States. We had no marriage certificate, no birth certificate. Absolutely nothing. Just we swore that we tell the truth and that's it.

Where did you go?

We came to New York. Between my wife knew that she had an aunt here, her mother's sister, somewhere in New York we found them. And I was here, the fourth

day I went to work in a garment factory and that where it was. I - since then, I never missed day. I never was any kind of welfare or received any kind of organizational help from anybody, anything.

And how did you get that job in, in New York?

How did I get that job? The man who owned the shop was a Hungarian. By that time already, I know a little bit Italian and 50 percent of the garment business and industry was Jewish and the other 50 percent probably Italian. So, when I came up everybody tried to, really tried to help me a lot. But, within two years I became the assistant designer of the company and shortly after I became a designer. People were very nice.

How did you learn English?

Just by, I never went to school or had a course or anything. I don't know, just by wanting to learn.

Just doing it?

Yes.

I want to get to Kansas City. Let me just fill in a couple of questions here. When you were liberated, how, what was your physical condition?

Very bad.

Were you...?

Well, I tell you how bad. When I came to the United States for three years I was told to diet. It took me ten years to gain a hundred pounds. I think I was 104 pounds. But, physically, it wasn't really that bad except my stomach went for three years, you really didn't have a meal as such, or.... There's some places we had a little bit better but most of the time was dried cabbage soup and loaf of bread or that stuff, not cooked. There was some places that we had meat but later we found out it was horsemeat. This we didn't know. It was hard. It was very difficult to get used to and also, when we came, nothing tasted good. The potatoes wasn't like in Europe, you know, the bread wasn't good, this wasn't good, that wasn't good. It was, it was a very big ... I mean, it's not like these days, the Russians come, everything, the food is different, everything is different. We didn't have no supermarkets. Now you have a restroom (sic) and a butcher, a bakery, a this, a that, and it was very hard to get used to.

How long were you ... You weren't in the displaced persons camp very long in Italy, were you?

Well, actually, this was displaced persons camp, too, even when we are, when we had the child.

Oh, yeah, but...

But, it wasn't the kind of displaced persons camp like where they had a thousand people.

Right.

This was, where we were, all these people had children. As a matter of fact, many, I don't know who else came to the United States but I know one friend of mine went to South America, three of them wound up in Israel, and whatever. There were people who didn't want to come to America. I didn't want to come neither – it was just...

It just happened.

It just happened 'cause all our life we wanted to go to, to Palestine –

To Palestine.

- but being there was no Palestine yet, and already I had a child, I didn't know what's going to be and everybody, America sounded good.

What were the conditions like? You had enough food?

Yes, I had no problem, no.

What kind of thing – what kind of...

There was cooking. It was all the couples were cooking, everybody cooked together, made together. So, it wasn't...

And before you went to the villa, where did you live, how did you live? What was it like?

In a camp, in Milano we were in a camp, an ordinary camp.

But are they like ... would you live in barracks-type places?

Barracks.

Okay.

There was no facilities.

Okay, now when you came to America, did you come by boat?

We came by boat.

And how long did it take?

Eight days.

And what were the conditions like on the boat?

Terrible. Kathy was sick all the way through. We came with a troop ship. There was no ... There was just bunk beds.

Right, okay. So then you became a designer in New York ...

Right

And how'd you get to Kansas City?

I was head designer for a company, Barkin and Levin, Lassie Junior. The second largest coat and suit company in the world.

Barkin and Levin?

Yes. And Leon Karasin, who owns Youth Craft. You know, when they go ... every industry when you have a company that's doing well, they know who is the designer, who is the merchant, you know, whoever it is. So they ... Youth Craft had an office in New York on Seventh Avenue, buying office. They bought piece goods [unclear] sort of thing and the man who the piece goods buyer for Leon was also a piece goods buyer for other companies anyway. So, Leon had a designer when he came back from the war who - he was an old man. The business wasn't going good. He was looking for a young somebody who could build up the business and this piece goods man recommended. So one day Leon and Bob Chick who [seems to be showing photograph] ...

Right, I saw. You were young. You were like 23 -24 years old, right?

Well, I was more than that. I came here in '59.

Oh! No, but I mean in New York.

Yes.

Okay. So go ... Oh, that's right, so you worked for awhile there, okay.

But you know, one thing that they really recognized when somebody has a talent, irregardless if you spoke good or you didn't speak good, if you did good work. So, anyway, this Milton Seagal was his name, he recommended Leon to talk to me. So, he made an appointment one day at lunch with Milton, the piece goods buyer. I met in his office and Leon says, "Well, would you like to go to Kansas City?" I said, "Kansas?" I never heard of Kansas City. So, we met a couple of times and he says, "You know what? Here's a ticket for you. Why don't you come, come out for a weekend with your wife." So, we came out to Kansas City. It was very lovely. They wined us, dined. At that time, it was Eddie's downtown. We went to Eddie's for dinner and then a show and Mary Karosen took Kathy to Harzfeld's on the Plaza and wined and dined. I didn't think nothing of it. Then, about three months later, he gave me enough that whatever I make, doubled my money. By that time, I had a house in Long Island and I, I had four children. I didn't feel like moving or anything like that. Anyway, he said, "I tell you what. I'll make a down payment on a house here for you and whatever money you lose on your house, I'll pay you. I want you to come [unclear]."

He wanted you bad.

I also had an offer from England, from London a company, and Liliane in San Francisco. Kathy didn't want to hear going back to Europe and we went to San Francisco and I didn't like what idea was the hippies at the time, so I made a deal with Leon I came. And I was here by myself for the first year because I came in September and I didn't want to take the kids out of school and I wasn't sure if I like it. And I did like it and moved the family. But the house I live in, he made the down payment.

Same house. Wow!

Yeah, we still live in the same house.

Okay, well let me talk a little bit about New York. When you went to New York, I know language had to be a problem but were there any - what other adjustment problems did you have?

It was very hard. You know, also, you have to remember, none of us really had any formal education. I do speak four languages but neither one do I speak good. I mean, I could speak but when it comes to installing your telephone, I'm, I'm literally, I'm not good. I never read a book in my life since I'm in America. I read the newspaper, a magazine, an article. I watch television. It's very hard for me.

Were you discriminated against?

In America?

Uh-huh.

No.

Was your life mostly with other people who have come or other Jewish people?

But, you know something? I was never discriminated and like when I came to Kansas City, before I took my job, I went to Rabbi Haddas and I asked him about how is the Jewish community? I have four children and what can I do, whatever? That was my - when I came on a Friday, a Friday night, I went to the synagogue I wanted to know. I liked it and I came, and what, I was here maybe three or four years out on the board of directors of Beth Shalom. I was on the board of directors the very first year at Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy. You know I was president of Lodge 184. I was president B'nai B'rith Council. I went to conventions. Whatever broken them up, I spoke. I was involved in the March of Dimes. I was involved with ... I went to speak about the Holocaust as far as Wichita, 35 years ago ... and 30 years ago. I have friends that I made ... I sold Israel bonds to churches strictly for about 10 years. I went to speak ... I don't know ... I mean, you probably ... you are a child - you don't know how much about it. But, I sold hundreds of thousands of dollars, honored by the State of Israel on their 25th anniversary, on the 18th anniversary. I was honored by Israel bond dinner at the Jewish Community Center '68, '69, whatever. You were really a kid so you wouldn't remember. I was very active except now it's ... my time is over. So, I'm not ...

Your time is not over.

Well, what I mean is I did enough. That most of these people like ... I don't know if Joyce, if she knows, what was going on. It's now that it's more stylish the Holocaust. I see all the names I never saw them became or did anything.

When you came to Kansas City, you said you've been talking for 35 years. Did you always talk about the Holocaust? Did you always tell your children about it?

No, no. Not for a long time we didn't talk about it. I didn't ...

But your children know, they know everything? You've talked with them?

Well, yes, but when we came over, never, not until maybe George was *bar mitzvah* so that really we started talking about it. Even when I went to speak or did ...

Have you told your grandkids?

My grandkids, the older ones.

Right. [unclear]

The problem is they know but they don't understand. By the time they understand, they're not really interested. They into teenage ... they don't care about anything. Later years they may reflect then, but it's very interesting.

When you came here, who became your friends, your social circle, so to speak?

Well, I, I was lucky - made a lot of friends in the neighborhood really. [unclear] All I can tell you is we had this New American Club, which we had like 300 families. And, as you know, um, I was active in the community. As of today, I live in Kansas City since, my family, in 1960. So that's forty years. Outside of two or three people, I know none of the families that was ever invited to an American family to say, "Come for dinner and tell us about your experience." Never. Anybody, ever that we went to dinner. I went to dinner ... my best friends was Gordon Waller and Stanley Donovitz. We are really close. But outside of that, we've had meetings in my house probably 200 times. Twenty, thirty people in my life, make coffee and cake and all kind of thing, we are never invited to any family ever. And I'm not speaking for myself. All the New American Club. You are like the greeners in the town. But now, I get calls from so many people. I have some of every group or group in my house, "Would you come and speak to us?" Now, after so many years.

That's odd.

I spoke to Overland Park Church. It was about ... I have the letter. They also sent letters of Thank You but there was no Holocaust. I think there was 600 people on a Sunday. It was probably the biggest ...

Wow. So you do quite a bit of talking now?

Oh yes.

What else do you do for recreation? What are your - any other hobbies? I know you're still working in the tailor shop and ...?

Well, my hobbies is my family. I spend a lot of time with my grandchildren.

And then tell me about you kids. Okay, George was born in Italy?

Right.

And how old is George now?

George was born in '46. He's 54.

Ok. Then?

Allen was born in '59 - I mean in '49, and Shari in '51 and Karen in '59.

And how many grandchildren do you have?

Nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

And are they involved in the Children of Survivor's Programs at all?

Well, you know my son Allen is on the speaker's bureau and all the kids, yes. Karen and Shari and George. I don't know if you know, George's school, George is principal at Kadima Hebrew Academy in Los Angeles and the children they started a program writing to the Postmaster General that how come that every year they have a Christmas stamps and we don't have a Hanukkah stamp. So, they wrote it for a couple of years and then they got a notification that they issued the Hanukkah stamp. This was three years ago.

Yeah! I was going to say there is a Hanukkah stamp.

And the stamp, the postmaster in Los Angeles, they issued the stamp in Los Angeles in their school. And I have the picture that congressman was there and the senator and that's how the Hanukkah stamp started with this school.

That's so interesting. I didn't know that.

And then when it was issued, the Wallenberg, the stamp that the United States issued, George was the speaker at the Simon Weisenthal Center, the issuing ceremony.

Really? Wow.

So, you know, we all involved, my family, very much so.

Do you think that your children felt differently as a child as children of survivors?

I really would have to study that in my mind to tell you an intelligent answer. I know very much, the last five years, absolutely positively but I said it took a long time. I, my sister and I, you know everybody's getting from Germany restitution. We never applied for restitution because we both felt that, at the time, I didn't want, I felt badly to get paid for my mother and father. I mean, it was just against our grain. So, I still ... I'm probably the only one of two in Kansas City who doesn't get any. I did get paid from Hungary, from the Hungarian government for 1,023 days restitution in the amount of \$1,300, a one-time pay.

Great. Wow.

Now they have a new thing, Hungary is starting to, they want to pay for each person, a family member like for your father and mother, brother or sister, that's all. But in order to get paid, which they allotted \$30.00 per person [unclear], you

have to produce your birth certificate and go to the Hungarian consulate and have to sign it there so to make sure that ... all kinds of ... And now I'm filling out some paper from the insurance companies. We have a whole thing going on.

I've been seeing those articles in the paper that showed an old-timey picture and said, "What if you had money from the Holocaust and you didn't know it?"

[showing paperwork] **This is the last thing that I know from my family, about my family. I got from the Red Cross.**

So, your father was confined at Flossenburg ...

We've got a date.

... in 1945 and was incarcerated there on March '45 but it doesn't say what happened. So do you assume that he ...

They don't know. This is the last information got.

... He transferred to Buchenwald so you just assume that you died in it ... you don't know?

We don't know.

And your brother was also at Flossenburg. Transferred to Buchenwald in ...

They give you the serial number and everything.

... in 1944 and you don't know. And they have no information about your mother. Did you know at all where your mother went?

I know because my mother and my sister went to Auschwitz and my mother was put in the crematorium the first day.

She – wow. And your sister ...?

My sister has a number. She's in New York.

She's in New York.

This is the last information I got from the Red Cross.

Wow. And they just don't know? How do you think you survived?

This is the organization that...

Oh look, there's you and Kathy.

I used to go to speak to them selling Israel bonds.

I see. Oh, this is nice. Well, Gene, why do you think that you survived?

Does anybody really know about person? I think, when I came to United States, I used to tell that we were sentenced to live and there has to be a purpose. Really, I mean, I can't think of, just luck was 99.99% and the rest ... The good thing was that when I was young in our home, everything - there was no transportation. I probably walked five, six, seven, eight kilometers a day so I was used to. And I was trained - I was a good soccer player and I went the morning to my grandparents to bring milk. I went to school, I went to *cheder*, I mean, you know, and people who were not used to that, most of them, died. There's no ... very few people stayed alive unless you had to be in a good condition. Plus the luck is the most important thing.

Do you think your faith had anything to do with it?

Yes. Absolutely.

And you continue your life ... I mean, you were telling me about being president of all these organizations and you belong to the synagogue so it's still a part of your life. Of course, your children here are all at the Academy so ...

[rustling of papers] You know, I don't know if you saw [unclear] the synagogue ...

"The synagogue of Beth Shalom" "The synagogue thanks you Gene Lebovitz for designing and making a bender and mantle for our *siyum hatorah Torah*." That's beautiful.

I made the Torah - I don't know how many I made for Kehilath Israel Synagogue I made for Beth Shalom, this is the fourth *sefer* Torah cover that I made. See, this is ... you know that box that we have that's so heavy to carry around?

Right.

The rabbi said very few who will carry it so if I would make a cover inside so now they take care of the Torah and it's got a beautiful cover and they take down then they put it back in the box.

Oh, that's wonderful.

I made a number of them and all kinds of ... I have works practically to all of the United States.

Do you feel like you're an American?

Yes.

Okay. You're pretty emphatic. And what should we learn from the Holocaust?

Well, we should learn that if we don't learn by history then it's going repeat definitely. There is no question about it. I see, you know ... I wish I would have time because probably it would take half a day to talk about the various things and observations and feelings because now is probably, the last few years, the first time that I really sat down and made time for myself just to think and, and see how things changed in life and how important things what was not important for me ten years ago that is now. And so and you put all these together which is experience and feeling and understanding and now that you probably never had. And me, I'm sure that right now, my 22 year old kids are, may not think much of it or are not interested, but at some point in life they may sit down and say, "Well, at least I put it in words or writing," something.

Absolutely. Absolutely. And thank God you did.

Because right now the friends are more important, and dating, you know, and going to concerts ...

That may be what ... maybe they don't look in, into themselves right now?

But, I would say that is normal.

Sure!

At this point, this is the most important thing.

So, you're taking care of this one when they finally start looking in, they have this for that.

Yes. And then they feel ready, at least it's going to be a tape ... We have a number of tapes. We had a delegation come from Sweden from Uppsala University to talk to us probably, I don't know, 10, 12, 15 years ago. They wanted to, they went all over the world to talk to people who met Raoul Wallenberg to get some information about him. So, we have a six-hour tape there. And we had some very interesting things. I can tell stories and all kinds of things. Think I told you last time ...

Well, you've told me different things this time than you told me before.

Well, I could tell the others too. I just, you know, depends on how much time I want to spend.

We're almost at the end of our tape.

I tell you one of the nicest story that I had ... we had a friend, this lady, her name was Olga Rudyanski. She was a baroness in Hungary and happened to be married to a Jew. But, it was not very well known because she never used her married name. When the bombing started, somehow somebody found out that her husband was Jewish because he was in labor camp. And when they ... when an air raid, the siren started, everybody had to go down in the basement and they did not allow it. They kicked her out from the building. They did not allow to go down in the basement. She had a six month old baby and she was crying. She, you know, in Budapest, all these apartment homes have a huge door like the size of this wall and after 9:00 in the evening, it's closed. You have to ring the janitor to open the door. Some have a key. So, she ran across the street and stood under that, that big door with the baby holding an arm and a bomb fell in to the basement of that house. Bombs do not fall. They go on an angle because the way the airplane is flying. The bombs always never hit the roof.

Right.

It went on to the building and all the people down there died. She was the only survivor, across the street. She came to the United States. Her son went to University of Pennsylvania. He's a heart specialist in New York.

Oh, my gosh.

So, I mean ... Also, told you a story about my wife ... Lots of stories ... I don't know how important and how long you want to take.

Well, I'm almost out of tape here but I can't tell you how much I appreciate you coming back. I'm going to stop.

[End of recording]