**Gerda Lederer**

Audrey Au listened to tape and edited. 6-06.

I was born in Berlin, Germany. And on the whole, we had a very traditional upbringing… factory… too much about his background. I mean I do know… but I really don’t know… interestingly enough he came from a very, very old… hundreds of years… I don’t think… just happened to know (inaudible)… in Germany all this time and… and became very wealthy…

*Q: To which what?*

(inaudible) and he came from… my father was a banker but he died… he was a nice guy, we liked him… (inaudible) because we lived a very conventional life… you know and it was for…

*Q: What were the child rearing patterns…*

They were certainly… which was what…

*Q: (inaudible) I have another tape recorder, let me get it.*

… foreign language, but it wasn’t the perfect… my mother just wasn’t the kind of person who took care… everything was…

*Q: Okay, is it going? You know why it isn’t going, because it’s a voice-operated recorder. It stops when we talk (laughter).*

A long time.

*Q: So that’s it.*

Oh, well.

*Q:… have to get you up in the morning.*

Yeah, and we go to school… I’m not sure now, I don’t remember. My mother slept late, so I didn’t see her… (inaudible) I never thought about it, now that you ask me… We very often eat our meals without our parents, you know, because they were out or they came home… and did our homework and then we… I don’t remember.

*Q: What’s wrong with this? It doesn’t seem to be…*

… was your (inaudible) the guy that your husband is working with.

*Q: Yeah, we’ve been having a meeting with McGraw Hill today. I think they’re hoping McGraw Hill will give them some money… seems to be excited about.*

(tape changed speed)

I was born April 9, 1926, in Vienna, Austria. Of course I was born in a hospital and my mother stayed in the sanitarian for an incredibly long time, that was customary then. But I’m in the habit of saying I was born in the house that my father was born in because my parents then lived in my (inaudible) 55, one of the second most beautiful shopping street in Vienna, across the street from a department store called (inaudible). My father had lived in that apartment with his parents when he was a child and my family owned a fifth or a twentieth or some portion of the house. In any case, the portion that the apartment was in. I thought as a child that it was a very large apartment, but when I revisited it not so long ago, I guess I found that it wasn’t really quite so large. That happens.

*Q: Yes, I know.*

I, my nuclear family consists of my father, my mother, my sister and myself. Since my father passed away at the age of 99 last October, I’m the last survivor. My father died a long time ago and my sister died in an automobile accident in 1988, which is a strange feeling not to have anybody left. But I...

*Q: My mother died of cancer, so I know what you mean.*

My father was my favorite parent. I adored him. He was a very serious man and he loved me limitlessly, absolutely. My mother was a sunny, friendly, gay, frivolous kind of person to my way of thinking and I was a little bit critical of that. But my sister was three years older than I. My childhood in Vienna was a very happy childhood-- it was really. I really was secure and safe and happy with my family. I remember March 1938 very well when on the 12th of March 1938, the (inaudible) occurred and Austria was taken over by the Nazis without a shot being fired. The thing that I remember particularly well and that no history book and no propaganda has ever been able to falsify is the enormous joy that was felt by the Viennese. I remember it. I saw them. They were just intoxicated with the thrill of it and the joy of it. Now, it’s relatively recent that someone asked me, I don’t remember whether I read it or whether someone asked me whether I could imagine how many people were not in the street. And since you don’t remember that, you don’t see them and you don’t remember it. I was taken aback and I thought well, that’s probably true. There were probably people who were grieving and were at home and who were not pleased about the development. But of course you only see (tape sped up)… anything on there?

*Q: Let’s try it. Okay.*

The thing that happened on that (inaudible) resigned and his speech was recorded over the radio, uh…broadcasted over the radio, and we listened, and it was about six o’clock at night, I remember there was a (inaudible) to the speech. Afterwards, they played the Austrian anthem… very slowly as if it were a funeral barrage. I remember that some how. That of course was the beginning of a difficult time. This was March 1938 and we left Vienna in September 1938. First my father had absolutely no intentions of leaving. He was very Austrian and he didn’t know where we would go or what we would do or how he would earn a living. He didn’t speak another language and he just didn’t think this could last. (inaudible) said it couldn’t last. … a lot of horrendous thing had to happen before he realized that… be killed. Certainly be tortured. So after that happened he got busy trying to get…

*Q: What was it that happened?*

A lot of relatives in Vienna and one of the relatives was his sister, his younger sister and… and had two children, a son and a daughter. We were very close with the children--with the whole family-- especially with the children. We spent a lot of time together. … after the (inaudible) maybe two or three weeks later my cousin, who was then fifteen, was coming home on a Saturday afternoon from the Synagogue and he was just crossing the street going home to his house when a group of Nazis marching down the street had a few Jews with them and they were collecting the Jews for a street washing brigade. There were political slogans on the street. Now, I never knew why they thought that washing them off with soap and water would take them away because most of them were painted on with oil paints. But this is what they were doing. They were collecting people to scrub the streets. And they collected my cousin, Ernest, and… Ernest was fifteen or sixteen, a strapping fellow and a good sportsman. He knew better so when they said 'here’s a bucket and here’s a rag and clean the street,' he didn’t say, 'I won’t.' But they said, ‘kneel you Jew Bastard,’ and Ernest wouldn’t kneel. Whether he wouldn’t kneel because Jews don’t kneel… that’s an… a position that’s inferior… they put themselves into. Whether that was the reason, I think it was because he was wearing his good suit since he had been to the synagogue. His pants legs so that the knees would be… and started to scrub. And… must have been about his age was doing the tormenting said, ‘didn’t you understand me? I said kneel you Jew Bastard,’ and for that he gave him a kick so that he fell down on his knees and with that my cousin got up and hit him good. He boxed him in the face. And with that four of them, the boys who were conducting this march, descended on him and beat him within an inch of his… and left him in the gutter for dead. His sister… he wasn’t dead, he woke up and when he came to… he went away they would… when they came back from their walk, from the march and maybe they would go upstairs and look for him, so he didn’t go. So Ernest got up and made his way to our house and rang the bell, like an emergency. The only people who rang like that at that time were the Gestapo, so everybody in my house thought they come to get us. But they hadn’t come to get us and they opened the door and there stood my cousin, bloody. He came, yes, and he looked, we children were shunted out of the way because he was just terrible to look at. And they put him to bed in the maid’s room, the maid had left anyway because (inaudible) and they nursed him and bandaged him and later the doctor came. But my father decided that it wasn’t safe to stay and my father made the rounds that all the Jews at the time made from one consulate to the next trying to get a temporary Visa or some sort of Visa. We had applied for Visa to the United States, to Australia and to England and had not received any of them yet, or maybe never would. And then my father bought a Visa to Santa Domingo and with those in hand he got a transit Visa for France. We could go, we had a three-week (inaudible) in for France. And with that we left. We left the house unaltered, we didn’t pack and put away the fridge and stuff like that. We just took our suitcases, just our personal belongings.

*Q: Did you know you were leaving for good, though?*

Yes, yes.

*Q: Did you not try to sell anything because you were afraid of causing…*

First of all, my parents had sold their stores. They had two stores and sold the house, the country house they had and then had to turn around and pay everything they had received in a tax called (inaudible). The tax you have to pay because you are fleeing the country. It was no use you couldn’t keep money anyway and besides my parents didn’t want to upset the applecart. They didn’t want to change anything so that the neighbors couldn’t say that the Hines are leaving and somebody should stop them, or whatever. So we left everything. Later my parents tried to arrange to have a lot of the furniture put into a lift which is a container…

*Q: Storage container.*

And have it taken to the United States. It got to (inaudible), there it was bombed and sank, or at least that’s the story I heard. However, I must say I gave a thumbnail sketch of my mother before. There were a few things in her life were she was really (inaudible). One of the…

*Q: Was really what?*

(inaudible), really terrific… one of them that I admired her for all her natural life was the fact that she never, never, never said, I had or I lost or I wish I had, like the story you tell where the mother was able to turn around and say, but you were saved. She lost her sisters, she lost her brother-in-laws, and her brothers, and their children, and innumerable friends, but she was allowed to save her husband, and her two children, and for her that was everything. She never once said, I wish we had that beautiful piece from the living room or my chairs from the bedroom or something, never. She was just-- she settled for everything because she had us.

*Q: That’s interesting because one of the stories I remember reading someplace was a refugee joke, which was this Dotson was walking down the street and he said, back in Germany I was a St. Bernard.*

Yes.

*Q: There are so many people who did this. Why do you think your mother was able or didn’t that?*

I don’t know. I don’t know how she was able not to do that. And my mother never talked about the holocaust and my mother never read about it and my mother never wanted to read any books about it and you and I might have thought that it didn’t, that it had left her and was not on her mind anymore. Actually, my mother tried in her high old age to commit suicide. She took an overdose of pills and as soon as she was out of the hospital, she did it again. She did it twice. My oldest daughter is a physician from L.A., she told me what to do and what not to do for Mom, and I sat with my mother in the emergency room of the hospital in the Bronx where she had been taken and she was delirious. In her delirium she said, ‘the trains are moving now, there’s my sister. Hi Josefina. It’s crowded in here, isn’t it? Do you think the train will soon get there?’ And I suddenly realized that she thought she was on a train going to (inaudible) with her sister who had actually gone. And so in her deepest unconscious or subconscious it slept there somewhere and came up that time. In her waking hours she never spoke of it. She wasn’t in the concentration camps, but this was just a fiction, a dream, a nightmare.

*Q: Did you ever ask her about it at all?*

No.

*Q: I’m just amazed at how you deal with things when you are able to and not before. My brother died of cancer in 1978 and I got married in 1981, first child in ’82. I started to see a shrink the year after my brother died, so it was 1979… never talked about him and that was the reason I went because I couldn’t sleep at night. And, you know, it wasn’t my fault that he died of cancer, but I just couldn’t deal with it and we moved to California in 1984 and so I had seen this man since 1979, gone through all this and I remember the summer before I left, sometime in the Spring, I said we never talk about my brother. Only then when I was leaving that I started to talk about it and that’s nothing compared to the, I mean, one can’t put these things on a scale.*

And were you able to speak about it them?

*Q: No, it was very funny I went through an experience where we had talked about it for a few weeks and I could always tell with the psychiatrist who didn’t say much, he was very non-interactive, you know, when I wasn’t getting close to something, he would get very quiet. And he was always, you know, 45-50 minutes on the dot and I had had one of these very difficult sessions where I had been crying about my brother and I knew it was time to leave and he didn’t move and I thought 'something is funny here.' And in my mind’s eye, my oldest child, who at that point was about 17 months, I had this image of my brother going down the rabbit, Alice and rabbit hole, you know…*

Yes, yes.

*Q: And I had my hand and I was holding him as he was going down and just in that instance I realized my son was right behind my peripheral vision and I just went like this to look at my son and took my eyes off my brother, just for that split second, and when I looked back, I had let go of my hand and I told him what had flashed through my eyes and it was, you know…*

You had experienced the loss.

*Q: I knew I had to either let my brother go. Stop grieving him and love this little boy that was kind of represented life to me. I think that a lot of the people that I’ve talked with have, you know, they put ‘do not disturb’ signs on their memory because they couldn’t deal with it. They had to get on with life. They had to, you know, put food on the table and things like that and I think sometimes as they got older that they needed…*

Yes. It seems like a very plausible explanation.

*Q: It was so much, it was so overwhelming. I mean, I think about what it would be like to have to leave your home, your country. Your father didn’t speak any other language, I mean, can you imagine what that must have been like? You said at one point, we didn’t get it on the tape, you said when (inaudible) came you could sense the fear. Kids can smell it.*

Yes.

*Q: What was there that you sensed or smelled with your dad? Why was it making him willing to leave, not just to recognize it…*

He was willing to leave after this horrible incident with my cousin. But my father was a very hard and determined man to the outside and so I saw this resolution in him. My father, incidentally, my whole family, but my father particularly were very typical for their class and their group at their time. This may amuse you. You know, my father was a personal friend of the Emperor of France?

*Q: No.*

That’s his version. I don’t think the Emperor of France even knew that he was alive. I told you the address of where he had the store.

*Q: Right.*

When he was a young man, before the first World War, he would help his father in the store and he would stand outside in the street when the emperor of France drove by on his way from (inaudible) to the (inaudible) where he had his office and did his work. He drove down (inaudible), down the rode where my parents, where my father’s family had that store, and my father and everybody on the street stood in front of their stores at attention when the Emperor went by and listening to my father, he believed firmly that the Emperor greeted him. And certainly my father greeted him. It was a real personal kind of relationship. Because the emperor of France was very liberal and kind to the Jews, and this sort of comforted him all of his life. And that’s also why my father was friends with Catholic priests, with Catholics in the community and with Jews. There were a lot of Jews, but he thought nobody would hurt him.

*Q: It takes several steps. You have to first of all realize that what’s going on is not temporary, that’s it stretched the boundaries of the normal political parameters. That it can threaten you, that you’re vulnerable. Then you have to have that kind of determination resolve that you are talking about to put everything else aside, go to all the consulates and just keep going and going and going. You have to have the financial resources to buy the tickets to San Domingo and that kind of emotional ability to make a break with the pack. That’s one of the questions that I’m interested in. I mean there were other people that had horrific things like that happen to them who were not able to do all that. Did you see anything in your father that would make him more receptive to this?*

My father was actually, it’s interesting, you know, my subject is authoritarianism and I think my father was a classic authoritarian. He was enormously strict with himself and had no pity. He taught me how to ski, we went on skiing trips, he hiked up mountains, he taught me how to swim, and we swam, and swam, and swam.

*Q: Was he hard on you too?*

No. But he made demands on himself and taught me to make those demands on myself. So I think that he just decided at that stage that this was something he was going to do and he never looked back. He just carried through with it, he just did it. I remember when they painted swastikas and nasty slogans on the storefront on the windows of our store and the man who worked for him--he had a number of employees-- but the manager when he came in and saw this, he was anxious to quickly, quickly, quickly get it washed off. He and other employees went quickly to wash if off so my dad wouldn’t have to look at it and wouldn’t have to see it.

*Q: You know, your falling asleep.*

Yeah, I’m falling asleep. I’ve been teased all my life that nothing happened to us. Because in comparison to what happened to other people being uprooted, losing all your earthly possessions: your home, your language, your friends, your family-- it was nothing. We were whole. We were not destroyed. It seemed so out of proportion to complain about what happened to us when to these others, everything had happened. I really do have an array of friends. I told you. We told you about Irene Shapiro. I have a friend who is very close to me and I love her very much, her name is Renee Weiner. Renee Weiner has a very unusual story. She, like myself, comes from Vienna. She's a couple of years older than I am and she came with papers to Paris, but they didn’t get out. That is her, they were there a little longer than we and, but it was also just before the war. Her mother, her sister and she went shopping and when they came back. Her father had been apprehended and taken away by truck. They still saw him. The last time she saw her father, he was on a truck in front of the hotel and he waved to her and she saw him and the words that he spoke are engrained in my brain. Would you believe that he said to her, ‘Renata, don’t worry. These are the Germans and I grew up with them, I lived in Frankfurt (he lived in Frankfurt all his life), I know them. They won’t hurt me.’ The French were known to be really brutal and anti-Semitic and mean, but here he was being apprehended by the Germans and he knew them. It shows you how assimilated and how trusting these people were. Anyway, Renee changed her name from Renata to Renee and stayed in Paris. The age difference between her sister and herself is a little more like yours, like your children. Her sister is seven years younger and so there was the mother, the very young sister and she. And the mother, they declared the mother dumb, deaf and dumb, because her French was so atrocious that if she opened her mouth, everybody would know that they were from Germany, from Austria. But she, Renee, and her little sister spoke French very well and without an accent and they lived there. The war broke out and Renee joined the (inaudible) Frances. And fought in the French underground the whole war, all the years until the end of the war and had many different jobs. Among them fingering the traders. She had to point out the traders and they would be taken care of. They couldn’t shoot them because that would take too much noise. They would take them into the house and choke them to death. She did that a few times, she said she couldn’t do it. So they gave her a different job. She hiked with a group of children. They gave her children and she hiked to a hut on the French side of the French-less border where she would dress them in that hut. She would condition them. She would dress them and talk to them, sew their valuables into their coats and they would put on two or three layers of clothes because they couldn’t end up with what they had on. Then she would take them up to the border when the guards were at their furthest distance, and somebody would receive them on the other side to take them away and she would go back down. She did that over and over. She has amazing stories like that. To this day, she is a very active sportswoman; she’s now 76 and goes swimming nearly everyday from May to October in the ocean in Long Island. She hikes five, six, seven, eight hours. She’s an amazing lady. She’s married and has a son. You know, knowing people like that have really been a very uplifting experience for me. In comparison, I always felt that what we experienced wasn’t so much. Of course, there were stories to our lives. People make the story make sense. If you in these experiments they had people read sections in a book and the sections were disconnected. They were (inaudible) sections. They read about a boat and about… are you familiar with the research?

*Q: Generally.*

And in retelling the story, people want to make sense of what they read and they fill in the pieces. They connect the pieces and supply what wasn’t there. It seems to be a normal human desire to make it…

*Q: And what they supply is often different.*

Yes! And there is nothing there that is in the story itself. There was not a logical connection. It’s like two separate stories, but because we don’t feel comfortable with that, we supply it.

*Q: Let me just ask you this one thing because I want to let you go to bed. When you’re telling the story about how you had it much better than these other people, you never thought of yourself and felt sorry for yourself, I’m not questioning that at all, I accept absolutely what you are saying, I think that's true. I also wonder if, however, the unwillingness or the fact that you do not think of yourself as a victim is also partly a defense mechanism that people may do to avoid feeling that way. Nobody wants to feel victimized. We were talking tonight at dinner about different kinds of discrimination, mostly anti-Semitism, but there are other kinds too. We kind of learned of this. There was a Jewish professor at Stoneybrook, he and I, and some other people, were at a party that some was gay. And I don’t know how we got talking about this and he said to me if someone made a homophobic remark, would you say something if you are in a new group of people? I said, sure of course. I would call them on it. He said, how about if somebody said an anti-Semitic remark? And I said, yes, absolutely. How about a racist remark? I said yes. How about an anti-woman remark? And I stopped and said, no, I wouldn’t. And he said that’s interesting because I would call somebody on making anti-feminist remark or sexist remark and he said I would not say anything if anybody said an anti-Semitic remark. We started trying to think about what that meant and I think part of my reaction was, you don’t want to feel vulnerable. So, I’m asking you, but I do not want to put words in your mouth and I do not in any way suggest that you weren’t in fact luckier than these other people.*

But you may be right. I never looked at it that way. It may very well be that one doesn’t want to be felt sorry for and one doesn’t want to be a victim.

*Q: Probability is not something most of us are comfortable with.*

Yes. There are so many aspects to that. You know, I have a cousin, I have a cousin and the widow of my cousin, of another cousin, who lived in Israel, I didn’t see my cousin who lives in Israel for many, many years. She immigrated after myself. When we lived in Austria we left with her father and she stayed behind with her mother, but her mother died in Vienna and then she was totally alone. Her brother had left for Palestine and then she managed to leave for Denmark and eventually ended up in Palestine-- it’s a long story. But I remember her writing to my parents and I don’t know, she says that she never said that, but I seem to remember that she wrote that we really didn’t help her when she needed help. And I felt so guilty about that, that I was out of touch with her for forty years, for forty-two years until I, myself, traveled to Israel and then I got in touch with my other cousin who had been to the States to visit and I wrote in my letter, ‘If you see this cousin, or if you call her, I would dearly, dearly like to see her.’ When I got to Israel she stood there in the airport, this little old lady, you know, like myself, only took about 20 minutes and after that she was exactly the way I had left her. It was so wonderful. And I’ve seen her often since. But the feelings of, I had put away the feeling for her with the feeling of guilt that I didn’t help her and I should have helped her and my parents should have helped her and therefore, I had certain reactions. So, you store these things like that and you don’t really reexamine them. You don’t take them out. So, I…

*Q: Think about what I asked you about the vulnerability and just tell me at some other point if, you know, as you reflect on our conversations…*

I think that it very well was that one doesn’t want to be the victim and one doesn’t want to, I think, that may very well be true and I never thought of it that way. I thought having been interviewed a number of times before, that there were really no new dimensions to discover. When Albert interviewed me some years ago, I was amazed that he was able to ask me some questions that were very cathartic and that really made me think of things that I had never thought of before. I don’t remember now what they were, but it was like that.

*Q: I’m amazed that you go through a different therapy in a different point in your life. You get through the father, mother, I mean, some of the things come up and you go right back and it feels so real and there’s new dimensions that you didn’t look at in your mind. And you’ve come to new, you are able to see different things because either emotionally you are able to look at something from a different angle or you generally something’s connected and why it didn’t. So the way people organize the stories that you’re talking about, I think it was really interesting.*

I was just thinking before that between your recording equipment not working properly and my jumping around like that and telling different ends of the story, must be very confusing.

*Q: No, no. Not at all, not at all. It is interesting, I did an interview with one woman talking about this, also about experiences that women have. She was a professor of mine in graduate school, she said she’s been very lucky, she never really had much discrimination. I remember being there and seeing the things that were happening to her, and I said I’m going to say something very rude here. That’s the way you choose to remember it and she stopped a minute and she said, yes, that’s the way I choose to remember it.*

There was a processing that she did know and level on which she wanted.

*Q: I thought here she is a totally different context, but these women who made it in academics had to find a way not to think of themselves as victims. They had to feel like, well I will make it anyway. And I think that people, I mean, I look at someone like you who has put together a life, you don’t have to see your husband very long, he’s a sweetheart. You must have a wonderful relationship, the two of you. Professionally, you do work that satisfies, you know, and other people are broken by this. So I’m very interested in understanding, just as another human being, how it is that you construct a life out of the various fragments that we all have? Although, in yours, the disjunctures are more obvious, perhaps.*

You know, on the level that has, if anything, indirectly only to do with my early childhood experiences and with my political life experiences, I married a man who was exceedingly handsome and I was wildly and passionately in love with him. We had three daughters together, and he turned into a terrible abuser, not in a physical sense, but an emotional and mental sense. Terrible. He convinced me that I was really stupid and that it was much better not to open my mouth in public because I couldn’t talk. He degraded me enormously, my self-confidence and my belief in myself was very bad. From early childhood on, I knew I was stupid and I knew I couldn’t do anything and so I really had a… my success in school and with my professional and so it happened despite my view of myself and my husband’s attitude. And…

*Q: What was it that made it turn positive?*

I’ll tell you. My husband and I separated, and I must say that in my life with my husband there were always for years and years very positive times together too. Sexually we were extremely happy together and there were periods when we got along very well. He seemed to me to be the intelligent and most wonderful person, but he was in fact very mean and eventually had terrible troubles with his daughter. I thought he’d kill her – our oldest child. And he became a great womanizer and I couldn’t stand it. I couldn’t. I was so jealous and so obsessed by his infidelities. I finally left him. I finally did a temporary separation and went abroad for a year and that was the turning point. That was the turning point. This man, this second husband of mine, this man whom I met then has always had such faith in me and such admiration and such support and such kindness and he has, this is the most interesting phenomenon and it has… (side A of tape ended)

*Q: ...the most interesting phenomenon, and hasn’t been written up yet and maybe that will do it someday, okay.*

My friends, a colleague of mine at that time, for example, had never set foot in Germany and was not planning to. An American born Jewish wouldn’t even buy a spool of thread if it was made in Germany, let alone a car.

*Q: This was your friend?*

My friend, at the time when I separated from my husband, we were good friends. My life in America is surrounded by refugees, by people who have their origins in Austria or in Germany or in Poland and who came to the States. They (inaudible) all German and when I went to Germany for a year to teach there, because that was my temporary separation from my husband…

*Q: Why did you choose Germany?*

I wanted to go abroad. I wanted to go to Switzerland. I had read a report that had just come out where they compared different nations to their achievement in mathematics.

*Q: You’re teaching math?*

Yes, I was teaching math at first in the college, then in the high school level and I saw that all of these countries did better than the United States. So between my husband and myself, we knew that we wanted to do a temporary separation. He had tried to leave me, had tried to live a couple of miles from where we worked. He came home and he was crying and he said, ‘can’t do it. I cannot live two miles from where I raised my family, where I built my house and I can’t do it.’ So I said, 'would it help you, would it help us, if we did a temporary separation and I took a job abroad and we could see how we managed without each other?' He said that was a wonderful idea and he helped me, you know, we looked so…

*Q: You took the girls with you or were they older?*

No, we waited until they were off to college. Until the youngest one was 18. So…

*Q: Because a lot of people go through things like this. I mean you are saying there is this turning point that came when you did this separation, but you must have been together with this man for 20 years, and a lot of people would not have taken a womanizing abuse, you know, verbal…*

But remember when I said that I had no confidence in myself? I had no confidence that I could tell him to go to hell, that I could tell… I thought I couldn’t live without him. I thought if we separated, I would die.

*Q: So it was just the fact the children got older?*

He, George--that’s his name-- he wanted our marriage to work. He wanted me to be different. So one of his girlfriends had this wonderful psychoanalyst, so he went to see him and when he convinced himself that he really was wonderful, he asked him to take me on as a patient and fix me so that I would be different and that we could get along very well. I went with him to the shrink and, of course, he couldn't go there because he wouldn’t accept both of us as a patient and I started to go there for an analysis for a couple of years. The result of the analysis, to the shock of the analyst, was that it made me ready to go off and leave him, temporarily or permanently and to relieve myself, when I did leave him, is indescribable. I was so relieved. I couldn’t, you know, and how did I stay with him? First of all, he could brainwash me. He always made me feel that I saw everything wrong and he was really the wonderful man and brilliant, I was disloyal to him because I didn’t agree with him and all kinds of things. But when I went, when I was trying to say before, when I went to, yeah I wanted to go to Switzerland. I found this job there and tried to change jobs with this man who was going to come in my place. It then turned out that he was not in Zurich, which I had hoped, and not in Lucerne, which was smaller but still possible, but out in the sticks and I was afraid that I wouldn’t, that I would be terribly lonely. I need…

*Q: People.*

At least the city that I can go to a movie if I don’t have friends, if I don’t have… so I said that wouldn’t work. So then someone put an ad in my mailbox at school showing an ad that they were looking for math and science teachers in Germany.

*Q: So it was just chance.*

Absolute chance. So I came home and I said to George, look this is what we’ve been looking for, but Germany. I can’t go to Germany. Even Austria is so awful, we’d been back a few times. It’s unendurably Nazi.

*Q:What year is this?*

It was ’73, ’72 or ’73. So how can I go to Germany? And he said, and he knew a lot, he said you know, it’s not like you think. It’s not what you think it will be. They are different. They are, especially North Germany. They are not like that. They are not Nazis. And I took his word for it. I went to visit there and I went to interview for the job in Washington and they took me with open arms. My school gave me a year’s leave of absence, supported me, and I went. And in that year over there I met Herbert, and from the word go when my friends met him, when they saw him or when he came to the States to visit, they all loved him. And his ability to be with people who were brutalized by the Nazis, who were nearly suffered, who suffered genocide, his ability to endure that was limitless. He was just able to do that. And he is an extremely kind person. For example, he did volunteer work until now with people who were disabled, stroke victim, woman in a nursing home, a woman who had arthritis, crippling arthritis so that she was in a wheelchair, through the Westchester Mental Health Association. He did volunteer work like that. Now he is an (inaudible) for nursing homes. But he just has this very gentle and very respectful way with dealing with people who are in need and he never offended. He was able to get across to these people they came to Germany for the first time. Do you know what that meant to this friend who has never bought a spool of thread, never set foot on and so forth? A lot of them, Irene was in the camps. He translated her auschwitz stories so that her cousin in Germany could read them. He’s amazing.

*Q: You use the word (inaudible). You said the refugees in (inaudible).*

Yes.

*Q: What do you think about the (inaudible)? It was uniquely German.*

I think it is false. I think it is false because anti-Semitism was rapid in other countries too and, because this annihilation is anti-Semitism, it's not like a disease you catch or like a conviction, it was just something he developed because it went with what he wanted to explain. I think…

*Q: (inaudible) developed?*

Yes. Browning’s book is much, much better. And his answer to why, to what about the anti-Semitic countries in Europe, his answer to that is, ‘I’m not studying them, I’m studying Germany.’ I mean he does not want to do any comparisons to relate anything to anything else. So, I think his observations are very important and they need to be made and I think that this theoretical work before his observations and his conclusions are false. His willingness to say that the Germans today, of course they are wonderful is also false because they didn’t do any studies on them today. I think he happens to be right, but it’s not because he has any basis for his statements. Neither do the original ones not ours.

*Q: I was think at dinner we were talking about different methodologies that you get a different feel if you reach different conclusions if you read memoirs, autobiographies, if you do an interview or see an interview that someone else does and I wondered the fact if so much of this legal testimonies that also was giving you a particularly skewed view.*

Did you see the film about the holocaust in Nire, “Mr. Death”?

*Q: No.*

Very interesting. It also something to the analyst. I read, incidentally, an interview with a doctor from (inaudible) who performed the experiments on Jewish women-- it’s in the film, that last hour, the last phase, the last phase, the Hungarian Jews. Very interesting documentary.