

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Avraham Bomba
August 28, 1990
RG-50.030*0033**

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Avraham Bomba, conducted by Linda Kuzmack on August 28, 1990 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview cannot be used for sale in the Museum Shop. The interview cannot be used by a third party for creation of a work for commercial sale.

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AVRAHAM BOMBA

August 28, 1990

Q: We are on camera. Would you tell me your full name please?

A: My name is Avraham L...stands for Late Bomba.

Q: Where were you born and when?

A: I was born in a little place. It was Germany at that time. Boyden-Oberslazen, but when I was a little kid...I don't even remember anything. My father he comes from a...a city by the name of Czestochowa. And they moved to Czestochowa. I was brought up over there. I was raised over there, went to school, and I lived over there until the last days of the liquidation of the Jewish population in Czestochowa.

Q: Tell me about your childhood in Czestochowa. What was it like living there.

A: My childhood was not a rosy one. I come from poor parents. What do you mean, poor parents? In..in Poland, I would say about 70 percent, maybe more than 70 percent of the population were poor. Poor, I mean poor. Actually, they had no food on the table. And to get a job was very, very hard, especially for the Jewish people. Jewish people were not employed by the government, not by the legislature. Their trade was tailor, shoemaker, some of them a barber, hatmaker. Even in factory, in Jewish factory where the people they owned the factory, also Jews, they didn't want to employ Jewish people. Maybe there's some reason, maybe not. Some of them they didn't want to have the sin on their own conscious because he has to work on Saturday. So the best thing for them was not to employ them. So and actually, it was very, very hard...the upbringing. In my house, my father he married off my mother. He was married. His wife_____ passed away. He had a son and a daughter. I have never seen them. When my father married my mother, my brother left for Paris. After that when I was about 9 months old, my sister left, also for Paris. They lived over there, married, had children, and we remained in the city of Czestochowa. Why I knew? Because after I got a little older, I wrote letters to them. I knew I have a brother and sister over there. Besides them, my mother had...had me count three brothers and two little girls. The two little girls passed away when they were...one of them was about a year old. Another one was about three years old. The main reason of it, there was no food. There was no milk in the house. There was nothing in the house. Why I think that was the reason, I remember they'd be sick or other thing. My mother tried to help my father whatever she could, but there was no work. On one job, 50 people grabbed it. And that was going on until I, myself and my brother got a little bit older. My brother went to work. He started to work by a relative of ours, shoemaker, which he was a good one. Even by having a trade was a difference between a good and a bad one. So he was working, helping out. And then by the age of 12...when I was 12 years old I couldn't go to learn a trade. I got myself a job in a factory by making dolls. They had somebody over there, liked me, took me in when I was 12 years old. I worked there for 2 and a half years old and then my mother decide and myself that's not a trade for a young man.

Gotta have a real trade. What's the real trade? I had a cousin of mine, he had a barber shop. In my town, that's considered as a good trade. Was nice dressed, mixed with nice people, all kind of people they came in, and he took me in to learn. Learning time was 3 years for nothing. Alright, I got a few pennies like you call it here for tips, other things you know. And this I brought into the house. That was after those two kids passed away. And there was a little boy that time. It was about 3 years old. And that's how we got together. We provided for the house. My mother was...I would say not in a bad condition, because food, clothes, even had electric which for that time, it was a big thing. We had a radio in the house. You know, we didn't spend the money like the kids today, throwing it away, because every penny we made we brought to the house, needed. And that's how we grew up until my brother got married. I myself tried to go to school. I went into a school after the hours of work and I finished it. It's one of the finest schools. And besides that I was very active in an organization. I was active in the Zionist organization...uh...called the _____, The Right One, Ben-Gurion's party. I was in the youth group. I was the leader also with them. I remember I led a branch of girls, about 20 some girls....also not young ones, 18, 19 years old in which I was myself at that same age. Was the _____ branch. You know about the _____. And beside that I was very much in love with books. Up to date, I cannot eat, I cannot go to sleep. I got to have a book. That's my thing. And real I learned by myself. I would say like self education.

Q: Did you go to seder?

A: Huh?

Q: Did you to go seder like everybody?

A: Oh, naturally, every...every child when to seder. Every one went to seder. I myself went to seder for the money because my mother had no money to pay so went into a seder which there was provided by the Jewish _____. You know what that means, the eldest of the Jewish people. And we didn't pay for it, and I learned there. I was very good student. I was very good in the...in a bible and all kind of kings, in _____ which I know up to now very well. And besides that, I was very interested in literature, all kinds. American, French, English. And I know about a lot of it. And so I'd say by the age of 18, start going around with a girl from my home town. We were...we were...we would say here in love. Not the same way people here in love. That time was a different style. It's already 50 years ago, don't forget. More than 50 years! So we were going around about 7 years. We couldn't afford to get married.

Q: Tell me about her. What was she like?

A: She was a beautiful girl. Blonde. She was beautiful. In my eyes, you know, well especially when you're alone, every...everything is beautiful. But she was a nice girl, very nice girl. And we're going around and we started, you know, to save for the time when we get married to buy some stuff. We didn't have any money. It wasn't like...it wasn't like here. You want this and that. And we saved up until the time came in 1939. And that was the bitter time had

come. Everything was separated. The German came into the town on a Friday morning, September, the 1st, the war started. Our town was almost on the border with the German, was 4, 5 kilometers which is about 3 miles from the border. In the morning, they were already in the city. So we lived...separated. My brother was living with his wife. He had a son about 4 years old, and I was living with my mother and my younger brother and my girlfriend was with her parents. Different place! To tell you the story how it was, you know, the first thing when the...when the German came in, it was not a ball. First thing, they came in on a Friday, I mentioned it. Friday, it was quiet. At the beginning of the war, everybody start running. We did to. We ran about 40 kilometers, walking. Me, my wife...not my wife, I mean my mother, my little brother, also my girlfriend was with me. And then we decided where will we camp? The Germans were there already. So we...where we going to hang around? Decided to go back. Went back...came back to the same apartment. Monday morning, like a magic thing happened. The Germans were all over the place. Everybody out of the house. And they start dragging the men, just the men, to public places, like school, synagogue, churches and open place on the market. We were a couple of days and but seeing that stuff, shooting, killing some people, a lot of people. Matter of fact a friend of mine which was together with me in Treblinka by the name of Rappaport, Moshe. His father was killed the first one. First ____ from Czestochowa. His name was Rappaport, Lazer Rappaport. And a lot of them. We...we were over there about 3 days. They took away couple of thousand people and the rest of them they sent back home.

Q: Can you describe what you saw?

A: What...what was like? I'll tell you what...excuse me. I'll tell you what was like. You come into the house. Imagine yourself. You were in my shoes. Somebody comes in without anything, without any reason. Out from the house. Not allowed to take water, not allowed to take bread...bread, not allowed to take anything. And in the street. In the street with guns, they start running after you until...until you got to the place. I myself...they took me into a church. The church was the...the holy...the name was the Holy Family Church. We had a big church. We had a very big church. And we went over there in that church. They weren't...the people they couldn't get so fast in in the back of the church. They got killed in the front going in through the door. And they killed a lot of people that way. We were there. There was no food. There was no water. There was no places, you know, for the humanbeing with _____. We were over there, a priest. I'm gonna mention him. His name was _____. He was one of the finest gentlemen of the Catholic priest I have ever met. He said to us, "Children, never mind you're without any church. You do whatever you can. You...this place or that thing, as a...you know, and the other place. He tried to bring in water for us. And really, I admired him as a gentlemen. He knew that we are Jews which was also some Christian people living in those neighbors, mostly they took his from the Jewish neighbor. Let's say...I would say...I don't know about Washington...Let's say when you this side, this that, that kind of a neighbor they took. We're there for 3 days, came out from over there, went back home. Thank God, everybody's fine. My brother was in a different place. He also came home. I was working in a barber shop about when I came to the age 17, 18, my boss passed away. His wife passed away, and the family...they decided to sell the shop to me because I was working there. I was

working there for about 4 years. And was 20 years I bought that shop. Not the money that I had. I had no money, but there was another barber which he had a little bit of money. He came in with me as a partner, and we owned that shop from I would say 37, 38 until 1942 we were partners. A very wonderful man as a partner. Very wonderful man. And that's how we lived. Every one...every barber had a quota for taking care of the Jewish people...people they worked for the government. They worked for the Judenrat, so we had a quota about a week, 30, 35 people to shave them, to cut hair without money. We did it. So we were not obligated to go dig ditches or other thing for the German. And for us that was good thing. At least we were employed. And we had a card that we...uh...that we are not obligated. And that what was going on until May 41. May 41, they decided to make a ghetto. So that call in the language of our town, it calls the big ghetto. Why the big ghetto? Because was many streets included in the ghetto. Also the streets were more wealthy people lived, not just the neighborhood where the poor people lived, also where... And from that ghetto nobody could leave. Nobody could go in like Catholic people. Situation was going from bad to worst. It was impossible to get along. For instance, before 1939 a loaf of bread, in Poland was a loaf of bread 5 pounds. The price of it was 50 cents. During 1941, the price of it was already 15 slotas. In my trade where the price of getting a hair cut was 50 cents, getting a shave 25 cents, the price didn't go up. Instead to get from a customer one loaf of bread, we had to do more than 15 customers for the same thing. Well, naturally was the situation was very bad. But we lived and some kind of hope it's gonna end. One day it's gonna end. Everybody knows that, this...that. We're gonna pray. It's gonna end. It didn't end. That was going on from May 41 until September the 22nd, 1942.

Q: Were you married during this time?

A: Yes. I got married in 1940. I got married 1940 because we couldn't go from one place to the other. Our dating...the time...we were almost 7 years together, so we decided to get married and to live together. We got married. Wasn't a marriage... marriage like they make it now, but we married off. Two years after that, my wife she got pregnant and we had a son. Was born September the 31st, 1942. That is almost 20 days...not 20...little bit...only 20 days...little over 20 days when it started the liquidation of the Jewish people in Czestochowa. But between 41 May - September 42, they took out a lot of people. They send them...they put them places, especially young people. They sent them to work which most of them did not return and it was not always in that big ghetto. But we could live with communicate also with the outside people, with the...with the Polish people. Some of them, you know, not the German...they didn't look, they looked away they didn't see it, they could bring in some stuff. But when the liquidation started on September the 22nd, it was exactly a day after Yom Kippur in 1942. At Yom Kippur 1942, we were at the prayer house and people came in from work because people they had to work even on Yom Kippur. They said at the station, the railroad station, there is a lot of cattle trains and there are Ukrainians around. We heard the word Ukrainians, we know something it's going to happen. So the prayer was interrupted. We seen going here and there, looking what's going to be, where we're going to go. We know already that they're going to take us away. They're going to take us somewhere. Middle of the night, around 12, 1 o'clock, all of a sudden, all the lights were on, which

normally since 1939 was not allowed to have any light in city or in apartment and here the lights...lit lamps were on bright, shining. Four o'clock in the morning, the Germans started to take out the Jewish people. They started first the poorest neighborhood where the poor people lived. That was on September, the 23rd, 1942. I was living with my wife, my mother, my little brother, child of mine in that poor stretch called ____, which was the poorest neighborhood. They took us out to the transport...taking out you know you take people they transport who wasn't fast enough got killed and left on the road. We were the lucky ones. We maked to the transport. When we came to the railroad station and there was over there I would say thousands of people. Thousands and thousands of people! They had, accordingly that I know, over 60 wagons, cattle wagons. Each one contained over a hundred people. Children were not counted because the children...

Q: Excuse me. I want to stop this and we will go back. Would you stop the tape, Bonnie? The PA is coming through into the studio and will be on the tape, and I can't have it. Alright? And this is not the time for it. Bonnie, just do it. Just do it. We will back up a minute. Wait one minute until they do it. I'm sorry. This is not the time for this. Would you resume the tape as quickly as possible please? Bonnie, I suggest that we proceed while somebody else goes the checking on that to find the source of that. This is no time to stop, so if you'll tell me when the film's rolling. Barney, I want to move please. I want to start now. Alright, tell her. Bonnie, I would like to start now please. I'm sorry about this. They had to check the wires. Alright, Bonnie I would like to...can we start this while someone else deals with it. Okay.

Q: Alright. The tape is on. I'm sorry about that. Can we go back a little and can you start again your description of what it was like when you were rounded up and taken? Is that possible?

A: As of...as of...as of 39?

Q: No. No. No. You are in the synagogue. It's after Yom Kippur.

A: Oh. Alright. Yes. So when we were taken out from the house, they took us to the railroad station. And on both sides there were German Ukrainian. Whoever couldn't walk that fast, they got rid of him by killing. So we went in to the railroad station. It was not the general railroad station. It was the railroad station for cattle. And over there, they pushed in people. They threw in children, one on top of the other until they're loaded. Those ones...over 60 wagons. Myself and my wife, the kid, my mother, and the little brother, we couldn't go in. It was about 2,000 more people. They couldn't go in because they had too many people already in the wagons so they decided to send in...send us back home. Now this was unbelievable a story. All of a sudden, people start to panic. People start to dance. Happened? They were the lucky ones. They got their amount what they need to be taking out from the ghetto, and the rest they will not touch anymore. The people they were together, the families were together, they were very happy because nobody was missing between them. People were taking away like brothers or sisters or parents...if somebody remained of them, there was crying going on in the city. We were sent home. We were sent home, but one thing whoever could understand the situation was not finished. They didn't take away the Germans. They didn't

take away the Ukrainians, and the light was still on for day and night. So we know something is going to happen to us again. We didn't have to wait too long because on the 25th, 4 days after the first transport, the same thing was going on again. September, the 25th, 1942, which on the Jewish calendar was _____, again they took us out. Now this time we didn't go straight to the railroad station to be sent off. We went to the market which over there the German the head man from the Gestapo was the man over there by the name of Degenhof, he was the leader from them. He was the murderer of the...not only this city, but more cities. And that was...when he decided who should live and who should die. With the point of the finger, he said this way, the other way. A little bit younger, not too many asking questions, "What is your trade?" Somebody had a trade like electro mechanic, which was very few people in our town, or engineering, other thing, to the right. Ninety five percent of the people which they took out from the houses, he pointed to the left which means to the transport. But before that, it is another thing I have to mention. People were running around crazy, starting to get a paper from the Judenrat and also from the Germans that...all kind of paper: red, green, with a stamp, without a stamp and everybody tried to do the best even with money to get the right paper. But nobody know what the right paper was. Each one was happy because he's got the right paper. Coming in to that place where he decided...Degenhof decided who's going to go right, who's going to go left, the paper was not important. It was just worthless. They took the paper, tear it up. So I was with my mother and the kid, my wife and my brother, and it was most of my family who went to the left to the transport. Went in to the transport where the cattle transport they had, and they took us in to the wagon. That was the last time I saw the city of Czestochowa before I came back from Treblinka. Now to tell you a story in that cattle train, I don't know how to start and I don't know how to end because it was like living through a whole life in that thing. First thing, people one on top of the other. You couldn't stand straight. You couldn't bend. You couldn't sit down. It was just like one on top of the other. They took us 6 o'clock in the morning into that train. We were over there until about finished it loaded with all of us 2 hours maybe, more than that. Then they took us around back to the main station and over there we were waiting a time. Across the railroad station, there was another train that passengers...Polish people, they could go. They could ride, handle anything they wanted. When we stood each other, happened I was the lucky one...I was near a little window, where was with wire closed around that people shouldn't be able to escape. I looked through. Most of the people what they did to us, they spit on us. It happened one girl I know her. She worked for a Jewish family from my...not the house where I lived but house where I had my barber shop. When she saw me she said, "Oh, you are too here?" And in a way, she started crying. But more than 90 percent of the passengers in the other side of the train, they spit on us. And so we start rolling...start rolling to went nobody knew where we're going. In the middle of the night, was already about 18 hours in the train, we came to a side station which they pointed out this was Warsaw. Stood over there for awhile and inside that train, with God's help, it was hot like Hell and that was almost the end of September where usually in Poland, end of September is nice and cool. But at that time, just God helped them, not us. After about 1 o'clock or 2 o'clock start rolling again and we went through wilderness and all kind of thing. We came to a halt. I looked out and I see a sign which didn't mean nothing to me. The sign was Treblinka. Today, everybody almost knows what that word means. At that time was just a name, not a...a little bit...a tiny

little...maybe...maybe it was over there 40 families altogether, all waiting with them. Stayed looking out the window. More things came. From other parts of the country. They went in, after about 2 hours they came out. And all the trains empty. Another train also...over 60 trains with the town people, they came in. Went in, disappeared, 2 hours came back. And now was the time our train start rolling and we went in. Gate opened up, rolled in to the camp of Treblinka. 10 men over there. We got in over there. The trains didn't go in like, you know, the first goes in. The engineer takes a train, but backwards because the engineer and the people they're working in the locomotive of the train, they shouldn't know what's going on over there. They were not supposed to...to see what is going on. That's why the pushed in the end of the train. And we went in. Out! Started yelling, "Out." It opened up. I don't know how many dead ones was a...in the train because nobody counted we had in our train. We had on out...men on the right side at the open telling...woman at the left side at the barracks. We didn't know what it is. And we didn't believe something what's going wrong. I know something is not usually that this is the last time we see each other. My wife, the kid and my mother went in to that left side. I my...mine little brother was at that time was 13 years old. And some of the Germans, Ukrainian and also the Jewish from the red kommando. "Take off your clothes." Took off the clothes. Start taking off the clothes. All the people did. But myself...I don't know what it happened. A man...a Jewish man which he had a band, a red band, what called a red kommando went through...he recognized someone which was near me and he said, "What are you doing here?" "You see what I'm doing here." So he said to him, "We need a few people. Go to the side." "You need more?" "Yes, need more." They took out about 16, 17 people. I was between them. Now this man which he recognized, he was married to a cousin of mine. They took out his brother-in-laws, three of them; myself; my little brother they couldn't take out because was a kid, 13 years old. And a few more stayed on the side. We didn't see. People went in through the gate. Now we know what the gate was. It was the way to the gas chamber and we have never see them again. That was the first hour we came in. After that, we...the people, 18 or 16 people...more people came in from the...working people what they worked already before in the gas chamber, we had a order to clean up the place. Now clean up the place is not something you can take it clean. It was horrible. But in 5, 10 minutes this place had to look spotless. And it looked spotless. Like there was never nobody on the place. So the next transport when it comes in, they shouldn't see what's going on.

Q: You were cleaning up the place?

A: We were cleaning up in the outside. Tell you what mean cleaning up. Taking away all the clothes to those places where the clothes were. Now, not only the clothes, all the papers, all the money, all the...the...whatever somebody had with him. And they had a lot of things with them. Pots and pans they had with them. Other things they had with them. We cleaned that up. Still didn't know what's going on until this guy with the red bands, when we asked him what's happened to them? He said, "Be happy we're here because they're finished." At night when they took us into the barrack...the barrack was near, I was just about...I would say 50 meters from the gate to the gas chamber. It was at the same place where the people undressed themselves. The men undressed themselves, there was a well....just take out

whatever... And over there we had the barrack we went to live in. Why I mention the well, because I tell you what the well was. People they knew already, not from the beginning like from Warsaw they transport...they started on the 22nd of July 1942, so people they know already what Treblinka is. That is not a working camp. That is not a concentration camp. That is extermination camp. From there nobody goes out alive. The minute when they came in, we find over there...took out from over there from that well, over 50 people. They jumped in. Instead to go into the gas chamber, they just jumped into the well.

Q: Jumped into the well. I'm sorry.

A: The well. Yes. They drowned themselves. Took them out and that water we used to drink. Nobody got sick. Nothing happened. At night, couldn't sleep. Some of us which were...there were religious people and they found out that their parents or their wife or their children were killed which they didn't take out...people...where they're people which they have children. Mostly they took out people 25, 26, 28 years old. Some of them they were religious and they start saying the traditional Kiddish. That was the first night I was over there. In the morning, 5 o'clock the morning, the order. Out! Went out. Stayed in line to work. What was the work? The work in Treblinka like mostly was those clothes which were there were taking away from the people the night before, they day before they killed and there was piles up on the big places with clothes. They had to be divided. Like coat to coat, shoes to shoes, shirts, and also the quality of it. A cotton, other things, wool...that was the job. We called it sort kommando. Maybe you heard that name. Maybe not. So we worked over there. I myself I was a barber. Then at the third day or so it came...it came another order. They need barbers. It was mine town between the 16 people they took out, there was one more barber. But I had some with me friends ____ you do. You're gonna be barber. They took also from other places, mostly from Warsaw. They got themselves about 14, 15 barbers. And they took us in to the other side of the place which is called Treblinka No. 2. Treblinka No. 2 means only the work by dead people in the gas chamber. What they wanted us to do is to cut off the woman's hair. They took us in to the gas chamber...in the gas chamber before they gassed them. There were benches, about 20 benches...maybe less. And on a row of benches women were sitting and the barber went through cutting hair, with me cutting hair. The way the commandant...he was Jewish who...the way I know after that...I find out that he was converted but that doesn't mean anything. His name was Glesk_Maybe you heard the name. Eugene Glesk. He was the commandant of Treblinka. He was a very nice man. Very fine gentleman. He came over. He had a speech to us. He said, "Look, people. I don't want that the woman should know that they're going to be gassed. Make believe you're giving them a hair cut. They...they're going in to take a shower. It is...take a bunch of hair from here. Take a bunch of hair from here. Don't take off all the hair. Don't make them look like monkeys. And so we did it.

Q: Tell me what it was like?

A: What was like it? We had scissors. From them we took bunches of hair. Cut off. Threw on the floor to the side, and about 2 minutes have to be finished. Not even 2 minutes

be...because there was a line waiting to come up the next group. And that's how we worked. Inside it was very painful. Most painful was because some of the barbers they recognized their dear ones, like wives, mothers, even grandmothers. Can you imagine that you have to cut their hair and not to tell them a word because you were not allowed. If you say a word that they going to..uh..be gassed in 5 or 7 minutes later, there would be a panic over there and they would be killed too. After that, the transport was finished.

Q: Excuse me. I'd not to leave the gas chambers for a minute. Can you tell me a little more? You've talked about a friend.

Tape #2

Q: You started to tell me about your barber friends who worked with you in the gas chamber. Would you tell me about some of them and some of the families that they met there?

A: It was just families like any other family. But the most thing it hurts when you know people. When a transport came in, you don't know the people. Those are people, but when it comes in somebody you associate or you are related, that's an entirely different thing. It hurts a lot more. We have..I have friend. We worked together. We were friend in the same town together. Was a barber, a very good barber too. And he was working gas chamber with me. It happened that there came in one time his sister, one time his wife, came in his sister-in-law same thing. He start hugging and this and that. To take a half a minute more with her than with any other one. But this thing has to be done. He couldn't help himself. It was very hard. It was very, very horrible. But any other way it was, you get killed. Which it happened. Now let me...let me tell you a story. I had a very close a friend of mine. I worked with him together for years. His name was Dorfman Slamic. Very fine gentleman. Now two men from all the time where I was over there, they didn't want to stay with us together and work together. They run into the gas chamber by themselves. He was a barber, and the other one was a neighbor of mine. He did the same thing. That's two and the history...when the history of myself being in Treblinka _____. I didn't have the guts to do. I wish I could. I did not. But what could he do? Or get killed! To go together with him or wait maybe another day. And I want to tell you something. If a humanbeing is in a situation like that, he thinks of every second, every minute...maybe...maybe there will be a change. Maybe something happened. Maybe there will be a miracle that he will survive. That people were not ready to get killed. People were not ready even to try to escape. And it happened to myself which I organized my escape. I organized another escape from 11 people which they escaped from Treblinka. But people that were not ready for it, they didn't want it. I had a friend of mine which is...was a leader from the...from the organization of the workers and I approached him. I said, "I'm planning an escape. Maybe we'll escape. You interested?" He said, "Look, Abe. I'm here already. Where I'm gonna go outside to the Pollack. They will kill." Which is...was the truth. It was the truth. "So I rather stay here. So it's gonna be, it's gonna be. I'm gonna live another day...I'm gonna. If not, be killed." Now that is one thing. Another thing is...which I want to mention..I hear that story many, many times and it hurts me a lot. I'm going back to this same time that...uh...Jewish people went in like the sheep to the slaughter house. It hurts me a lot about that. I explain that to you why. People are not sheep. The way the Germans are organized to get the people killed is entirely different way. The first thing of not allowed to go out. The second thing is of not bring in food. Then they starve the people. They take away the clothes from the people. They take out the furniture from them, the better one. They take away the...the force, and then to starve them little by little until the people they lost their will to fight even the will to live. And to them was the same thing. What I'm gonna lose. I'm starving here. I got nothing here. Maybe if I go away and they would send me somewhere away, they promised...maybe over there I will stay. And this is entirely a different story than the story like some people they say, here especially people...Jewish people, "Why you went?" They don't understand that looking at a wife, at looking at a child,

and not to have a drop of milk, even a drop of water for them...what could those people do? How could they fight? And with what? First thing, you went...somebody was lucky. He went across the gate. Got killed on the other side because he got paid from the Germans. He got paid. For each Jew he got paid a liter of vodka. That was to them and he got paid with salt. He got paid with sugar. And even not for that time he was willing to do because to get rid of a Jew. And that is not happen to 1, a thousand, or ten thousand. It happened to lot of them. The people they didn't go like sheep to the slaughter house. They were already willing to go the last way even to the gas chamber because their will was not decided by them. It was decided by hunger, other thing what they went through. Sicknesses, all kind. And now I want to tell you...I want to tell you about the thing...the gas chamber. Always, they ask me already about this thing. The gas chamber. How it looked? Very simple. Was all concrete. Was no windows. There was nothing in it. Beside on top of you, there was wires and it looked like, you know, the water going to come out from it. Had two doors. Steel doors. From one side and from the other side. The people went into the gas chamber from the one side. Like myself, I was in it doing the job as a barber. When it was full the gas chamber, the size of it was...I would say 18 by 18 or 18 by 17. I didn't measure that time. Just looked like I would say I look here the room around, I wouldn't say exactly how big it is. And they pushed in as many as they could. It was not allowed to have the people standing up with their hands down because there is not enough room, but when the people raised their hand like that there was more room to each other. And on top of that they throw in kids, 2, 3, 4 years old kids on top of them. And we came out the whole thing it took I would say between 5 and 7 minutes. The door opened up, not from the side they went in but the side on the other side and from the other side the...the group...people working in Treblinka No. 2 which their job was only about dead people. They took out the corpses. Some of them dead and some of them still alive. They dragged them to the ditches, and over there they covered them. They digged ditches and they covered them. That was the beginning of Treblinka, the time when I was there. Later, they changed the situation over there by killing people the same way, but not take them to the ditches but to take them to be burned, to pile them on top of the other top, they burned. It was for those people...I brought you the picture. Three of them, they worked only by dead people. I myself which I worked in Treblinka No. 1, was little bit easier. Why was it easier? Because we...the people working in Treblinka No. 1...1, we took in the transports living people. All living people. And from living people, we got something. We went through a pocket. We find a piece...a piece of bread. We find sometime a bottle of water which was a really...some of them they brought in other thing to eat, but over there those people they worked in Treblinka No. 2, they had no chance. All they got is naked people going in and dead people taking out from the gas chamber.

Q: How long did you work as a barber in the gas chamber?

A: In the gas chamber we were working as a barber over there between 2...little more than 2 weeks. Not for 3 weeks. And then they decided that the barbers will not go in anymore to the gas chamber to cut off the hair of the woman over there, but in the undressing barracks, they divided a part...let's say like you take here, divide a part and on this side they put the same thing. Benches around and we cut the hair off, not in the gas chamber anymore. That was the

last time...the 3...the 2 or 3 weeks we worked over there, we worked. Nobody else worked more from Barrack No. 1 because they did not allow it. It was a gate between Treblinka 1 and Treblinka 2 to the gas chamber, also with barbed wires and it was some kind like trees, other thing through the wire it shouldn't be visible.

Q: Abe, I need to ask you, if you can, before you...before we leave and...and go to this other job because now we don't know enough. Can you tell us...during those 2 weeks you were in the gas chamber working and I know it's hard, but can you tell us about some of the other people working in the gas chamber with you. Your friends first. What...what who were they and what did they do?

A: They were common people like myself...growing up together. They were people I know. They're the people I know. Like there were people from Warsaw, people from other places I never knew. We just met over there. Same like I say about those people. Some of them I don't know. And like...uh... you know, ____ I mentioned to you. I never...I never knew him. I saw him in Treblinka. So the people I knew...what kind of people they were? I'd say mostly were people...hard working people. One of them specially was a man...he was a fireman. Matter of fact, he was related to Danny Kaye because Danny Kaye come from our place, his parents. And his name was also Daniel Kamiski which was the name of...uh...Danny Kaye. He wasn't a barber. I took him in. He was a nice man. He was next to me standing. And they were looking for a barber and I said, "Danny, how about you." Fine. What's happening? They go in. Because over there, he did that job. He wasn't in the eyes of the German which another thing I have to tell you. People working in Treblinka, there wasn't a job that you work, you gonna work tomorrow. Every day they changed the people they worked there. If somebody worked in Treblinka a week, he was an old worker. He was very old because he worked there, he survived a week. Mostly they did...they changed. Every day they killed 2, 3 hundred, 4 hundred people of the people they worked in Treblinka and from the transport arriving, like myself they took out, they took out other people. So they were working over there the same way. And those people that I know they worked with me as a barber. The same they did. The same thing as I did. They had over there sometime _____ their sisters coming, and I said it before. They had to do a job. The job was to prepare...to go...people to go into the gas chamber. Not any other thing. Now, after that we worked over there only a few hours because a transport like cutting their hair... Let's say a transport like myself when I came in. When I came in, I came in from the town of Czestochowa. Then came a transport from other places. It was 18 thousand people. Eighteen thousand people they took out, 16 or 17 people from the 18,000. And it happened a day I was there and I can remember...it was 4 or 5 days like that. Not all the time. Most of the time was between 12 and 15 thousand people. But happened 4 or 5 times there were 24 thousand people in one day. And it took time. Each transport took between 2 hours. No more than 2 hours. And it was _____. Everything spotless. The train would come in. You couldn't see any dead one. You couldn't see any blood one. Everything was shiny. The rest of the time...talking about myself because not everyone was a barber over there. But we did...after our job as barbers we worked in our places in the sort kommando, picking the clothes up, bringing the bundle from one place to other place. Taking the bundles to the...to the railroad place to load in the...in the wagons

because they have to take those things in. Now there was a question also or some did ask me, "Why did they have to cut the women's hair?" Was simple, simple answer to that. Because they needed it. What they did from that was to make saddles for the horses. Now if you cut off hair from a human being, those hair it just like cutting off the feathers of a goose. If you cut the feather from a goose, when the goose is alive, that will never die. Whatever you do, you push it down, it goes up...stays up. And with human hair the same way. When you cut hair from a dead person, this hair just like the person. It's dead. But if you cut the hair from a live person, if you put in the saddle, the saddle will not push down because that was...that's why they cut their hair off. Just to be send back to German to the practice over there when they...where they make the saddles with it. Now the...while working over there...did all kind of work. At the time...let me explain the...the start of the...of the day. In the morning, 5 o'clock we had a order to get out. Get out. Went to the kitchen. Not just going forth like soldier 5 in a row to receive coffee. A little bit of black water and slice of bread. Daytime nothing. After the work, we received some kind of soup. And it was people working in the kitchen...excuse me the expression, the toilets and all the places. The hardest job and I think even harder working in the gas chamber cutting women's hair was when the transport came in and you had to take out people from the wagons. Crippled people, small children, which they lost their parents between like let's say they took one...the mother into one wagon, the children into another wagon they were not together so they were separated. But we have to take is...to take those people, the old, crippled people and the small...little small children is to the lazarette. Maybe you heard what...about the lazarette. Now lazarette usually means a hospital. Now over there wasn't a hospital. Was a big, very big ditch. And it was also with trees around. You couldn't see what was going on inside. In front of it was a man in a white thing with a red cross. It's just like going into a hospital, but going into that ditch...over there was Ukraine or German...shot in the head and into the ditch. And that was the hardest job to do. To take people, specially to have children... children a few months old...to take them in, throw them into the ditch where the...over there the fire was burning day and night at that ditch. All the thing what we find papers...all kind of thing, we threw in that ditch and that was going on as long as I was there. The fire was never off. All the time it was on. And on top of that, people and people are killed. Somebody...let's say...anytime when we couldn't go in to the latrine...to the toilet, we went to the side to do his, right away they killed. That happened to a close friend of mine. His brother's a barber. He's alive. A guy by the name of Sliska. He just stood on the side to do his...took him killed, into the ditch. And that happened all the time. Every time and all the time. Now it happened that one...one time it happened. A transport came from Ketrzyn. Ketrzyn is a little town next to Warsaw. Came a transport over there and a woman came out from that transport. Why I mention it? I'll tell you the story what it happened. That the one story which very, very seldom. She came out. In front of her was two men...two was moving with the red finger on. One of them...tall fellow about six two or six three, blond hair. Real German, but he was a Jew. And another one...his name was Solic Matter of fact, he was a barber. Well, he did a good job. What you mean a good job? For the Germans I would say.

Q: Explain.

A: And he was active. What that mean good job. There are people doing good, bad. He was quick. He organized it quick. He took the people away quick into the...out from the trains. But he didn't know they are Jewish people. He came out from the train with a razor and she cut the throat of both of them. Specially the tall fellow. I never knew his name. Was very, very handsome. He was more...looking like Germans than all the Germans together. And naturally, on the spot they killed her. Not with guns, with their shoes with anything they had, they killed her. And they took those two men into a hospital. I don't know where, but out from Treblinka. And they tried to arrest them whatever they want. This tall man they couldn't help. He died. They brought them back to Treblinka. The other one...he got killed, also brought back. When I left Treblinka _____. But the first man...that's the only funeral in Treblinka which was from the beginning until the end. What they did, they took him. They maked a grave for him, and wood thing. They buried him. Everybody stood...an order. That's the only one grave which a man...Jewish man was left in that Treblinka. A woman from Ketrzyn. Now during the time when...when I was there, it happened a lot of thing. What it happened? In the barrack I was in it, we were about 70 people one barrack. Every night of the work people, 5, 6 was missing. What mean were missing? They killed themselves. Hanged themselves with their...whatever they could get on them to strangle themself. Even my brother-in-law did the same. Uh...He married...he married a sister of my wife by the name of _____, a highly educated man. He was the leader of the...he was the leader of the Socialist Party Bundt had the name Bundt in Poland. He was a leader from that. He hanged himself. He couldn't take it. And that happened every single night. Three, four, five people. Beside people which they were killed by the Germans exchanging them for new ones which they came in from the new transport. Oh, it happened at one time to me. I got very sick in Treblinka. Very, very sick! And I went over to the commandant, to the German, I said, "Take me to the lazarette." When I say take me to the lazarette, he knows exactly what it means. To be killed! Because I had an attack of the...how you call it? kidney and that was pain...I couldn't take it. Unbelievable! So he said to me, "How long are you working here?" "Oh," I said, "I work here about 5 weeks." "5 weeks." Go to the kitchen and ask them to give you some Snupps." And I was surprised. And everybody was surprised that he didn't take out of the gun and took care...what for you need that. Not that Jew. Could get 10,000 of Jews. Get the other one. I went over there to the kitchen and I told him what _____. Whose going to give you whiskey? A little bit water you can have. I got a little water and then he told me to go into the barrack. That was the first time somebody went into the barrack in the middle of the day not going to work. And I laid down in the barrack. I had two cousins over there. They worked together with me, which they were taking out at the same time transport with me. One of them, he risked his life to find out what had happened to me. He came in to the barrack. He saw me. He never said a word to me. He run out and he said, "Abe is in the barrack." At the night, they came in. Everybody on top of me. "Oh, you must be really the lucky one that they didn't kill you." They didn't kill. I still was in pain. Over there, we had a transport coming in. Not one, but many transports coming in from Czechoslovakia. A man came in by the name of Zello. He was captain in the Czechoslovakia army. Another one came in by the name of the Messiadic which was not the president Messidic. He must be some kind of a relation. He had a wife. He was Jewish or his wife was Jewish. I don't know. They came in. Was a doctor. What happened? When I told, he took out the tablets and said,

"Abe, take the tablets," to me. I took the tablet. The following morning I never knew what that mean the sickness until three years ago now I got sick in Israel, also on the kidney. Now another practice. I worked in...I worked in a barrack where people were hiding. I did it myself too before I escaped from Treblinka. What was...the barrack was full of clothes...bundles maked out of clothes. So what we did we put the bundles in the barrack one on top of the other until to the roof. People they tried to escape. What they did they went in...in the day time during the work in the barracks and they remained over there. And they hid themselves between the clothes. Both it happened by accident when the clothes moved, could never go out and got choked there. At one time we took out from a barrack the size I would say maybe about 40, 60...40, 50 meters, over 30 people. Dead ones! I did the same thing when I escaped. But before that, I worked over there and I tried to help some people any way I could. At one time he came in, he was a kapo. His name was in Jewish Ben Yamin Yakoski. Have you heard that name? You did. He had a brother over there. Very, nice, religious individual boy. He was from a town of Yen Jeif, which is not far from Kielce. He came in he said, "Abe, I trust you. Tonight, my people...my brother _____ they going...they're planning an escape. Eleven of them. What should I do?" He said. You know you...you have some landsmen from your town working outside...not in the barrack, but outside?" I said, "Yes." "Tomorrow morning after the appell you bring in your friends. If somebody comes in to you and tell their friends, they're working all the time here." Naturally, I did whatever he told me. In the morning...group I worked with them...ll of them disappeared. Then it came in...the assistant commandant...friends which we call them the lackger, that name you heard already many times. He came in the barrack and he looked at me. "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm working on the cloth...looking what is there, cotton, this that." "Are the same people working here what they worked yesterday?" I said, "Yes. Everybody's the same we're working." It wasn't true. What those people...by crouching the other side of the gate, they left some kind of sign from the trees. At night they couldn't take away the little...this from the trees. And he saw that somebody went through that. He came over to me. He took my...I had...had a hat..he took mine hat...he start knocking in a wooden block which hold _____, but I was like paralyzed. Didn't feel at all. Just for the thing what they had. I was scared. They're taking out to kill me. I didn't feel it all. Behind him, was a friend of mine by the name of Sidman, Eisack Sidman. He was standing with a knife over there behind him. And if he would take out the gun, he would kill him. But it happened that he knocked and knocked and I didn't say a word to him, so thought maybe I didn't know nothing. He let me go. Then at night after work, people came in. "What happened?" I told them. For those people, they escaped. After that I found out what happened to them. From all those 11 people, 2 were alive when I returned from Treblinka to Czestochowa. All nine other ones, they were killed by the Pollacks. They went back to their home town in Yan Jeif, and they were very, very rich. They were like, I would say, the Rockefeller. They had a possession. They owned _____ to _____. They call themselves I would say in German, The Bundt's. They got killed. Two of men they tie your hands to escape. I met in the ghetto of Czestochowa, when I came back from Treblinka. They couldn't stay there and they went somewhere away. I never saw them again. That was one part, but the second part we...what we decide to run away. The first thing is we had to get money. When you go out...when you come to the Pollacks, it's impossible to live without it. So we tried to get some money and

that wasn't a hard job to get. The money wasn't a hard job to get the money but to get the money was our job. If they find on you one slota or one dollar, you get killed. So ____ about 8, 9 from our hometown. One is still alive. He is today 85 years old. He lives in Israel. Yakia Bisner. A friend of mine. And this one, particular this one. I took him away from the gas chamber three times. He had such kind of eyes...you look at him you get scared. And twice the German took him in, told him to go to the gate which going into the gas chamber. And I was from the...from the side. I threw clothes on him. I took him away. And the third time he went and he worked together with me. We...we were together all the time and we collected money together to escape. And matter of fact, he escaped before me. Also organized this thing. We decided who's going to go. He went away with two other ones, which the other ones got killed where he's still alive. When we collected the money...and going in to the barrack, the Ukrainian...they did something which is not normal. Why? In the middle of the night we came out from the barracks not walking, but crawling to the wires...to the barbed wires. We want to go through them. We were 7, 8...one was still inside and we had the money with us. Also the same one the Sidman which I mentioned before. And the Ukrainian they jumped on us. We...we were the last straw... went back to the barracks, back to our place. We don't know anything. But they got him. And they're going to kill. What you got? We showed him. Got money, a lot of money. It happened they let him go. Why they let him go? I'll tell you why they let him go. They took the money. And they escaped. Those two Ukrainians workmen...they escaped from Treblinka. Then we decided a group of 9 people is too much at one time. We're going to organize a different way to escape. Three at a time. And we organized it. One group went the first one. Then another group they didn't succeed. Two of men run away. They third one got caught by a Ukrainian. His name was Ella Loddick, Ella. When the Ukrainian jumped on him, he jumped on the Ukrainian and he bit through his neck. With his teeth he killed him. And he run away. I met him in the ghetto of Czestochowa. He was over there, married. He got married in that little ghetto after he got back from Treblinka. I was at their wedding. A few weeks after he got sick and he passed away. Now the third group I went with a friend of mine and a cousin of mine. And we did the same way I mentioned before, hiding between the clothes, make also...you know, each went into the ditch. Three of us. We kept the clothes apart. At night, the Ukrainians, the Germans come in start hollering, "Rouse, Rouse." We don't know anything. Then with their picks from their rifle, they start picking if somebody is not over there. They left. We worked over there until about 6 o'clock. About 8:30 was...winter beginning of January 43, we decide to leave. Now to escape from over there is...was one chance. What was one the one chance? We had to go through that lazarette what the fire...what the dead people was burning. We had to go through there. Otherwise, it was impossible because it was six or seven row of barbed wire. You went through one, you had to go through the second, the third. Over there was only one. When we maked through that ditch of the burning fire, we had the gate of the...with one barbed wire. We decided that on a Saturday night to leave the place. We took clothes. We threwed the clothes on the barbed wire and lucky ones, nobody was in the tower...watching towers. There was all around watch towers. Saturday night we figured out because we saw so many times they disappeared. They went to uh...to drink or they went with girls, out to Ukrainians, so we maked that. We came out about 9 o'clock at night through that, start running and running. We run all the way. In the morning we find out about

6 o'clock in the morning, we were at the same place. Almost a kilometer away. And we heard the Ukrainian talking, so we were in Ukrainian place surrounded. Finally, I looked through the stars and I went a different way. Went different way, went to the River of Bug. Stayed there until about...in the morning about 8:00, 8:30 in the morning. Met a woman not far away. She said, "What are you doing here? The Germans are all over." "Let us in for just for over a day." Nothing doing. So we stayed there...stayed there a whole day like in a wilderness around us. Then the following morning, we saw a man with his wagon and horse. One of us went over...was a little village or something. He said it's not far away, about 6 kilometers which is not far. "Can you take us?" He said, "I'm going with my horse and wagon. If you want to go...after I don't know...I'll think about you. You go." So he went from over there and we came in. It was not a village, even smaller. Maybe was about 15, 20 families living there. And that time was...uh...the hard job started. We were liberated from that...but we were not liberated from the...from the war...from the Germans. And it start another painful, painful time. Being outside, the head man from that little village came over to us. He said, "I know who you are. I know from where you come because we only 6 kilometers from the place. We can smell. You know...when the corpse are burning, we could smell it. When the wind goes out our way. What do you want to do?" We said, "We want to go...we want to take the train to go to...back to Czestochowa." "And that's a rough time. I don't know how you're going to do it." "Okay, show us where it is the nearest station." He said, "First stay over here. Stay over night. Early in the morning, we'll see what we can do." Was a really nice man. He brought over some milk and something to eat. We left. He said, "Don't go with the way. I take you around the forest. Usually it is about 17, 18 kilometers from that place, Treblinka, to that village where he took us by the name of San Draniki. I remember every name of it. He took us over there, said goodbye. We was in the...we was also in the...in the...one night we stayed in the forest. Second night we decided to go into the village. A woman opened up the door. This friend of mine went over. "What do you want?" "We want just for the day, give us a place." So she goes in to her husband, "Go up to the stable." They had a stable. Nothing was in the stable. They were poor people. So I went in. We stayed over there. Cold. Ice. Cold. It wasn't a stable like...stable you know, just a part was open. Wide open. WE were freezing over there. We were over there for about a week. At night, came up and they told us to go into his house. His house was one room divided with something like this...some kind of paper _____. We stayed in the back. In the front there was a...his sister from Warsaw. She was a nice, young girl. And all the boys they came around, and they had a good time and we couldn't breath. We were afraid to breath. To sneeze, forget about it. And that was _____. This one fellow by the name of Berkewitz ___ was a fairly good one, but we paid a lot of money to stay. Every day we paid a lot of money in this room, and actually they didn't give a thing. Potatoes cooked almost raw, that we shouldn't be able to eat a lot. And when I explained the deal we paid them like thousand dollars a day. We did give them the money to buy material. We maked for them clothes, winter clothes. Day to days, and all that. Was very good material. A brother-in-law of hers find out about...where you got so many clothes. She said, "I'll tell you, but nobody has to know. I have some Jews." "Where is he?" "He's my house." So he came over, he said, "You come with me. I take the machine...the sewing machine. You come to me and you make for me clothes." I said, "Yes, I will make for you but they are my friends. I will not go without

them.” “Come.” Now this a...some kind of little story. I wrote that in a book. It is in a book. When we came over to that one, it was magnificent. There was a man and a woman...what can I tell you. Diamonds. Didn't take money. Just for the food what we ate. And she made the best food you can mention. We didn't sleep in the stable. We slept in the house. In a bed. And for us we didn't see..first thing we didn't see anyone. I myself for 4 months I didn't see a woman with clothes. All I did is my job in the gas chambers. All these people were all naked without any clothing. First time I see a woman it was strange to me to see a woman. And she was so nice. They had a son about 9 years, daughter 7 years old. His name was _____.

And we were over there over a week until I find a paper...newspaper and it was...a newspaper was a month from over there to Warsaw, from Warsaw to Czestochowa, which is a far...far away. From over there to Warsaw is far, I would say about 68 miles and from Warsaw to our town it is about 150 miles. Far away. To walk is impossible. We decided to go by train. Whatever will be will be. We'll go by train.

Q: At this point, we need to stop, change tapes, and then we can pick up with the train.

Tape #3

Q: Abe, the tape is started. We left as you were about to board a train for Czestochowa.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell us about that.

A: Before I boarded that train, I got into a family. I mentioned it before by the name of Suppel _____. We stayed there about 8, 10 days. Very, very nice people. And he had a...uh...brother-in-law. He and his brother-in-law was taking us to the railroad to pick up the train. Before we left (coughing) excuse me...their house...his wife start crying and she said, "Somebody from you survive, please write me a letter." And that was the end we saw them. We went through the forest. They went first. They didn't want to go together with us naturally. Before coming to the railroad station, from the forest under a tree...it came out a few Germans from the SS. And how...where do you have your passports. We find out that time that the German they took away all the passports from the public to change for a different kind of passport. And we knew that. So we told them, oh, yes. Yes. It's true. "Where are you going?" "Oh, we're going to take the train." Start looking around. I was shaking. I was afraid. That's a true. Because I didn't want to come in to their hand alive again. So my mind was to escape and let them kill me, but this cousin of mine start, you know, pushing me like coming out from a trance...my, myself...where I am. Who I am. And I didn't say a word. They let us go. Coming to the railroad station those two people, Mr. Suppel and his brother...was his brother-in-law went in to buy tickets, but the cashier at the railroad station saw us. He said, "What you want to get tickets for them. There are three of them. You are two. No, you cannot get any tickets." Why? You gotta pay money. And they came out and we told them to give them as much as as they asked for. He did give them money and we had a ticket. But luckily enough those people there didn't leave us. They went with us to Warsaw which is about 60 kilometers from there. We traveled. Even they were not allowed to travel at night, but they went with us. We arrived at Warsaw about 8 o'clock, and the train we supposed to take about quarter til 12 at night. They went over to buy for us tickets, and the cashier said, "You must be crazy. You know the law. We can't sell tickets only 25 kilometers from this place. And when you travel over there, then you buy other tickets for another 25 kilometers." And I was standing nearby and I took out a bunch of money and I put in the front of the window. "Oh," he said, "Oh, yes. Yes. I have...uh...all the papers from the...from the _____ (which means like the President from the city)...he had the papers...he wrote on the name whatever we did give to them and we had already papers to go to Czestochowa. Right we said goodbye to each other, we left. We took the train. Everyone in a different compartment. We don't know each other. In the morning, about 7 o'clock in the morning, 7:30 was still like half dark, we came into this station, Czestochowa. A cousin of mine, he lived before in a section which was mostly...uh...Christian people. And this place wasn't included before in the ghetto, not in the first and not in the second ghetto. Over there, went down, didn't see any Germans around, but Polish police. We took a doreska if you know what that is. I don't know how to say that in...in English. What...what I call it in English. I never know. In Jewish they call it

kind of thing, but it is a wagon driven by horses, a special passenger. It took us to this place over there where he lived. Over there, we went in. Also in the hiding, it happened a friend of mine...very close of mine and _____ he recognized me. We grew up I was in the same house. He didn't mention a word to me. He never saw me in his life like...and I never saw him. But we know it...we know we saw each other. We stayed the whole day hidden. At night through the forest, we went close to the ghetto. We came over to the ghetto. We wanted to go in and the ghetto was surrounded by Polish police, Ukraine, other kind. Was very seldom, in fact was never was somebody wants to get smuggled into the ghetto which normally people wanted to get out of the ghetto. So I went into the policeman, Polish policeman, "We want to go in." "You want to go in? You must be crazy. What for you want to go in?" We took out...I don't remember how much money. We give it. He looked away. We sneaked in...in the ghetto. Was a small ghetto. Beginning of January 1943. People in the ghetto. What can I describe to you. Very, very poor. Without clothes, without food, without anything. We got in over there. I met a friend of mine. Very close friend. We grew up together. Up til today we are the closest. He is the first one. "Abe, what are you doing here? You were sent away." "Yes, I was sent away. I am here." Met a cousin of mine _____. "Where are you coming from?" "Treblinka." "What is Treblinka?" We explained it to him. Went into his room and we start to explain to him. We start to explain to different kind of people. We start to explain even to the Jewish police. Nobody but the closest friends of mine or of theirs...they didn't want to believe it. They said, "What do you want...why you wanta tell me a story that nobody who was transported from here is not anymore alive?" I said, "That's right." "They are." "You people must be crazy? And where you come from? A sick house?" I said, "No." But one thing...because we didn't ask them for anything...we didn't ask them for food. We had money. We didn't ask them for clothes. We wore clothes. Until one to another, the whole ghetto knew. And the ghetto was about 5,000 people, all of them working in ammunition factory outside the ghetto which they took them every morning out from the ghetto and they took them to the factory. Over there they worked by ammunition, and at night they brought them back. We had no...no place of ours. We went...uh...escorted to no place, but we hanged around. It was very dangerous to be over there. Young people not doing any work. They came back at night. Everybody noticed, especially me. "Hey, Bomba, is back. He's from Treblinka. He tells horrible stories which is unbelievable." And we had coming in many friends, asking about their families. One I said, "They're dead." "How can it be? How they die?" Just asking question, "How? How long did they go? When they die? And how they died? Who was together with them?" Whatever we could, we answered him. I could answer people which I was with their family in the same wagon...how they locked it and how they lived through the journey to Treblinka and the last time I...when I saw them. It came so far that we were afraid that they're going to kill us because we're bringing in all kind of information which wasn't good for the Germans, wasn't good for the Ukrainians, even for the Jewish police wasn't good. We're hiding different places, and then I had some friends...barbers. One of them by the name of Balsome...he was the person...the personal barber of the man which he maked the selection. He was the biggest murderer of the ghetto by the name of Degenhof. And Degenhof said to him, "You know something. I got information there are people here coming from Treblinka." He said, "I do not know," which he know very well. He was also our friend, and we worked together as a barber and a few

barbers worked with us. He said, "I don't know anything." He said, "Don't tell me. You know." He said, "I don't know." So he said to him, "You know something. If they could...uh...run away, if they could escape from Treblinka I don't want to bother with them. I don't know anything." And myself was a barber. I went into the barber shop of the ghetto. Had a barber shop working over there about, I would say about 10, 12 barbers. They took me in. And I worked and I lived with them together. We ate together. Two women. One was the wife of the Balsome which he was the head man, like big leader, and the other was the wife of a partner of mine from before the war. They did the cooking, everything. At that time I had money. Naturally, I supported them with everything I could. And they had anything they wanted. We did also in that small ghetto organized like a little restaurant where people, you know, cooking, buying this that. What we did...I had a brother-in-law, and this other gentleman by the name of Eisner, he had a brother-in-law also. And they were running around almost naked without anything. What we did...we took out money and we said, "Here is a room. You buy all kind of food you can get. So who's gonna buy? Alright. You just do with it whatever you can. Was three of us. Jacob Eisner, and this friend of mine. He just passed away not so long ago, Rappaport, Moshe Rappaport, and myself. We went down in the street. People coming from work, hungry, dirty, beaten up. We handed them money. Go up over there at the first floor. There is a restaurant. And you get food. We supplied the food and we sent them over the customers that the people shouldn't go in like without anything, and I tell you this is the honest truth. We did it as long as we could. And we're working over there. We organized also in that small ghetto some kind of resistance against...a few of us. One was also from Treblinka by the name of Eislevich. He came from a town not far away from Rabonska. And then it was also in January. They tried to liquidate a number of people, like to take out from five thousand, about thousand of them in to be killed. I was also on that place. That was on the market place. They took out all the Jewish people from that marketplace. They divided them in groups accordingly the place where they worked...40, 50 in a group, and took out groups and they sent them away. This friend of ours from Treblinka, Eislevich...he had a gun. I don't know how he got it. He took out the gun and he start to kill one of the Germans...the Gestapo man by the name of Ron. That was the German's name, Ron. But he didn't kill him. He didn't even want to kill him. He took apart...apart from the clothes. Because of that they took out 27 people. From the people they actually...I don't know they wanted to stay or not, but they took out a group of people...27 of them, and they killed them. Shot them in front of our eyes. And this Eislevich with their boots, with their sticks they killed him. And this friend of mine, who was also close with that Eislevich like myself. He had his knife and I had a stick and I said, "What are you going to do? Don't do it. There will be more killing." He let it go. And I still sounds the...the voice from one of my friends by the name of _____ when he got killed, before he got killed. He said to his girlfriend, "Goodbye, Honey Sauce." After that we went in back to the ghetto. But the organizing inside the ghetto didn't stopped. There were other groups. It went out a group to the forest...some boys, younger...little older than myself and for a time we find out they got killed, but not by the Germans. By the Polish ARKA. The ARKA that is they called themselves they fighting for the liberation of Poland. But actually, they were fighting for the liberation of the Jews in Poland which they helped the Germans to liquidate the Jewish people. And until June the 22nd, 1946, they find out that a group is organizing a resistance of

the ghetto in Czestochowa. They want to know who the leader is. They took out a man, a friend of mine...very close friend of mine by the name of Poltashavichs. He was such a nice fellow, such a quiet man. They took him out to an open place and all the Jewish people around that place had to stay to look how he's beaten up almost to the end, just to say who is the leader. But he didn't say it. They killed him, and he didn't mention a word. Now, that was the last day in the ghetto. A day after, they start liquidating the small ghetto which at that time was between 4 and 5 thousand Jewish people working in four different factories in Czestochowa. One of them was by the name of Hassack _____. The other one was Hosa Hassack, Bata, and there was one Slavanka where people worked. The biggest amount of people they worked on _____ which was almost about 3 thousand of them. And I was working was in this same place here after the liquidation of the ghetto. By liquidating the ghetto, there was a lot of people which they belonged to uprising group, and many of them digged holes, bunkers to be hidden and also I was in...I was involved with a group which we digged a bunker, a big bunker...a bunker about 50, 60 people in it. We had inside food for 2 years hidden. We had beds in the bunker. We had everything you wanta mention. And also we digged a way to go through the ghetto into the other side, to the Christian side. Going in through that we had to go in to a big pile of garbage. Under that garbage, we had hidden a tiny little door from the top to go into that. At that time I knew already my wife...I met her there after I got back from the Treblinka...something like that I met her, and I said, "Regina, I have a place." We went over there...

Q: Do you mean the woman who later became your wife?

A: Became my wife. Yes. Regina.

Q:

A: _____ Regina. And I'm going over to that place. I'm opening up this and she said, "I won't go in. If you want, you go in. I don't want to go in." I said, "If you're not going in, I'm not going in either." What it happened, people went in and they with dynamite they destroyed the whole land of that strip about 6, 7 houses. Took out 3, 4...3 stories, 4 stories, 2 stories and all the people got killed. The rest of the people the Judenrat and most of the police they took to the cemetery and they killed them. Before that it happened...I got to mention it. Before that it was on Purim, 1943, the guard came over and he said to the Judenrat before...just shortly before that, because that what happened in June and Purim was in the end of March. He said, "We got a contract with the British government. We're going to release part of you and they're going to release some of our soldiers which they are under the British. Some are doctors, engineers, rich people, electricians, and all kind. By among they took 152 people. We will give you passports. We will transfer you to Palestine. Everyone was happy. From them gonna give all they have, more than they had to be included in that group. One of them...a doctor, Doctor Connon, with his wife. An elderly man, a doctor, he fell asleep. He didn't go. What do you think they did to that group? They took all those girls, about 150 people into the cemetery and they killed them. And this doctor, because he fell asleep with his wife, was missing. And then they liquidated the ghetto and they got rid of those houses

with the people they were hidden in it. They took us to the labor camp...to the...in Czestochowa _____. Over there, we worked there from the end of June 1943 until the liberation. The 16th of January 1945 we were liberated through the Russian troops. And from over there...I worked there in my trade. Only my trade a working, as a barber. They needed barbers over there, so I worked over there. I was very...I was almost fluently in the...in the German language, writing, and also in speaking it. I never wanted to be any of this big people. I was plain working man. As a matter of fact, the director of this factory, it happened that this one of humanbeing I would call from the German government...a name by Director Litt. He was in the parliament and he was also from the family of Franz. He took the people and he said, "This is your home. You're gonna stay here as long as you will be alive. You're gonna be...you're not going back anymore to that ghetto." At that time I was...I was still in the ghetto, but when I came over he called, "Who knows German?" I said, "I know German." "You're going to be the foreman of the barbers." I said, "No, There's an elderly man. I respected him very, very by the name of Goldberg. He was in our city a legislature, and he was a big man. I said, "The job goes to him." And I...and I worked as a barber until almost the end of it, when they start in 1945 when the front with the Russians came closer, they start to liquidate that factory too where we worked. They took away every day people. And I said to myself and also to a few friends, "I am not going anymore into a cattle train. I know where this thing goes. If anything happens, they're going to take me I'm gonna escape." And I even said to Regina, "Don't go after me. You don't know me any more. I don't know you any more. Just you wait. If I go, I will escape. I will not go in the wagons. If they kill me, I will not go in the wagons." At day time, they took out...a day before, over 2,000 women. Day after, they took out a thousand men, and they send them...the women they send to Ravensbruck, Bergen-Belsen. The men they sent to Buchenwald. I didn't go with that group. And the afternoon, seeing what's going on over there, that the Germans are getting nervous. Some of them did try to escape, and I tried to go through the wires. So one of the Ukrainians said, "Look, don't do that." The voice was different than a day before. He begged us...not he ordered us, but he begged us that we shouldn't escape now. Later it was gonna get dark. What happened? We saw...myself and some other of them...some of the Germans, they were carrying bombs to blow up the factory with the people, but it was so fast. I wasn't there already. I went outside by myself. Then it happened that I...there was too many Germans. I couldn't go through. I came back and I said to Regina, "This time, you're going with me." I took her out the wires. We went around. Imagine that I...I would say I was almost like born in the city, and I didn't know where to go. The place where I wanted to go couldn't go through. It was full of Germans. On the other side I wanted to go to the old town of the city. Everything inside was burning. Well, I decided to go a different way, just to go near that place. I had a friend of mine, a Christian friend. I had many, many of them before the war, by the name of Berenski, Adolph Berenski. Very, highly educated man. And I tried to go...to get to him, but wherever I went I couldn't get through. And there's another story with him either. It is worthwhile mentioning it. This friend of mine, when I got back from Treblinka, he had a factory. He had a big factory. A rich man, rich boy. He was married. A rich boy, fine educated. He wanted to divide a part of the factory and to make a small room into...put me in that part. Me, the two friends of mine from Treblinka and Regina and some of...one friend...one of our other friend had a girl or so. He said, "I have everything ready. I

just want you to come over there.” I don't know. I had no feeling for it. I had no heart to do it. In my heart, even we grew up together I didn't trust him. Don't ask me why. I don't know why. And I didn't go. Now listen carefully to it. He did a lot of for some of his friends, Jewish people. He sent in food. He sent in clothes to the concentration camp where we were and he helped them a lot. After the liberation I found out a story, an unbelievable story. One of his girlfriend, which was a friend of mine. In fact she is now...she's living now. I just saw her not so long ago. He did a lot for her and for her sister and some of the family. He had a girlfriend, a Christian girlfriend. You know after going around a time with her, it happened she got pregnant. A Christian girl got pregnant. Why I'm telling you this story is she...this girl, she was with a sister. They had two sisters, Jewish sisters hidden in their house. He knew about it, but he wouldn't believe it. When he ordered her to get rid of the pregnancy and he didn't want to marry her, he went to the Gestapo and to the other...and he told them that those two sisters had hidden two girls in their bunker. They took them out and they killed them, and the two sisters...they took away. They send them to Ravensbruck. This girl got rid of the pregnancy and she was working in the Ravensbruck for a time. She was liberated. She got back to Czestochowa, and he was in the city already a big man. Everybody knew him. Nice, fine man. Nobody knew about...knows about his story. When she got back, she went to the...Polish police at that time, and she told them the story. And they called them in. "Is that this?" He said, "Yes, it's true.” They jailed him, and he got 15 years in jail. After living in jail or a year, a little more than a year, he committed suicide. That's the man I didn't trust him. I didn't go to him. And something...something is luck. We had all kind of people. We had in the ghetto even Jewish people...I don't have to tell you, if you are in this kind...they working...they were working against the Jewish people. — I'm sorry to say that this true. And that happened. It happened in our...in our town. We had a few men. I don't have to mention the names. If you want I could mention it. Yes? I don't think so which is very...because we are Jewish people, we shouldn't tell stories like that. But for the, you know, documentary and for the history, everything has to be open. One of them was a Rosenberg. He was a policeman. The other one was by the name of Slemmer. There were two brothers. One of them was involved. The other wasn't involved. Was a barber. Nice man. But because he was with his brother all the time, take him also. One of them was a baker. He was head man before the war from the bakers, even he could write and read. Well, he got rich. His really name...they call him Kollibike. That's how they called him. And there were two more boys. I don't want to mention the names because their two brothers are alive, and I'm close with them. They were working against. What that mean against? They organized a group from those...one of them, the Kollibike, and that policeman, Roseberg, he worked with the German together. Announced it for the Germans, whatever was going on, who is organizing an escape, who is organizing an uprising. We find that out. And in our ghetto, we have a group of people...we took not all at one time...one everyone...a wife to a house...it was not far from my house. Over there we had lawyers, real lawyers. We had also a prosecutor. We had judges, real judges before the war. It was a trial. They tried him for treason against the Jewish people, and we decided death penalty. And death penalty was done on the spot. On the spot and in a bottle, wrote down the whole story, buried the bottle. And we did that with him and the other one. The other group of four people, they didn't do that. They didn't work together with the Germans, but what they did is they organized themselves a little

group and they went in the name of the partisans to the people...Jewish people which they knew they had money, hidden money. We offered the partisan. We don't want money and this and that and in the meantime, they grabbed the money and spent the money, all kind of thing. And people _____ and they didn't like it. And they decided to get rid of them, and they got rid of them. That was going on and on. And barely liquidation...and I tell you liquidation was very horrible because there were old people in bunkers hidden all the time. There were young people and people that went to work and they had their parents in the bunkers. People went to work and they had their children in the bunkers and all of a sudden, you know, you cannot go back. And there were bunkers, some of them which because of children they were crying and other thing. They find out about it, and all the people got killed. And that is almost til the end of this... Now I want...I wanta go back to the time in Treblinka. I didn't mention that, but I have to mention it. When I worked in the gas chamber, that is very, very important voice to me. By cutting a woman's hair, I met a girl over there. What can I tell you? Miss America is a beast according to this girl. A beauty. A beauty from beauty land. While cutting her hair, she looks at me she says, "Look, I see you are a young man. Do something that you should be able to escape and go over...tell the people what is happening here. Especially, go. Maybe my father is alive. I know he is alive because he was a pharmacist in a little town." I said to her, "Look, what are you trying to do? Can I escape from death?" She insisted, she said, my name is Salli Levinson. I am from a little town by the name of Koanst in Poland. My father is the head man from the Judenrat. Now he is a pharmacist and tell what is going on what happened to me. And you know something, behind my mind I had all the time in me and in a little way that pushed me a little bit because of her words to do it. Over there in that...in that little _____. Oh, I tell you...I tell you the reaction with this with other people, they came in. Coming in to the gas chamber, the woman mostly...the men we didn't do. We didn't cut their hair. Only women. But when they came in they people from Poland...from what city they come forth doesn't matter...about 50, 60 percent they knew already they're not going to take showers. They're going to be gassed. They knew it. There wasn't any...any outcry. There wasn't any panic. They were I would say released from their pain, from their going through what they went through all the time until to the end of their life. But most what it happened when we have transports from other part of Europe, like from Czechoslovakia, from...from Austria, from Germany, from Yugoslavia, those people they didn't know. Until going in to the gas chamber, they couldn't believe that is their last wake. First thing, they didn't come by cattle train. They came in...in the big wagons, the pullman wagons and they were sitting in comfortable. Some of them were playing cards. Some of they...some of them, you know, they were having a good time. At the railroad stops, they could walk out the trains to go over to the places where they could buy coffee, drinks, other things, and go in back to the train. When they came in and I remember at one time, I happened I went into the train in Treblinka like that. And told the people to go out. One of the...was from the Germany, they came. He had a fight with those people. He wanted to take his umbrella with him. He wouldn't...he wouldn't go with umbrella, and... Anyway, we crossed. I told him the way you go you don't need anymore umbrella. Well, it didn't come to his mind. Those were the people they didn't believe. Absolutely. But the people from Poland, around Poland. They all...they believers. Now one particular transport I will tell you. Come to Treblinka from a little village not far away, about 12 kilometer away. This time when it

was Poland I...i went over there. They came in not by train, not by wagon, but Ukrainian and the German took him by foot. It was some kind of holiday. Don't remember what kind it was exactly. They went in...covered head, and calling up the out-cries, _____, and they went into the gas chamber at that time when outside we didn't work. It was long time we didn't work. What was on? This...uh...commandant or was commandant...lager, _____. He was a sportsman. He organized a box match. Fighters, really fighters. We had a man. He was in his class, _____ in Poland. You heard of thing. Now there was another...another one from Warsaw and this one came from the...from the...from jail. He was not kosher man. Even in Treblinka was...Yomkiller they called. They had a fight. A regular fight. Here you gotta fight. You got entertainment and 10 feet away a bunch of people I would say maybe 200, 250 men, woman, children walking into the gas chamber. If we could sit 2 hours more...it's very hard to describe and to tell every second, every minute and every hour or day what was going on in Treblinka. Treblinka wasn't a camp for work. It wasn't anything. Only what we people did, we worked by dead people. And that was going on until the uprising in Treblinka. The uprising I wasn't there. I know a lot about it. I was almost involved about it. I know exactly how it happened. I know who was involved. The uprising was in August 1943 where the camp was liquidated. Everything was liquidated and nothing is showing over there, besides what they put up...the Polish government put up just symbol stones. And coming over there that I had to mention that because this is the first time...and I don't know I'm gonna go again. I was there a couple months ago. At that place when I went in with all my family, and I looked at the place and had arguments this and this, this and that. I said, "No, this place was only a Jewish place. If you say Auschwitz, if you say Buchenwald, Dachau, there were other nations which they were gassed too. I cannot deny this. But this place in Treblinka was strictly for Jewish people. Besides 3 or 4 wagons, not trains, but wagons shipped...ships, they took them in and they gassed them together with the Jewish people. Not any other one. If somebody came in, let's say what it was a Aktion against people, and they took him into the wagon and someone had business in the ghetto at the same time he didn't know because nobody knew, it could happen, 1, 5...little more, maybe a little less got in in the trap and they couldn't get out...go out for no money at all because whoever was in Treblinka, there was no way out. Whatever they saw, they had to finish them up. So it could be. Beside that, there was no other camp which was strictly Jewish people. Now also for the story, if you say mostly...

Q: We have to stop and pause and change tapes. We'll change tapes and then we'll go on.

Tape #4

Q: The tape is on. Before they start the tape, let me ask you something. Treblinka? Did you know Ivan the Terrible?

A: Yes. Yes. I knew him very well.

Q: Alright. We're going to go back to Treblinka. What can you tell me about Ivan the Terrible in Treblinka?

A: Oh, I was in Treblinka. I saw Ivan the Terrible. I remember him very well. I saw many times I did not work under his control because after liquidating the cutting the hair in Treblinka No. 2 in the gas chambers, I never went back again to Treblinka 2, so I got not involved with him, but I know him. I saw him going around in the...in Treblinka No. 1 where we worked and our people from the Sort kommando and other work what the...we people did. Many times I saw him and that is without hesitation it is him. It is the same. The same one. And I got friends of mine, at least five, six of them. I was together with them. Every one of them recognized him.

Q: As who?

A: As Ivan the Terrible.

Q: You talking about later, John Demyonim?

A: John Demyonim. Yes. Everyone recognized him. And let me tell you, if they say that people sometime they..uh... don't recognize, they forget and the other thing. I was a few times as a witness in Germany against some Nazis in...uh...in...uh.... in Treblinka?

Q: Who?

A: I was a..for instance, _____. You heard the name? His was in...in...uh...Frankfort. There was no trial like it's going on in the other part of countries and especially the United States. When I came in we were over there 10 or 12 witnesses. Riceman. Maybe you know the name? Sam Riceman was my friend from Montreal. He's not alive anymore. Passed away. Catholic. He was from my home town. Was many of them. At times we were at least 12 or 14 witnesses at the trial. Coming in over there, it was a different style of trial. I have never seen that trial. I can tell you my part. I cannot tell you other parts because I wasn't there when testifying from other ones. When I came in...State your name, so and so, so and so. Fine. Okay? Sit down. Swear. Okay. You know against who you are a witness? I said, "Yes, I'm a witness against Joseph _____. His name in Treblinka was _____. And I'm here to testify it. "Well, if you're going to testify, you know who the man is?" "I know. I worked there so many times." "Will you recognize him?" I said, "Yes, I will recognize him. I think so will recognize him." So they just said to me, "He is here. Point your finger where he is?" Now

you got a mob of people between 4 or 5 hundred. Civil clothes. I have never seen the man in civil clothes, and also the other ones....I have never seem them. Now that wasn't myself...me myself, but the minute I raised my eyes and I looked around and I saw his eyes, I said, "This is the man." You know, like you coming in and the man sits on his bench and you say again, "No, you have to point out which one it is." They called him on the witness...on the stand and I testified. Now, talking about Demyonick. We were 14 people forth. Every one...every single one not seeing him in the military clothes, only in the civil clothes, pointed out him and recognized him. You wanta tell me that man...like __. like _____, like _____, and more of them they worked with them for 13 months. Day and night they don't recognize him. He...only his excuse is only...and that's the only one. That's another one. He is not the same. For he doesn't know...he does not remember where he was those two years. The same time it happened...it happened to _____. He blinks. Two years he blinks. He doesn't know. But we know. We know. We know our good friends and we know who's real. We will remember all the time of our life. We will remember our enemies. No question about it.

Q: Alright. Thank you.

A: You are welcome.

Q: Tell me about...very briefly, about liberation and Czestochowa and what you and your wife did afterwards.

A: Oh, liberation in Czestochowa going. We were liberated ourselves, January 16. Going out from there we had no place where to go. Luckily we went in at the night before the...we were liberated...that I escaped from over there with my wife, went into a Polish house, and the fight was going on. We pretended we were Christian which I couldn't. My face has a good face. I mean for _____. And we stayed in their house. In the morning, one woman came in. She said, "So many people is outside. I think that concentration camp people is all outside." When my wife heard this and I did also she said to me in Yiddish because she did...the woman where we were in that place and there were so more friends, neighbors, they didn't know that. She said in Yiddish, "Come." I go out and I see. So I went over there and I went to that friend of mine which I mentioned before, Adolf Berenski. I was in his house for awhile, then I met another Pollack. He said, "Abe, you gotta come to me." I went over there to him. I was in his house for two days I think and then a rumor what's going on that the German is coming back. So what he did he said, "Oh, Come here. _____. So I went to other friends. They want...I was in Treblinka with them. I went over there to them and we stayed for awhile. Until we start to get together but I don't want to be too long in my home town. I went back to that place, Boyden-Obersladzen, met some other friends, and I met another friend from Treblinka by the name of Borax, Gustaf Borax. Maybe you heard that name. He's now an elderly man. He's about 90 years old at least. I hear he lives Haifa. I met him. We opened up a barber shop in...over there and we had a very...that was in beginning of March 1945. We had a nice apartment from the Germans. The apartments were empty because they...they run away. They were afraid for the Russians. Most of them they went on the...on the west side, because they wanted to be behind American or English instead of the

Russian. Any way it happened it didn't took too long, just across my barber shop was a jewelry store. A man, their brother, their two sons...staying in the barber shop working over something...shots across the street came in from the ARKA. They killed the son and the father. The same day I came home and I said to the children, "Pack whatever you got and that's last time we're going to see ___." The following day we left and we went to the border town of Germany. I had papers over there ready Germany. We went through Czechoslovakia into Germany. And we stayed one time in Bamberg and then we went to a little place in near Regensburg by the name of Fogenstein. I had over there also to do. In that...in that little Fogenstein...we came in over there. We were a handful of people. We were two or three women, about 8 men, 8 or 9 men. I was the one...I spoke German, so it's going into the Bergenmeister which you call mayor of that little town. The whole population was about 2 thousand. We went over there because over there we could get food. And in a big town like in Bamberg, it was very hard. And we had a little...not...we had a little fight. We were people from concentration camp. The governor...the American governor, he said that we have a right to get the same thing what the German people. We don't have to stand in a line behind two thousand people. We're sick people, suffered, so whenever we came...and altogether we were 11 people, so the mayor said, "No, you have to stand in line just like anybody else." And he was...find out, a big Nazi. And I was with a friend of mine. He raised a chair to hit him over the head. Yes. And I hit him once. I never in my life I never had a fight. I was...I wasn't a youngster running around, never fight, nothing. This thing I never had. But I hit him once.

Q: You hit the mayor?

A: Yes. I hit him once in the nose and all the thing was...was like coming off. And all what happened...oh, a big thing in ____, the little town of Germany. The Jews tried to killed our mayor. I ran away from over there with that other man. Went into Regensburg. Over there was a major from the army. He was just very funny, Mayor Levine. Mayor Levine. So he took us to the governor. And the governor of that part was a colored man, and he was governor. Yes. So we told them the story what had happened. So he said, "I'm gonna send for the...for the mayor. Mayor came over with the secretary. He said, "Look, you are from the Jewish people. He is from the German people. Shake hands. Let's fight this." I said, "We Jewish people have suffered enough." "Okay. Okay, I ready for it." He said, "No, he doesn't want. He want us in jail, and he is going to try us and we have to be in jail." So this governor said, "Okay. In the meantime, don't touch these two men. Let them go home." We went home. It passed about a week, maybe 10 days...all of a sudden I'm going down in the morning. What I see? I see about 100, 150 soldiers, American soldiers, surrounded the whole house of that mayor. You know what had happened? They took him away. Some of his friends, they knew that he was a SS man in the Panzer Brigade. And they took him away. He was in jail for 6 months...for 6 years. That incident I have over there. And then I left.

Q: When did you and your wife leave Europe?

A: Well, we left. We came here to this country. We come...we came here '51. We were at different places. Then we came here. We had a rough time here too. Came without a friend.

Believe me, _____. And in my trade, you cannot be...whatever you're doing here, you cannot be a millionaire. Okay, you make a day...you make 2, 3 dollars more, 2 or 3 dollars less. But eventually my wife starts. She worked a little bit, and we got together made a living here. And thank God we are very happy in this country.

Q: Is there anything you want to add?

A: No. Nothing specially to add to it. Now when you ask my wife, she will have her story. I don't want go together my story with her story.

Q: Abe. Thank you very much.

A: You are very welcome. It was very welcome. It was really a pleasure talking to you. You are a person which you have something in your heart, you mind very well. But anywhere, you have something...I'd say Jews they are all nationalities, good and bad. Something of a humanbeing, and that is more important than anything else.

Q: Thank you very much.

A: You are very welcome.