>> Herz: ...my father were assigned an upper bunk. It had straw ticking. I am not sure whether you know -- would you know what straw ticking is?

>> Interviewer: Yes, yes, I do.

>> Herz: It was just burlap filled with straw. The bolster was burlap filled with straw. And we had not eaten at that time, and we were not to get anything to eat. And then next morning, a routine began in earnest. And I do not know whether you want to ask me anything more.

>> Interviewer: Yes.

>> Herz: Go ahead.

>> Interviewer: Please continue on about the routine now. What was daily life like?

>> Herz: The routine was that we had caps, or we had hats. Most of us had some sort of a covering for our heads, and the first thing we knew that the civilization had come to an end was that the barracks eldest took his stick and lifted off hat of everyone that came in there, the hat of everyone that came in there. There was a piece of scalp went along with it, it made no difference. Then we saw a big sign, *"Mützen ab im block,"* which meant, "Hats off in the barracks." The barracks was the point where food was distributed and where things went on. In the morning, we were issued -- we had still got a few cups or spoons or whatever it was -- two slices of what the Germans called *Kommissbrot,* which means "military bread," which was a mixture of wheat, rye, and barley perhaps. It was a very compact bread. Each one got two slices of bread, sometimes a pat of margarine, sometimes a little bit of marmalade. The coffee was, the coffee was toasted acorns ground up; tasted terrible. And at lunch, for lunch, or the midday meal, a soup with maybe a little bit of meat. Potatoes was the main thing, and beets that you normally feed the cattle here. So this was our midday meal, and we started to get -- we were already hungry in Terezin because we did not get enough to eat. In Auschwitz it was worse. We were beginning to starve. In the evening, another slice of bread and some coffee; no marmalade, no butter, no nothing.

In between -- at the beginning, before we had coffee in the morning, we had then later on what the Germans called *Appell*

stehen, which means -- *Appell* means "counting," the counting of the prisoners. We were arranged in groups of five, with small distances between us. The SS trooper would come by and start counting, one, two, three, four, and five, then multiply it by five. If he miscounted, he went over it again, but meanwhile, we had stood out there already two hours because the *Blockälteste,* "the block eldest," and the German prisoners with their striped uniforms -- we did not have striped uniforms. The German prisoners were beating us; well, not beating us at that time yet, but they're getting us into line, rough shoving, punching, just to get us in line. So we are standing there an hour, two hours, and I kept wondering why none of us would overpower this lone guard who had just a small pistol. But what could we have done? There were guard posts on either end, high tension wires between with barbed wires that curved inward towards us, and we were as vulnerable as anything. We could have been killed. They didn't need but simply to spray the entire place with machine gunfire and they would have gotten everyone in there. So apparently, also, there was no organization. There was no underground organizations that said, "Let's get together on this and let's see how we can do this." I'm sure that most of the Americans have seen the Stalag series where they always overcome the Germans, but they actually did not. None of their schemes actually succeeded for very long, and I am sure that in reading -- in viewing the television series -- what is it called again?

>> Interviewer: "Hogan's Heroes"? Is that the one?

>> Herz: No, no. Yes, that I meant where they always did well, but the other one about the Holocaust, Lanzmann, Claude Lanzmann. It was called "Holocaust," wasn't it?

>> Interviewer: "Shoah."

>> Herz: "Shoah." They showed that actually only one or two people escaped out of the millions of prisoners, Jewish prisoners or prisoners in Auschwitz, and it is a very small amount. So we tried and tried schemes to think of while in Auschwitz. None of us would have worked because only later on I saw why they would not have worked. They had what they called the *großen Postenketten* or the "grand military patrol." In small holes in the ground, camouflaged SS were spaced 10 feet apart surrounding the entire camp, armed with machine pistols, with automatic rifles. Nobody would have come through. So we gave that up, and we determined, well, we'll try and make -- try and survive. We did not yet know, and we did not know that Auschwitz was an extermination camp or that we possibly could be slated for extermination. The only thing that we did know was that

there was always this sickly sweet smell and pallor in the air. We saw a crematorium belching smoke 24 hours a day. We saw Red Cross wagons ferrying back and forth, and only later we found out that they were carrying military personnel or cyanide canisters. We did not know that. Also, we were not permitted that close to the entrance to the camp. So at any rate, all of a sudden, we were made acquainted with brutality, which we did not think a civilized nation like the Germans would either permit or have knowledge of or do. The first one was that at lunch, all of a sudden, a man was taken. An older man, maybe 65, 70 was taken and laid over the central heating portion, which was just a rough chimney about, I would say, two and a half foot high. He was laid over that, held down by the German *Kapo,* they called them, the barracks eldest and the work detail eldest, who were German criminals, and he received 15 cuts with a walking cane, and I have never forgotten the screams or the pleas for mercy or, later on, nothing anymore except the sounds that a dying animal would make. When they finally let him off, he could not stand, and two fellow prisoners were ordered to support him. And a cardboard sign was hung around his neck with a piece of string, and on it, it said, *"Ich habe brot gestohlen."* "I stole bread. We saw this many, many times. The older man, who could be anybody's grandfather, was totally destroyed. He was no longer a human being. Mucus -- snot, if you wish to call it, because that's what we called it. Snot ran down his face. His eyes streamed with tears. He was whimpering.

At any rate, we were acquainted, all of a sudden, what a German concentration camp was like.

>> Interviewer: Did you have any contact with your family?

>> Herz: Yes. We saw each other. My mother's hair was cut down. She had long hair. My mother was a woman at that time of 40; healthy, friendly. At any rate, we saw each other. My father, my brothers made the best we could of the situation. My younger brother, who is now in Rome, Italy, had secreted a work of a German poet. You may have known -- you probably will know him, Goethe. He had written a work, "Faust." We read it twice. We read it three times. Whereas in Theresienstadt we had some sort of a cultural life -- we tried to make Jewish culture our -- there was a Zionist movement in -- how do we call it -- in Theresienstadt.

>> Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

>> Herz: In Auschwitz, there was nothing. It was the end, the end of everything. We read the book. We memorized it. We quoted.

We had a deck of cards that one of us had. We played card games because there wasn't anything else we could do. My brother, out of sheer boredom, got himself a job laying, laying a stone *Lagestraße,* a cobblestone Lagestraße. It gave him a half of portion of food more. The work was excruciating. My mother found that the -- nothing grew in Auschwitz, by the way. There was not a bird. There was not a living -- no grass or something. There was a drainage canal going through our B camp, and daily details of prisoners from other camps came and laid sod. And my mother checked the sod over. We were desperate for food, and she found, from living in our small village, that there were items that we could eat out of there, and she gathered them, and whenever we could see them, we partook of them. But everybody was about as egotistical as -- there was no longer any sacrificing for anybody, even for family members. You couldn't. There wasn't enough to go around. A mother could not give of her portion for her starving child because there wasn't that much. We were actually starving. We were dreaming of food. We were talking about food. We were -- in three months of not having enough to eat, or four months, we were actually at the end of our strength. And yet, we had hoped only that somehow, in 1944, the end of the war would be in sight. We were also, all of a sudden, cognizant of the fact that we could all be very easily killed down there by machine gunfire from the watchtowers.

And then, in the middle of July, I remember, news traveled through the camp. There was an upheaval in the German government, and we have now a new minister of the Interior. And we thought, Oh, something has happened. We were, neither in Theresienstadt nor in Auschwitz, able to obtain any news. Rumors by the hundred thousands; not one bit of hard news. I do not know when the landing -- the landing may have already been taken in Normandy in 1944. We were not aware of it. We were totally and hermetically sealed off from the rest of humanity. The upheaval was, of course, the assassination attempt on Hitler on the 20th of July, and our hopes were dashed in the next three days when we found out that measures would be more stringent than ever, and that the person who had been chosen to head the entire Interior Ministry in Germany under which all the camps were was Heinrich Himmler himself. I'm sure that you have heard of Heinrich Himmler. And from one plateau of hope, we were, again -- how shall I say -- dashed into an abyss of nearly dismal despair, and yet again, we were hoping that eventually we would be liberated. I had already -- I had visions that we were returned -- remember again that this is not a 66-year-old person, that it is a 16-year-old person saying this to you. I had visions that we would be hailed back in triumph to our

respective places of where we came from and restored to all civilian honors and recompensed or compensation for what we had suffered. We heard artillery fire in the distance, and we thought, Well, these were the Russians advancing. They may have well been. I do not know how far artillery fire, the detonations, carry. We heard only that the Russians were near Kraków. This, again, may have been a rumor. We were not able to verify it. Nobody could tell us. So that was Auschwitz. Brutality, yes.

Oh, one more thing that I wish to say. What did people die of? Well, they died of hunger because they had come to the camps with already a weakened composition. The corpses, and that was my first -- Theresienstadt, I already knew -- the facts of life were abundantly clear -- that people died, and I knew that they were buried. But there, because there was no such niceties as burial in a coffin, the people who had died were thrown, or "stacked" is perhaps a better word, at the very end of the barracks row. Underneath the watchtower, they were stacked like cordwood, naked, without dignity, as they had died, staring, unseeing, nobody to close their eyes, just like cordwood. Cordwood is 4 feet, as you remember, and that is how they were stacked, 4 feet high. Then, at the end -- every period I think they were lying there several hours -- I cannot remember. I was not anxious to explore this place of the dead. I did see it because I wanted to see it. But I would say every 24 hours, a cart came that had high sides. I know that because I saw it. They were simply hand and foot, tossed on there. Dignity of the dead? Nothing. And we then knew that they were taken to the crematoria to be incinerated. There is no way to euphemistically describe this. We had still, at that time, no knowledge of the advent of the gas station -- of the gas chambers and that people were killed or gassed in such numbers as they were. We only knew one more thing. The transport that preceded us had some people in it, and we talked about them to people that were in the B Lage. Well, they told us then they were moved on such-and-such a date, and they deliberately did not tell us, did not tell us, that their fate was the gas chamber. We were deceived by all of the people that were in the camp in any position to tell us. We were deceived. They were, perhaps, told by the SS, if anyone would ever talk about gas chambers and crematoria, that would be their fate, and they knew the Germans meant it. That they had been German trusties for 15 or five or ten years meant absolutely nothing. If a German SS felt that a prisoner, no matter what, was acting against rules, regulation, whatever it was, he felt no compunction to pull out his gun or to assign him to a gas chamber immediately, there and then.

>> Interviewer: What were you doing in the camp?

>> Herz: Nothing.

>> Interviewer: Nothing?

>> Herz: Absolutely nothing. Waiting. Rumor. Talk where we had been. Talk where we were born. Talk of our experiences to others. We did not talk to the Czechoslovakians because we were not able to communicate with them. I did not know but a few short words of Czechoslovakian and some sentences. I did talk with the Dutch because I am from a neighborhood that borders the Netherlands, and our dialect was very close to what the Dutch speak as their national language. So with the Dutch, I could communicate. I made an effort to learn their language, so I knew about -- Westerbork, I believe, was the Dutch camp, and the term *onderduiken,* which means “dived under,” meaning that somebody would take them in and hide them, a la Anne Frank, Anne Frank. That was because the Dutch were a kinder people than the Germans. So we were waiting. That we were in pens did not occur to us. I must say this again and again. We had no inkling, no notion of what awaited us there. The only reason that I and my oldest brother got out is, a bombing raid on a factory in nearby Dresden which was manufacturing gasoline from bituminous coal. It had been badly damaged by Allied bombers, and all of a sudden, we were called out, my brother and I. He was 19. I was 18 -- I was 19. He was 20. We were still in good physical condition, and we were told that we were to be shipped off to a camp where we would do work in the German industry.

>> Interviewer: This was 1944?

>> Herz: 1944, August, probably. We did not have a calendar. It had to be August, somewhere around that. The beginning of August, let’s say. It was shortly after the assassination attempt. My brother and I were told to report to a barracks somewhat closer to the entrance. We were assigned two bunks, and we were told, You people are going. There will be a transport together of about 2,000 men. You are going to go to such-and-such a town, or to a town near Dresden where you will do work for the German war industry. We did not know what to believe at that time. We hoped that it was the right thing, as again, we had no thoughts of death chamber. The only thing that disturbed me was my mother came, sneaked into our barracks. It was strictly against the rule. Everybody was assigned to a barracks. After 9:00, nobody was to leave the barracks, under death penalty. My mother came and said...

She took leave of us.

We tried to figure out a way how to get together again after this. That's about the best I can tell you, and I finally had -- she said, "Let me stay with you." I said, "No. You know they don't allow it. You'll only get yourself into more difficulty. Please, go." So...

She left. The next day, early in the morning -- we still had our civilian clothes. My brother and I were taken. We thought now that this was going to be our end. Finally it dawned on us that this might really be the end, that they were going to get rid of all the able-bodied people in order to have no resistance from the women and children and older people. But, no, we marched by the crematorium, and it was the first time I had seen the crematorium. There was no activity going on, except that the chimney was belching the blackest soot that I had ever seen. The stench was almost impossible to bear. We were taken to a low-lying barracks where we were told to undress completely. Now we thought that this was going to be the end. We kept our shoes on. They asked us -- they told us, "You may keep your shoes." I had a small knife, and I don't know what else I had. Some token that I had been given from a girl in Theresienstadt, I had hidden it in my shoes, but they had taken care of that. Our shoes were disinfected. Some Polish prisoner in a striped uniform was there. He had a basin, and we had to walk through this basin, and he took our shoes before we entered this shallow basin. He shook out the shoes and beat them together, and I could see that he was bringing up coins and valuables that people had tried to hide. We were given our shoes back.

Our next station was a barber. We were relieved of, or we were shorn of all of our body hair; completely bald. Our underarm hair, our pubic hair, everything was shorn off. Every body hair was totally shorn off, and we were given the striped uniform that I am sure you have seen many times. We had, on these striped uniforms, we had sewn on the numerals and the insignia that we had already seen in the camp, and we had been explained what it was. Black for German, professional criminals; green for other criminals that were not professionals but had just run afoul -- murderers or something like that that had been given penitentiary sentences; perverts. Everyone had a different insignia. I remember one group that I found later were the homosexual, the pink triangle. You may have heard of it. And then when I looked at -- oh, political prisoners. The elite of the camp -- the Kapos, the eldest, the block eldest and the work detail eldest -- had their low numerals like 642 with a red

triangle. We knew that they had been in since 1934 or ’35. Our numbers were stenciled on there in black ink, preceded by a yellow triangle resting on its base and a red triangle superimposed to form a Star of David. My number was 85,501. My brother was the oldest brother, and he was the first, with the initials also. His number was 85,500.

We were loaded into cattle cars. We had nothing to sit on. We had lost a lot of weight, and we were sitting on our bare bones on our behind because that’s what we were told. The railroad cars were locked. As I had told you before, we had to march to the railroad siding, which was a different siding than what we arrived on, and that is where we saw the großen Postenketten, which was, whenever there was a transport arriving or a transport leaving, the guards were situated 8 to 10 feet apart from each other, or 10 to 15 feet -- I cannot recall now -- each one in a small hole in the ground. I do not know why they had the hole in the ground business, but that is where they were. Maybe they had a seat down in there where they could sit down and were just visible above the ground. So at any rate, we passed this, one after one after one, and they were all in camouflage units, and finally, we passed about 15 or 20 of these till we arrived at the wash barracks. So there we were in the railroad cars, and we were being transported. We could not see out because the railroad cars were totally dark. We had no tools to break the cars open. The planks were heavy, so we gave that up.

Well, finally we arrived. We did not know this, but the numbers that we were given were assigned to us by a concentration camp called Sachsenhausen Oranienburg. And the camp that we were in was called Schwarzheide. “Black heath” is the translation. It had been a labor camp for prisoners. The barracks were there. Everything was in pretty good order, and we had, again, the guard troops that accompanied us. We did not know this until we left the railroad train. They had Pullman accommodations right behind the locomotive. Apparently, there was no need to shoot past the railroad cars because there was no opening in there, no window, no nothing. It was just totally enclosed cars. So we saw then the Pullman cars, and we were driven to an assembly place and arranged in the ordinary five in groups and marched to the camp from the railroad siding, which was about 4 or 5 miles distance. We knew that we were in Germany because some of the inscriptions were in German. We finally arrived at that. There were no electric barbed wire fences this time, but there were the barbed wire fences that were double, triple concertina wire with guard posts, nevertheless, in guard houses above.

We were given nothing to eat. We were given nothing to drink. We were fairly much dying from thirst till finally, the camp turned on the water faucet, and we nearly killed each other trying to get something to drink. We had not had anything to eat or to drink since the night before from Auschwitz. So there, we were assigned, then, barracks. I think my barracks was Barracks Number 2. I, of course, was with my brother, and we waited two days to be assigned bunks, and bunks were, again, with straw ticking. And cleaning of the barracks and work details, cleaning out the latrine. And then we were told the facts of life. This camp is such-and-such. When you must go at night to the latrine, you must announce yourself to the guard. What was the formula? "*Wache,"* which means "guard," guard on duty, "one prisoner to the toilet." And you had to wait a moment. He did not acknowledge it, but you moved in this -- the camp was floodlit at night. You moved then to the toilet, and I suppose they kept track of how many people were in there. But always this indignity of having to announce your destination, so to speak.

I do not -- I cannot tell you anything except the routine was unloading bricks without any nourishment whatsoever. It was, if anything, even less, I believe. Later on it was established that we got approximately the equivalent of 700 to 800 calories a day at a job requirement of, let's say, 2,500 at minimum to 3,000 calories, unloading a railroad car. The details were marched out of the camp. At the entrance to the factory, we were split off. Three or four SS troopers took us and marched us, our detail, to the place where we were unloading bricks from a railroad car and stacking them up. Of course, none of us was geared to this kind of work. Our hands were bloodied. The first night, we had already blisters, and we still were forced to, to -- how do we call it -- to perform this work. The brutality there was quite simple. The SS, at that place, the guard troopers had rifles like our M-1 rifles here in the United States, and they would just take their rifles and beat on the back, on the head. Not the face; apparently they figured out that if they knocked our eyes out, we wouldn't be able to work at all, so they concentrated on the back mostly.

The other job was concrete works, carrying iron reinforcement rods, carrying cement bags. At lunch, some food was brought out from the camp, and the only reason that occasionally I got some additional food was that some people -- the Germans had some mussels or -- not oysters, but mussels, some shrimp things, and there were quite a few observing, observant Jews here amongst us, really religious persons, and they perceived that this was really and truly against their religion. So they decided not to

eat it, and I was able to get occasionally a few bowls of soup more, mainly because people didn't -- couldn't -- did choose not to eat it.

So life was like that until one day, I was working in an underground bunker. I found a German foreman's lunch pail. Right or wrong, I took it and ate it. I was so hungry, I ate it. I stole this man's lunch, and I ate it. And I was also so decimated at that time, I fell asleep down there on this job. I just could not -- I could no longer go on. I fell asleep down there. Unfortunately, this was the time that the SS had chosen, above ground, to assemble our group to take us to another work station, and I was missing. They could not have been very long there, and I ran to my place, but unfortunately, I was discovered by one of the SS men. He said, "Where are you coming from now?" And I said I was in the underground bunker. He says, "We called everyone together. You did not hear." And he started to really lay it into me with his rifle butt. And I dragged myself that evening back to camp, and my name had been reported, and I had to undergo another beating from this particular man. The camp inmates called him *Peitsche,* which means "whip," or "ra-ko-chi" [phonetic] something like that in Czechoslovakian. And he really beat me nearly senseless, so I started to bleed out of my mouth, so then he gave up. Nevertheless, I had to stand at that -- what's called punishment standing. I did not get anything to eat that night, and since I was still continuing to bleed, they took me to what they called the hospital or *Krankenstation.* "Sick bay" would be the best translation of this in German. They took me to sick bay, which was staffed by the finest doctors in Europe because in order to get out of work, they had only university professors, medical university professors there as doctors. An ordinary doctor didn't even get in, you know, a family practitioner.

So at any rate, I do not know what they diagnosed. They kept me there. Some internal organ must have ruptured. I don't know what they gave me, but after a while, the bleeding stopped, but they still kept me on that station until about -- and I had a little bit better luck in there. I still saw my brother daily. He would come to visit me and talk to me on the window, and he told me what was going on with the camp. I could share no food with him, and he could share no food with me. We were all starving, and in this barracks that I shared with the others, our constant thought was nothing but food, food, food. We talked of nothing. We dreamt of nothing. We couldn't. Food was constantly on our mind, and it was one of the greatest tortures that I have ever

undergone because from then on, this talk about food did not cease until I finally got out of the concentration camp.

The camp itself was bombed severely on my birthday on the 23rd of August, a bombing attack that was actually destined for the camp. The camp was fog-shrouded by artificial fog, and the British bombed us instead. The barracks were destroyed, and some 87, 90 people were losing their life, and they were bringing them to the hospital, and the doctors were operating what they could, and the severed limbs were lying in front. It was carnage. But by that time, I probably was already somewhat inured, if that's the right pronunciation, to these sights, and I do not recall having greatly been agitated by it. It was terrible, yes. It was Jewish people that were being killed, but we had seen so much already, we were lost so much already in our life that we did not put anymore import to this particular situation.

Would you like to ask me a question that I may have not answered?

>> Interviewer: When did you get out of the hospital?

>> Herz: I never did get out of the hospital because I was still weakened and still not -- I got around with difficulty. I will only tell you one more thing, and I beg you to understand it. The hospital orderly, a German who happened to have been also from Cologne, tried to practice sodomy on me. I knew, of course -- I was 19 years old -- I knew that these things were done. He asked me to take his penis in my mouth and, as we call it now, suck him off. I did it because I was totally concerned with my own survival, and I knew that I would be rewarded with additional food. I know it's degrading, but tell me, what isn't? What wasn't degrading in that respect? He tried to -- I said he tried to practice sodomy on me, but he was unable because my body was perhaps not built that way because he was overly large. He was a little bit unhappy about that. He tried several times more. I was one of the younger prisoners. There were not very many people younger than I, and, well, he did not do this anymore than about three or four times that I recall.

And the end of August, the beginning of September, we were told that those of us in the hospital would be moved to another camp where we were to be evaluated for work -- how shall I say -- capability to work or other means, and a friend of mine whom I had known from Cologne and five or six other people were transported through Germany. The trip took something like about six or seven hours. The SS was sitting with us in the *Camion,*

the German word or the Polish word was camion. Actually it was just what we call a 6 by 6, uh -- how do you call that? A -- well, a military, uh --

>> Interviewer: A cell?

>> Herz: A truck. No, it was a truck, an ordinary military truck, but it had a canopy over it, and the guards were sitting there. The canopy was closed, but the guards were there at the tailgate, and they were sitting there with machine pistols. And so we made it into Lieberose, and we were given over to the camp, where there were already -- the block eldest that took us into custodianship and assigned us to blocks -- my block was Block Number 2. I had a big, fat German by the name of Arno [phonetic]. He had been a political prisoner since -- he was a communist, apparently, but that did not prevent him from really putting it -- pulling rank on us or totally making our lives one hell there. The commission actually did come out, and there were doctors from -- military doctors from Sachsenhausen, and they did determine, and I did not know what to do, and I told them that I had actually been sent over there because they could not diagnose what my ailment was, that it seemed to have stabilized into a cold, more or less, that I seemed not to be able to shake. And I was told to stand aside. My friend had the presence of mind to tell these doctors that really, we were capable of working but they wanted to be sure that this was diagnosed properly because they did not have German doctors at this camp, and that is why we were sent to Lieberose -- the camp's name was Lieberose -- and that we were there truly for evaluation. And they asked, "Can you two work?" And he said, "Yes, we can work. We are capable of working." And he said, "Okay, we assign you to Barracks Number 1. Report there also for work detail."

So this is what happened. He actually had saved my life because the rest of the people that were there were what we called *Muselmann.* Have you heard that term? A Muselmann is "Muslim." I do not know how the term got started, but it were the people that you have probably seen, just wrecks of human beings, no cheeks, cheekbones, no arms, no buttocks, sticks for legs, barely able to move about. These were called, in the camps, Muselmann. And the transport was put together early in the time in Lieberose. Whether they made it back to Auschwitz -- because Auschwitz already was there on the verge of being evacuated. Whether they did or did not, I cannot tell. I, at least, worked some five, six months in Lieberose until finally, the Russians approached. And our work over there were digging tank ditches in the fields over there, and again, we were subjected, not so much

by harsh or brutal treatment by the SS guards, but by those who should have had a fellow feeling, a sympathy, for us, namely the German Kapo. *H*ave you hear that term before? The Kapos treated us ill to the Nth degree. Everyone had the ever-present walking stick, and if we didn't move fast enough -- he seemed to think that he was responsible that the work pensum was done, and if we didn't work fast enough, well, then he started to beat us, generally, again, on the back. We were all -- our attitude was mostly this, trying to protect our heads and our faces.

Well, one day, he beat my friend so severely that he finally -- he was a guy from Saxony, a short fellow, a political prisoner. He beat both of us so terribly that we told our block eldest that we had to go to the sick bay because we needed some attention. Well, he apparently must have felt -- since we were German Jews, he must have felt some sort of, not compassion, or maybe a spark of compassion. We were, the next day, assigned to the potato kitchen. There, we could sit down and peel potatoes. And from there, we rested -- we stayed into the potato kitchen and did not have to work quite so hard anymore, and our jobs was just that. We were sitting, and we were talking, again, about old times and food and this and that and trying to eat raw potatoes, but as probably everybody knows by now, there is not very much value in raw potatoes because the starch has not been converted to an absorbable substance. The only thing that was forbidden is to take one single potato, or one single potato peel out, and we were, daily, searched, but in a manner that was unusual. We had our lunch pail, a cup and a fork, and the guy that serves us was a deaf-mute, also a political prisoner. He was a Polish prisoner, and I can remember vividly, we walked out there like that. Our lunch pail over there, our cup in that hand, and he would go under our jackets, feeling the pockets, feeling between our legs, lifting up our shoes to see whether we had secreted any, any potatoes. And if we did, well, that was the end of that person's potato duty in the warm kitchen, and Germany's gotten pretty cold there in the wintertime. Besides that, he got such a beating from the Kapo and was turned over to the *Strafekolonie* or "punishment detail." They wore big, red patches, blood-red patches on their backs and had especially hard detail. I never did get on that detail, and I was very thankful for that. So that was the potato peel.

And there is also where I found -- this was now concentration camp in the German manner. It had nothing to do with death camp. And there, again, the brutality was carried to the extreme, to the flogging or the caning. Again, we had to stand out for hours in rain, in sunshine, in heat, standing in our place, not being

able to move, just shifting around a little bit from one foot to the other and standing. It was such a punishment. We did not know what they wanted from us. Then they announced over the loudspeaker that such-and-such had transgressed. I don't know what he'd done, maybe sabotaged something. He didn't walk fast enough, or he dropped a bag of cement which spilled out and cost the German government damage beyond compare, and that he was to receive -- and this was in legal -- it was read by the camp commander that, Therefore, the Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler has decreed that he is to receive 25 *Stockhiebe*, or "cane lashes," on the naked behind, *auf der nackten Arsch,* "the naked buttocks," at the next Appell. Appell was the name of standing out there. And they had a special -- that camp had a special device where they half laid the -- it was like a lectern, a crude, big, lectern with an ink line on it, and two prisoners held his hands over the lectern, and two other prisoners held his legs, and the camp, uh, *Kleiderkammer* -- what is that word again? Where the clothing was distributed. Another German Kapo, a *Schwerverbrecher,* a "professional criminal" who was well nourished, the best he could on there because he wanted to make sure that the camp commanders saw that he was taking his work seriously. And the ignominy of it was that the poor guy that was being flogged had to count the strokes, ostensibly by the camp commander's order that he should be sure to receive only that which the Reichführer had decreed and not one more or not one less. And these poor people had to -- while they were screaming and begging for mercy and letting loose of their body fluids, had to count, "One, two, three." By the time they were at 10 or 15, none of them could give any more sound except maybe a whimper, and for them, the camp eldest was then forced to count until the punishment was completed.

They had also -- one thing, and we were not allowed to close our eyes. They walked through the ranks. Our own Kapos walked through the ranks and laid the -- I mean, they had short sticks, and they beat us unmercifully if we closed our eyes during these, these -- how do you call them -- corporal punishment sessions. And that camp also had its own portable gallows. And some poor soul -- I don't know what it was. It wasn't a Jew. It may have been a Pole. Had tried to escape. And for that -- normally Saturdays and Sundays, we had some time off to clean up. Saturdays we worked till 10:00. Saturday evening was given to cleaning the barracks. But those Saturdays, or at least that one Saturday that I remember was a very simple affair. It was just two Poles with a crossbar and a bench on there. The guy's hands were tied behind his back. As I said, he, again, had this

decree of Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler read out, that now, Therefore, I decree that you shall be hanged by the neck.

The camp was something like 5,000 to 8,000 people or 10,000 people. We did not know where it occurred, what he had done. We only were confronted with the fact that our Saturday afternoon was, again -- when we needed to rest so badly, it was again taken. I'm not sure whether I felt a certain resentment. Maybe I did, that he was the cause of our loss of sleep or whatever it was. Anyhow, it was over, luckily, very quick for the man. He was simply, since they had tied his hands and feet, he simply had a rope tied around his neck. His hands and feet were tied. Two of the strong German Kapos just simple lifted him on the bench. The Kleiderkammer guy, this clothing chamber Kapo, simply tied with a rope, and the other two guys just kicked the bench away, and all I can say is, I hope that his end was quick. It was the first one that I witnessed, but it was not the last -- I wouldn't say "execution" -- yeah, execution or willful killing of German guards of Jews or other prisoners. This was the way he ended, and for added measure, we were forced to march by the execution place slowly and were forced to look at it. We were forced like, later on in the American army, "Eyes, right." And by golly, we had to see this sorry, sorry spectacle. I am not sure whether -- as I said before, I cannot tell you whether I feel pity. By that time, "pity" was a word that had been expunged from our dictionaries. We had no longer pity, except for ourselves.

That was Lieberose. At night -- we had a stove in the barracks, and at night, we had a bucket where we had to urinate. The urination was in the barracks because it was subzero temperature, and you could hear the prisoners utilize this bucket. It was loud and noisy, and we had to carry that outside and empty it outside. And believe me, the buckets were always overfull, and much as we tried to avoid getting splashed by urine, it never happened because we had no food. Therefore, we drank. The only thing that was available to us was water. We developed *Ödems* because the water settled in our knees. We had difficulty, all of us, except, of course, the well-fed German Kapos. We still were working on details, digging ditches, unloading cement bags, whatever it was. One of the -- it was bitterly cold, and one of our ways of trying to shield ourselves against the cold, we had exactly one small, thin jacket, our prison jacket, and one undershirt. And in the bitter cold, we had no socks. We had no gloves. We tried to steal the paper bags and place them between us, between our backs and our front, to have some insulation. That was strictly forbidden, and I was

beaten severely for having this under my jacket. The only way they found it is, when we entered the camp after our work detail, they sometimes made body controls to feel whether we had secreted something, discovered that I had a cement bag, an empty bag, the paper bag on me. That earned me no food that day and a beating and standing at the gate with several others who had the same offense, had committed the same offense.

At night, instead of going to sleep, we, the Jews, were chosen to guard a woodpile because there was very little firewood. The other barracks tended to steal this. To avoid this, we were forced to stand outside in this bitter cold in the snow and guard our woodpile. I cannot tell you what thoughts I had. I had many, many thoughts to think of. Many of them were about what religion was doing to us; what religion was doing for us; why we were not being liberated; why the entire world, and this has occurred to us many times, why we seemed to have been forgotten or why we were, indeed, forgotten by the entire world; why we had no sign of anything. The German population kept very much away from us because we were described as the lowest of the low criminal element. We had no pity or sympathy from them at all.

What else is there to say? We stayed in that camp, and one of the highlights -- you must know now how desperate we were. One of the highlights was, German civilians fleeing from the Russians made it as far as the camp, and their horse died. And our cooks went out and got the horse and carved him up and put a soup together, some stew, and we had for the first time meat. One horse didn't go very far for 8,000 prisoners, but they used everything. And I'm sure by that time, all the religious Jews decided to eat what came their way. Even if they did know there was horsemeat in there, it made no longer very much of a difference. You ate because you had to hope for the next day. You had to get through that one day. So, again --